North Wales Police and Bilingualism

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Acknowledgement

This booklet is based on my MA Dissertation which was supervised by Dr Gwenda Rhian Jones, School of Social Sciences at Bangor University and I wish to thank her for her continual support and guidance. I would also like to thank her for her suggestion that a booklet should be produced outlining key steps taken to promote bilingualism in North Wales Police as part of the fortieth anniversary celebration in 2014. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution that she has made in editing and contributing to this publication.

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Meic Raymant
Head of Welsh Language Services Department, North Wales Police
October 2015
PREFACE

Significant work has taken place in North Wales Police over the years to promote bilingualism. The Welsh language priorities in our joint Welsh Language Scheme state that there is equal status for the Welsh and English languages in this Force and that our aim is to become a bilingual organisation and work continues to achieve this.

As a public body we have a duty to conform to the linguistic legislation in Wales and we take this seriously. Both the Police and Crime Commissioner and I are jointly committed to promoting the Welsh Language Scheme in this regard.

It is essential that we can communicate effectively with those who use our services. Part of this is the initiative to ensure that all staff can demonstrate linguistic courtesy in Welsh as a minimum. It is important that we are able to offer and provide language choice to the public in North Wales. We are also working to provide the same language choice to our staff and as part of this we continue to promote bilingual workplaces and encourage and support our staff to use their Welsh skills at work.

I hope that you will enjoy reading about the steps that have been taken to date to promote bilingualism within the Force and the various initiatives that have been put in place in order to develop the Welsh language skills of our staff.

Mark Polin
Chief Constable
FOREWORD

Presented here are a series of significant and key stages which evaluate North Wales Police’s concerted attempt at introducing bilingualism within the workplace and its central services. The publication is the result of the author’s own social research work and represents the quiet, industrious achievement of a few individuals in the promotion of the language strategy and cultural change, not only within the organisation itself but also within other public institutions in Wales.

As within any organisation promoting change, it is integral that a detailed consideration of the scenario is placed within its historical context. Following the approval of North Wales Police and North Wales Police Authority’s Welsh Language Scheme, the service immediately committed itself to measuring the Welsh language capacity of the workforce together with the early, innovative demand of requiring new managerial Chief Officers to learn Welsh. The publication deals with the effect of this on the service and its significance in establishing leadership and vision in order to ensure active, credible and sustainable development. Secondly, the investment in people and policy is discussed, and its subsequent implementation and mainstreaming within roles recognised as public facing. The strength and sustainability of any language strategy or scheme is that bodies monitor progress so that development continues, and that they are revised and consolidated in order to bring them in line with legislation or changing organisational requirements.

It is likely that North Wales Police will want to progress further in the future. The innovation and vision continue, and it is an honour to be part of the initiative of publishing this work as North Wales Police celebrates forty years since its establishment. This booklet is presented to those who have dutifully facilitated and promoted language change within the organisation as a mark of appreciation of their contribution to the success of the initiative and good practices established.

Dr Gwenda Rhian
School of Social Sciences
Bangor University
March 2014
INTRODUCTION

Under the Welsh Language Act 1993, public bodies in Wales have a duty to prepare a Welsh Language Scheme which sets out their commitment to affording equal status to the Welsh and English languages in the provision of services intended mainly for the public. However, as many commentators, studies and surveys have highlighted, some bodies have undertaken the task with more enthusiasm and success than others.

North Wales Police and North Wales Police Authority’s original Welsh Language Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board in 1997\(^1\). Prior to this, the Force’s business language was English.

Today, North Wales Police is recognised as one of the most progressive organisations in Wales with regard to promoting bilingualism and encouraging Welsh language learning and the use of Welsh in the workplace. But how did this change in policies, attitudes and behaviours happen?

PROMOTING BILINGUALISM

Following approval of North Wales Police’s Welsh Language Scheme, it soon became apparent that the Force was facing a significant challenge. The first step was to understand and measure Welsh language capacity within the workforce, as reliable statistics on linguistic ability were not available and also because this was not part of any deliberate language strategy. Although there was ‘informal’ Welsh language ability within North Wales Police, to all intents and purposes English was the organisation’s ‘official’ language. More importantly perhaps, there were no members of staff specifically designated to take ownership and responsibility for promoting the bilingualism agenda.

1 Section 14 (1) Welsh Language Act, 4/6/1997

LEADERSHIP AND VISION

- ‘the right people, in the right place, at the right time’

The appointment of two new Chief Officers at command level during the late 1990s presented an opportunity to implement the Welsh language scheme for the first time. Certain members of North Wales Police Authority were eager to ensure that due regard be given to the Welsh language scheme by stipulating that newly appointed Chief Officers must learn Welsh in order to show linguistic courtesy to the bilingual community. A strategic Welsh Language Group was established consisting of senior officers and members of the Police Authority and chaired by a Chief Officer. This development was significant as this new working group set out the first ever terms of reference seeking progress against some of the targets set in the Welsh Language Scheme Implementation Plan.

When a new Chief Constable was appointed in 2001, the Police Authority included a clause in his contract stating that he must learn Welsh to a standard equal to GCSE second language within two years. The new Chief Constable declared his intention to fully comply with this expectation and volunteered to go the extra mile by learning Welsh to ‘A’ Level. This was the first milestone. The Chief Constable received much external recognition for his achievements which sent out a clear message to both managers and staff regarding his intentions and commitment to the Welsh language. Never before had a chief officer in the justice sector declared publicly his intention to learn Welsh and to sit external exams in order to prove his achievements and then go on to do exactly that. This was a major turning point in that now an expectation was set that other chief officers learn Welsh to at least ‘intermediate’ level. The new Chief Constable indicated from the outset a commitment at command level to making a difference and to plan towards providing genuine language choice for the public, and his willingness to invest fully in the process of introducing this change was a clear indication of his determination.

A series of short strategies was produced for the information of managers and staff focusing on
the Force’s priorities. Amongst these was a Welsh Language Strategy outlining principles and tactics to assist the Force in achieving its aims (Appendix A). The strategy’s two core principles were firstly, that the Force would treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality, and secondly that the Force was aiming to become a bilingual organisation. This was the line in the sand. In addition, a series of strategic requirements was developed corresponding to ACPOs policing priorities⁴. This was a significant development in that now the status of the Welsh language was set at the same level as the service’s core mandate i.e. fighting crime and safeguarding communities.

INVESTMENT IN STRUCTURE, POLICY AND PEOPLE

One of the first steps taken on the journey towards achieving the aim of promoting bilingualism within the service was to learn from the experiences of another police force. To this end a visit to An Garda Siochana (Republic of Ireland Police force) was organised in order to learn how this force had set about promoting bilingualism. Key staff within the organisation gave presentations on the status the Irish (Gaelic) language in the service and a comprehensive report was prepared for the attention of NWP Chief Officers outlining the policies and procedures established within the Garda for the promotion of the Irish language, together with proposals for establishing similar policies and plans for improving the status of the Welsh language and its use in North Wales Police. A recommendation was made that attention be given to the recruitment of Welsh speakers and that basic linguistic conditions should be set within the selection and recruitment process – two elements that became central to North Wales Police’s language strategy in due course.

Coinciding with this, in December 2002 a criminal justice sub-committee published an influential report on the use of the Welsh language within the criminal justice system in Wales. This report recognised the importance of normalising the use of Welsh in Wales’ police forces in order to focus on the provision of language choice for service users. There was a recommendation that action should be taken to improve the situation at strategic and operational levels nationally. North Wales Police’s innovation and leadership in promoting bilingualism was recognised in the Dafis Report: “The use of the Welsh language by Wales’ Police Forces”. The report also recognised the importance of the Chief Constable’s leadership and commitment and the need a set a clear vision for the promotion of bilingualism and to measure progress through mainstreaming the language into corporate policies, processes and procedures (Dafis, 2005). The Welsh Language Board also conducted numerous reviews in which North Wales Police received general praise and recognition for progress and good practice. This recognition of good practice was reiterated in a report by Cwmni Iaith in 2008 which referred to North Wales Police as one of the ‘most progressive’ organisations with regards to the development and provision of active language choice within organisational policy in the justice sector. This led to efforts to work with other criminal justice agencies in North Wales to improve the provision of language choice within criminal justice processes as well as in police custody suites.

In order to promote change and structured implementation, from 2000 onwards concerted efforts were made to plan towards increasing Welsh language capacity by providing Welsh language training in the workplace. Although some Welsh language courses were already being delivered by an external provider, it became clear that there was a need to concentrate further on this core element. In light of this, a decision was made to create a new post within the Force to focus specifically on co-ordinating and delivering language training for staff. Prior to this the only posts specifically designated to Welsh language matters were those of two full time translators and there was also one member of staff with responsibility, alongside other responsibilities, for the Welsh

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² ACPO is the Association of Chief Police Officers that represents the highest ranks of the Service. It is now known as the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC)
Language Scheme. The investment in this post was a pioneering development. The appointed post holder’s duties included identifying the organisation’s priorities as well as the Welsh language and Welsh language awareness training needs of officers and staff.

The Welsh Language Training Co-ordinator’s post was subsequently re-designated and upgraded to that of Welsh Language Advisor in order to give due status to Welsh language development and promotion within the Force. It was decided that the post holder would work directly to the Deputy Chief Constable in his capacity as the ACPO Welsh language portfolio holder. By 2004 responsibility for the Welsh language had been transferred to the Chief Constable at his own request and he was now also now Chair of the Force Welsh Language Group. Many commentators have highlighted the importance of this development, as well as the importance of the Chief Constable himself driving the Force’s Welsh language strategy from the top, thus ensuring that the organisation as a whole took the matter seriously.

Following an inevitable increase in the translators’ workload and with a preference that all such work be undertaken internally, investment was made in additional posts in the translation unit. This internal investment in support staff reflected the need to promote the ever increasing agenda as well as to progress cultural change. In 2005 a new post of Officer for the Promotion of Bilingual Affairs was created to work alongside the Welsh Language Advisor. The individual appointed to this new role, who was, significantly, a uniformed officer, had extensive experience of, and had recently been responsible for recruitment. This meant that the organisation now had increased capacity and ability to pay additional attention to schemes relating to staff skills and recruitment policies as well as other projects. As a result of this development, for the first time, the Welsh language was mainstreamed into policing in a symbolic and meaningful way. The ability to ensure compliance was reinforced and the new post holder also had a thorough understanding of the barriers that existed within the organisation. The Chief Constable also

authorised the Officer for Promoting Bilingual Affairs and the Welsh Language Advisor to undertake more proactive work with the justice sector as well as other organisations nationally.

In 2007 a new department was created. The Welsh Language Services Department brought together staff at strategic, managerial and functional levels in the field of language policy as well as the translation unit staff, in order to ensure efficient and effective activity in these areas in the future. The Force had already acknowledged the importance of employing a full time team of translators to provide a professional and confidential translation service for the Force and the Police Authority (now replaced by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner). The translators’ duties include translating a wide variety of documentation and information in order to ensure a totally bilingual corporate image, the provision of simultaneous translation services at meetings and interviews as well as supporting operational policing through the translation of interviews, witness statements and evidence in criminal cases. The team also provides tutorials and support sessions for officers and staff at all levels in the Force as well as for prospective officers and staff as required, to assist them in attaining the required level of ability.

Following the retirement of the Officer for Promotion of Bilingual Affairs in 2008, a new post of Bilingual Workplaces Project Co-ordinator was created in the department. This post was intended to identify needs and create opportunities to support Welsh learners to use their language skills at work and also to encourage Welsh speaking staff to make more business use of the language. Currently, following substantial restructuring within the Force and the loss of posts in an economically challenging climate, the Department consists of the Head of Welsh Language Services, three full time translators and a co-ordinator and is part of the Corporate Services business area.
PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE AIMS OF THE LANGUAGE SCHEME

Recruiting Bilingual Skills

In common with the experience of An Garda Síochána, it became clear to North Wales Police that recruitment’s role in the quest to change the linguistic profile of the Force should not be ignored and that efforts needed to be made to increase the percentage of applications from Welsh speakers for the role of Constable. In January 2004, a structured positive action campaign was launched in an effort to encourage more Welsh speakers to join the Force. To facilitate the recruitment of officers with Welsh language skills, the Force created a brand new Welsh and bilingual DVD to raise prospective applicants’ awareness of the opportunities North Wales Police could offer. The Home Office had already produced a new DVD in English only and had refused to consider the bilingual needs of the organisation. This, once again, was pioneering work undertaken and funded independently by North Wales Police. In 2006 the Home Office made a recommendation to Chief Constables of Police Forces in England and Wales regarding prioritising applications from prospective recruits who possessed either specific local community knowledge or community language skills, once they had satisfied the Assessment Centre requirements. North Wales Police acted upon this advice and seized the opportunity to increase the number of Welsh speaking officers within the Force. This clause is no longer in force as linguistic ability is not one of the protected characteristics specified within the Equalities Act 2010. However North Wales Police continues to encourage applications from Welsh speakers for the role of Constable or Police Community Support Officer in order to increase the bilingual skills of the workforce.

Recognising Welsh language ability as an operational policing skill

It could be argued that one of the most sensitive and controversial challenges facing a public organisation required to produce a Welsh Language Scheme is identifying posts where there is an expectation that staff appointed to them possess specific levels of language skills in order to provide services to the public in Welsh. In North Wales Police at the end of the 1990s, as in the majority of other public organisations in all probability, only a relatively small percentage of posts were designated as ‘Welsh Essential’.

In 2003 North Wales Police’s Welsh Language Group made the ground breaking decision that Welsh language ability should be recognised as a skill, alongside the other policing skills. This posed quite a challenge to the Force’s corporate human resources mind-set, as the skills recognised as being crucial in providing a quality policing service are agreed and developed by Home Office Central Government Departments with no consideration given to the linguistic situation in Wales.

In light of this important development, and in the absence of any standard external guidance on how to measure Welsh language ability as a skill in a structured, consistent and transparent way, a need to establish a new process became apparent. Welsh language ability in North Wales Police had previously been recorded by means of a few simple words such as ‘none’, ‘greeting’, ‘basic’, ‘sufficient’ and ‘fluent’. Staff were expected to self-assess and measure their level of ability to speak or write Welsh against these words with no guidance or means of confirming that they had recorded the correct level.

In response to the pressing need to create a standard guide which would improve the means by which Welsh language skills were recorded, work was undertaken to create an internal framework to measure the workforce’s Welsh

3 Statutory guidance was published under Section 9 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 ‘Welsh Language Schemes – their preparation and approval in accordance with The Welsh Language Act 1993’’. Guidelines 8(i) and 8(ii) impose a duty on public bodies to develop staffing measures. More recently in 2009 further advice was published regarding these complex matters by the Welsh Language Board in response to the increasing demand from the language officers of public bodies for further clarification and support in order to be able to justify the process to human resources staff and chief officers.
language ability. North Wales Police’s Welsh Language Competency Framework is made up of levels of ability from 0 - 5 and is based on the ALTE framework (Association of Language Testers in Europe). The framework consists of a series of ‘Can do’ statements which allows staff to make their own decision regarding their level of ability (see Appendix C). The importance and significance of this new internal framework should not be underestimated. The adoption of this structured method of measuring Welsh language ability later became the basis of the Force’s language protocols for the appointment or promotion of staff, setting Welsh language levels within post profiles and the formation of a new internal Welsh language training courses structure. The framework is now an integral part of North Wales Police’s human resources processes.

Since 2009 all posts to be advertised are assessed against North Wales Police’s Language Matrix in order to identify the appropriate level of language skills, from 2 to 5, needed to adequately meet the demands of the role. A number of questions are used to denote the appropriate level i.e. regarding the location of the post; how much contact the post holder will have with the public, including young people; whether the post holder will be required to make public presentations and the nature of communications with other organisations that conduct their business through the medium of Welsh. Following this process and any further discussions necessary to confirm the correct level, the requirement is included in the post profile and will be a condition of appointment. If the post holder does not possess the necessary level of ability there will be a contractual condition that they develop the necessary skills within a specified period of time. Language training and support to develop skills are provided during duty hours.

It could be argued that formulating this process has transformed the way in which language skills are set as a condition of appointment to posts within North Wales Police. It has ensured that measuring and setting language skills is mainstreamed into human resources processes. The legislative framework and the commitments set out in the Welsh Language Scheme were fundamental to these developments, however it is crucially important to recognise that robust leadership and support for the introduction of linguistic change from the top of the organisation facilitated these changes and ensured that decisions made were acted upon.

THE RIGHT SKILLS IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Front counters and public reception areas

Denoting posts where it is essential that staff are able to offer language choice to the public began in North Wales Police in 2001 when the Force set about identifying its main, strategic contact points with the public. It was decided that all front counter and public reception area staff should have the ability to facilitate and offer language choice in order to provide a consistent service to the public at all public contact points. In line with the commitment in the Welsh Language Scheme, these posts were amongst the first to be designated ‘Welsh Essential’. For the first time, staff who did not already speak Welsh were asked to learn the language to a certain level within a specified timescale – the expectation was that they would be able to understand and respond to general, simple enquiries in Welsh. Training courses for staff were arranged and a series of verbal, occupational Welsh language exercises was devised in order to assess ability to meet the requirement. Front counter and reception staff were also permitted to attend any internal or external Welsh language training or activity during duty hours in order to improve their skills and confidence to speak Welsh. Identifying these main contact points was a key development in initiating the process of implementing the aims of the Language Scheme and clearly indicated the Force’s commitment to undertaking the most challenging and controversial work of setting linguistic conditions within post profiles. This was done as part of effective workforce planning and in order to improve the standard of service delivery to the public.
Force Control Room

North Wales Police’s control room is a central and core element of the service which means that the ability to offer language choice is essential. Contacting the control room is the main means by which the public report crimes or seek help or advice from the police across a large geographical area. In a bid to provide a consistent bilingual service, electronic solutions were utilised to facilitate the ability to offer language choice in the control room. The public were encouraged to phone 999 in an emergency only and two designated lines were set up for non-emergency calls – one for calls in the English language and one for calls in Welsh. Campaigns were organised to promote both lines and to let people know that they had a choice and could speak to the police in either Welsh or English. Efforts were made to plan shifts in such a way that there were Welsh speakers available at all times so that the promise of language choice could be fulfilled.

In March 2005 one Central Control Room for North Wales Police was opened in St Asaph to deal with calls to the police from every part of North Wales. Welsh language competency statistics from that time show that 30% of control room staff had Welsh language skills at Level 4 or above. It could therefore not be guaranteed that language choice could be offered over the telephone or that there would be consistency in the service provided. Plans had to be put in place immediately to resolve this situation and it was decided that the most efficient and effective means of increasing Welsh language capacity within the call handling service was to move fully bilingual police officers into the control room. Having higher numbers of staff who could speak both Welsh and English in the control room became even more important in 2010 when the force adopted the new national 101 number for non-emergency calls, making the old Welsh and English lines more or less redundant. As the delivery of language choice is now established as core business, during more recent force restructuring, opportunities arose to recruit additional fully bilingual staff into the control room. Today 97% of North Wales Police Call Handlers have Welsh language skills at level 4 or above.

Custody

The Welsh Language Scheme also specifies a commitment to offer language choice to those dealt with at North Wales Police’s custody suites. Considerable effort has been made to improve bilingual provision in this setting since 2002 following the Hughes report (2002) and more recently a report by Cwmni Iaith (2008). Work has been on-going in the justice sector for some years to improve processes for recording language choice. At the heart of both reports lies the need to offer language choice to anyone who becomes involved with the justice sector, that this language choice is recorded and that it is passed on to other agencies within the justice process. The Force have worked in partnership with other justice agencies in North Wales to fulfil these aims. All of this involves efforts to increase the Welsh language levels of staff who work in the custody suites in general, as well as to attract staff who speak Welsh fluently to work there.

Linguistic courtesy as an integral part of every role

Although specific consideration had been given to increasing Welsh language skills at public contact points, a significant percentage of staff employed by the force were still recording their Welsh language skills as ‘none’. For this reason all staff were encouraged to develop their skills to at least Level 1 so that they were able to show basic linguistic courtesy to the public and their colleagues. This would contribute directly towards reinforcing the behaviours expected of all staff, but particularly officers, as the ability to speak Welsh and deliver better customer service in a bilingual area is directly linked to the to the core policing behaviours expected by the Home Office at the time i.e. ‘effective communication’, ‘community and customer focus’ and ‘respect towards race and diversity’

However at the time, success in achieving this was to a great extent dependent on the attitudes and enthusiasm of heads of departments and divisions or command teams. It was for this reason that the new Chief Constable, following
a review of Welsh language capacity within the force in 2010, decided to formalise the expectation that all members of staff are able to show at least basic linguistic courtesy by establishing the Level 1 Initiative. It was now mandated that all staff achieve this level with the aim that no officer or member of staff within North Wales Police possessed no Welsh language skills whatsoever. The aims of this initiative have now been realised through perseverance, encouragement and support, and at times by insisting that some less enthusiastic individuals comply with an initiative led from the very top of the organisation.

Expanding and reinforcing – Welsh language ability as a condition of appointment and promotion

In 2005 the Force announced a new recruitment condition, i.e. ‘The Level 1 Protocol’ following a decision that work should be done to ensure that any newly recruited officer or member of staff was able to show at least basic Welsh language skills in the execution of their duties. This was done mainly on the principle that the ability to understand and correctly pronounce the name of a place and/or address was a matter of health and safety for staff and the public alike. Additionally, the ability to pronounce first names and greet or respond to a greeting in Welsh is an integral part of linguistic courtesy in a bilingual area. It was also felt that Welsh speakers in the Force deserve the same respect and courtesy from their colleagues as the public. From September 2005 therefore it became a condition that all applicants for post with North Wales Police, both officers and staff, were able to evidence Welsh language skills to Level 1 (basic linguistic courtesy) before being offered a post.

As the external examinations for adults learning Welsh administered by the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) were not suitable as an adaptable means of assessing spoken language skills against the levels in the Welsh Language Competency Framework, a series of verbal tests tailored to suit the needs of the police service was devised by the Force in collaboration with Llysfasi College, the contracted Welsh language training provider. To accompany this, ‘An Introduction to Welsh – 1’ CD was produced in order to provide learners with a distance learning package to support them in their efforts to reach the required level. This was important as there would be always be some applicants who had never encountered the Welsh language and the Force did not wish to put them at a disadvantage in the recruitment process. In August 2006 it became an additional requirement that newly appointed staff must attain Welsh language skills to Level 2 during their probationary period and as a condition of permanent appointment. Once again, in order to reduce the impact of the policy on applicants who had no previous knowledge of the language before joining North Wales Police, ‘An Introduction to Welsh – 2’ CD was produced as a distance learning support package.

The Force has now also produced ‘An Introduction to Welsh – 3’ CD. The work of preparing and producing the first two CDs was wholly funded by the Force, however funding to assist with the production of the third CD was secured from the Welsh Language Board in the form of a grant under the ‘Promoting Welsh in the Workplace’ project in 2010. The CDs are mainly intended as a self-learning resource for applicants for post within the Force, however as the cover of the CDs clearly display the Force crest and contain a foreword by the Chief Constable encouraging staff to develop their skills, they send out a clear message regarding the Force’s commitment to promoting and supporting more use of Welsh in the workplace.

In April 2006, a further step was taken to increase language levels when it became a requirement for all officers and members of staff to evidence language skills at Level 1 in order to be eligible to take part in any internal promotion process or to apply for a post at a higher grade. The rationale behind this was the need to ensure that the Level 1 Protocol had an impact on the Force’s current staff as well as new employees as part of the process of introducing linguistic change.
In January 2008, in an effort to accelerate the impact of the language protocols on the workforce and to make further progress, the Force ‘raised the bar’ and made it a requirement that all applicants for posts with North Wales Police who did not already speak Welsh evidence skills to Level 2 before being offered a post. Also, these new officers and members of staff would be expected to increase their skills to Level 3 during their probationary period and a 10 day Level 3 course was provided during working hours to assist them achieving this. As before, this expectation was mirrored in the internal promotion process and since January 2008 all officers and staff of North Wales Police are required to evidence Welsh language skills to Level 2 in order to be eligible to take part in any promotion process. Now, as part of the new Force Welsh Language Skills Policy established in 2012, all newly promoted employees must attain Level 3 before the end of their probationary period. This is testament to the Force’s determination to ensure that the ability to show linguistic courtesy and to offer language choice is part of the leadership agenda at every level.

Moving forward – increasing capacity at senior manager and command team level

Another initiative established by the present Chief Constable was to increase language capacity amongst officers and staff at command and senior management level. The review of language skills undertaken in 2009 confirmed what was already evident – a lack of confident Welsh speakers at Inspector, Chief Inspector and Superintendent level. As a result of this, it was made a requirement that non Welsh speaking managers increase their language skills by one level. The requirement today is that all management team members achieve Level 3. This initiative has ensured that managers within the Force have at least some spoken Welsh language skills and that those applying for promotion or posts at higher grades realise that having a certain level of spoken Welsh ability is part of the general requirement. More importantly, this initiative has contributed towards increasing the Welsh language capacity of the Force by influencing a group of officers and staff whom efforts to promote bilingualism within the organisation would not otherwise have reached. Increasing the use of Welsh language skills amongst this group on a day to day basis is another matter. However, the Chief Constable has stipulated that officers going before promotion boards must evidence their language skills and an awareness of the relevance of linguistic courtesy in the delivery of services to the public.

The planning and provision of training in support of the Welsh Language Scheme

From 2001 onwards a Welsh language awareness training presentation was included in the induction programme for new managers and staff, again as part of efforts to raise the profile of the Force’s duties under the Welsh language legislation and to make it clear to staff why it was necessary and how it should be done. Rolling this training out to newly recruited officers was not as straightforward, as their probationary training at the time was delivered at training centres in England. However the situation changed in 2004 when it was decided that all probationary training from then on would be delivered in-house. Language awareness training is now a mandatory element of probationary training thus ensuring that new recruits understand the importance of showing linguistic courtesy and offering language choice in the delivery of a quality service to the public.

North Wales Police had already made some investment in Welsh language training following the adoption of the Welsh Language Scheme between 1997 and 2000. These were mainly courses at beginner and intermediate level and were based on a similar format to that of Welsh language courses delivered in the community i.e. two or three hourly sessions on one specific day each week. In 2000 the Force began to look in more detail at its Welsh language training requirements and one of the first tasks was to conduct a needs assessment in order to prioritise training based on business need. Following this, the delivery of intensive short
courses in the workplace for learners at beginner and intermediate levels was trialled.

Tutorials to fulfil the Welsh learning requirements of the Chief Officers and to prepare them for examinations were organised. A decision was made to use the WJEC Welsh for Adults ‘Use of Welsh’ examination to assess the achievement of staff who had attended language courses. At the time there was no test of Welsh language ability relevant to the field of policing, therefore this was done to show the value of the learning through gaining a formal external qualification as well as to raise the profile of the training. As the demand for language courses began to increase an external Welsh language training provider was contracted to run the main courses. In 2003 Llysfasi College (now part of Coleg Cambria) was appointed to undertake the work. The willingness of managers and tutors at the College to respond to North Wales Police’s efforts to introduce new methods of delivering Welsh language training in the workplace has been of great benefit and this successful partnership continues today.

It was clear that there was a pressing need to address the specific learning requirements of front counter staff and the fact that they had to reach a certain level of ability within a specified timeframe in order to comply with the Welsh language clause in their contracts of employment. To this end, in 2004 an occupational test was devised to assess ability based on Level 3 in the Force’s Welsh Language Competency Framework rather than using an external public examination. This was the beginning of a journey that would eventually lead to establishing a bespoke series of occupational courses and verbal tests tailored to the requirements of North Wales Police’s Welsh Language Framework. This quest to find suitable means of developing and assessing the workforce’s Welsh language skills is another example of North Wales Police’s enterprise and innovation in the promotion of bilingualism. In taking these steps the Force has raised its standing and profile as an organisation that takes language planning seriously.

The below table shows the progress made with regard to the verbal skills of all officers and staff between 2006 – 2015 following the language initiatives developed over the past few years. It is clear that efforts to ensure that all staff can show basic linguistic courtesy as a minimum requirement (Level 1) have been successful.

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<th>Table 1 - Increase in North Wales Police’s Welsh Language Capacity 2006 -2015</th>
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<td><strong>Spoken Welsh Levels (% of Force)</strong></td>
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PROMOTING BILINGUAL WORKPLACES

A visible and audible language

In 2001, as part of the drive to raise the profile of the Welsh language and to promote more use of it, the Force’s first language skills badge - ‘Dw i’n dysgu’ (I’m learning) - was produced. The badge was enthusiastically received by staff and the public alike. A few years later another unique badge – ‘Dw i’n siarad Cymraeg’ (I speak Welsh) - was produced for Welsh speakers as an indicator of ability that would be suitable for officers to wear on their uniform. The Force’s uniform protocol encourages staff to wear the badges on duty, which in itself is a sign of ‘organisational permission’ for the work of promoting the language. Staff are also encouraged to include an electronic version of the appropriate badge in their e-mail addresses and the badges have also been printed on the lanyards used to hold staff identity cards. Both badges have now been adopted by the other Welsh police forces as well as other public bodies.

More recently, in 2011 a poster bearing the wording “Rho gynnig ar dy Gymraeg/Give your Welsh a go” was produced for display on office walls as part of a joint project with Wales’s other police forces to encourage learners and non-confident Welsh speakers to make more use of the language at work.

Since 2001, in order to acknowledge efforts made by officers and members of staff to improve their Welsh language skills, the Force has been presenting an annual ‘Welsh Learner of the Year’ award to an individual nominated by their colleagues for their notable efforts in learning and using the language. Another award, the ‘Welsh language Champion of the Year’ award, was added in 2003 to recognise the achievements of members of staff who take time to encourage and support their colleagues to learn and use the language.

As a result of all this work to raise the profile of the Welsh language, the Force received the support of the The Welsh Language Board to run a joint promoting bilingual workplaces project. The aim of the project was to develop more bilingual administration within the organisation and to create an appropriate climate for individuals to use the language not only with the public but also with colleagues. This led to an increase in employees’ confidence to make use of their skills and consequently to provide a better service to the public. In 2010 further support was provided by the Welsh Language Board for a project to produce resources to assist Welsh learners in developing their ability and confidence to use the language. More recently the Force’s Welsh Language Group has revisited the work of promoting bilingual workplaces in order to ensure that momentum is not lost.

CONCLUSIONS

Leadership, innovation and effort in the field of promoting, encouraging and increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace and the ability to offer language choice to the public has earned North Wales Police considerable plaudits over the past ten years or so.

The fact that the Chief Constables who have led the Force since 2001 have personally undertaken the task of learning and using the Welsh language with such enthusiasm - enthusiasm that has been apparent both in the workplace and in the public domain, has created a new type of leadership that shows respect towards the Welsh language and recognises its significance and importance in public life in Wales. This is true leadership by example and typical of the ‘can do’ attitude that is so deeply embedded in the mind-set of emergency services such as the Police. This leadership has influenced other chief officers, those aspiring to be senior officers as well as officers and staff in general.

It should not be forgotten that all this stemmed from the vision of some members of the Police Authority and their decision in 2000 to recommend that new chief officers appointed to North Wales Police should, with support, be
expected to learn at least some Welsh in order to show sensitivity and empathy towards the bilingual communities they serve. To underline this requirement, a clause was included within the contract of the Chief Constable appointed in 2009 stipulating that he must learn Welsh to a certain level within a specified timeframe.

This clearly illustrates the ability of power within a specific tier of management in the policing structure to fulfil its aim of identifying and responding to local needs and wishes.

The current Chief Constable has shown the same resolve as his predecessor to learn Welsh and to succeed in external examinations therefore meeting the requirement set in his contract, and he is still learning and practising his skills. Also, since his appointment and following the arrival of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the priorities in the Joint Welsh language Scheme have been revised and reinforced, setting new linguistic goals for management team members and other employees to achieve and comply with.

But leadership alone is not enough. The Chief Constables also saw the need to invest in additional specialist and experienced staffing resources to focus on the task of introducing and implementing new processes and procedures and to undertake specific projects to promote bilingualism and the Welsh language. The importance of paying constant attention to the production of bilingual information and literature as part of the effort to create a wholly bilingual corporate image was acknowledged, and staff are supported in this through the assistance and specialism of the internal translation unit.

It has been argued with some success that promoting the bilingualism agenda is aligned with the core policing competencies and that recognising Welsh language ability as a core policing skill has been fundamentally important in the effort to increase the Welsh language capacity of the organisation. Recognising this led to further attention being given to the force’s capacity to provide a bilingual service and the importance of ensuring that officers and staff are able to show basic linguistic courtesy.

Throughout this time the link between promoting bilingualism and the ability to maintain and improve professional policing standards was continually emphasised. There is a clear correlation between the ability to provide a bilingual service and the ability to meet the needs of service users and to communicate effectively with them – effective communication being one of the core policing competencies. Many challenges had to be overcome in order to move the agenda forward and it had to be emphasised time and time again that ‘this is Wales’ and ‘delivering language choice is a legal requirement – we have to do this.’

North Wales Police has not yet reached the point where the majority of employees are confident of their bilingual skills, but one could argue that this aim will not be achieved until the education system in Wales is able to produce prospective employees with the necessary ability. There is work still to be done then in increasing confidence and supporting staff in the use of Welsh in the workplace. For the most part however, efforts made over the past few years have succeeded in mainstreaming the Welsh language dimension into the policing values of North Wales Police.

The former Welsh Language Board, the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner, prominent individuals in the field of promoting the Welsh language as well as other agencies have acknowledged all the good work that has been, and continues to be undertaken in North Wales Police to promote bilingualism. In the coming years the new language standards to be announced under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011; the regulatory role of the Welsh Language Commissioner; language strategy and promotion work on behalf of the Welsh Government and the eagerness and willingness of Welsh speakers to take full advantage of the language choice available to them in their dealings with North Wales Police, will all have a crucial part to play in ensuring that continuous and increasing attention is given to the important work of promoting and progressing bilingualism.
Our strategic approach to the use of Welsh and English will be based on the following principles:

➢ Welsh and English have equal status
➢ Our eventual aim is bilingualism
➢ In order to support these principles we will adopt the following tactics:
  ➢ enhanced Welsh language scheme
  ➢ in-house tuition
  ➢ more ‘Welsh essential’ posts
  ➢ improved learning opportunities
  ➢ active encouragement for Welsh learners
  ➢ more business use of Welsh
  ➢ guaranteed linguistic choice in service delivery
Our strategic approach to the use of Welsh and English is based upon the following principles:

- the Welsh and English Languages have equal status
- we are aiming to become a bilingual organisation

In accordance with our responsibilities to our communities and our duties under the Welsh Language Act 1993 we will treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality.

Our Welsh Language Scheme explains how we are working towards ensuring the provision of language choice in service delivery and within our internal processes.

We work with relevant partners to ensure that genuine language choice is provided to those that come into contact with the Justice system.

Working towards achieving this will include the following tactics:

- The completion of objectives identified in our Welsh Language Scheme
- Promoting the Welsh language as a business language in the workplace
- Enhancing the bilingual capacity of the Force and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This includes supporting staff to develop and make full use of their Welsh language skills as well as ensuring that all new entrants have a basic knowledge of Welsh as a minimum skill on appointment
- Identifying language needs for posts within different areas of the Force
- Facilitating and promoting the use of Welsh when we are contacted by the public
- Linking the principles of quality of service to the provision of language choice to users
- Providing a truly bilingual information service
North Wales Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner aim to:

- Become bilingual organisations.
- Increase 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.
- Raise the awareness of current and new staff regarding the commitment to offer a bilingual policing service.
- Work towards attracting more applications from Welsh speakers and learners from Welsh communities to join the police as officers or police staff. Part of this includes nurturing more contact with Welsh speakers and with representatives of Welsh language groups in our communities.
- Continue a language skills strategy to ensure that all new staff including those within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner have the ability to demonstrate courtesy skills as a minimum before joining, in addition to concentrating on existing staff who have direct contact with the public. We will assist potential entrants to attain the necessary levels by the provision of ‘self learn’ resources and direct them to external support opportunities. Once appointed staff will be offered language training programmes during duty time to develop their language competence.
- Ensure that Human Resources internal proceedings and procedures fully acknowledge and consider ability in Welsh to be a skill, side by side with other necessary skills.
- Seek opportunities to promote and develop the use of Welsh in different proceedings and procedures with the Home Office, HMIC and other Welsh police forces.
- Make the most of every opportunity to define our commitment to the Welsh language as part of our effort to promote Equality and Diversity in Wales.
WELSH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

1. Framework

1.1. Elements

- To show linguistic sensitivity and awareness
- To show a willingness to learn Welsh and to use it in the workplace
- To understand Welsh
- To facilitate language choice on the part of the customer
- To speak Welsh
- To write in Welsh (where appropriate)
- An ability and willingness to use Welsh at work with the public

1.2. The levels will give an indication of current competence ranging from level 0 (no appreciable Welsh language skills) to level 5 ‘proficient’. (competent, confident and willing to use Welsh with the public in the course of duties).

2. Competency Framework illustration:

The levels are defined by a series of ‘Can-do’ statements which:

- Define levels of ability in terms of what language users can typically do at each level of the framework
- Make it easier of users to understand what each level means in relation to what language users actually do.
### Some Ways of Using Welsh in the Force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In an Office</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can interview Welsh speaking applicants for posts and assess their suitability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can say place names/Welsh first names or Welsh signs correctly. Can recognise departments/locations/ranks in Welsh. Can greet and introduce others in Welsh.</td>
<td>Can understand the essence of a conversation in Welsh. Can convey basic information e.g. simple admin. or routine tasks.</td>
<td>Can understand much in the office or in meetings. Can take and pass on messages likely to require attention during a normal working day.</td>
<td>Can contribute effectively in meetings within own area of work and argue for or against a case.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police Officer Duties</strong></td>
<td>Can show linguistic courtesy by opening and closing a conversation. Can give, and receive personal details. Can say place names/first names or Welsh signs correctly.</td>
<td>Can understand requests for assistance and responds in Welsh to simple requests. Can give and receive instructions and directions.</td>
<td>Can converse partly in Welsh but turns to English in discussion and to give detailed information. Can describe people and locations.</td>
<td>Can deal with the public in most situations in Welsh but turns to English when using policing/technical terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police Station Counter/Reception/On the phone</strong></td>
<td>Can provide bilingual greeting appropriate to location. Can greet visitors and enable language choice.</td>
<td>Can understand requests for assistance and responds in Welsh to simple requests. Can use Welsh to transfer calls.</td>
<td>Can respond to general enquiries over the phone and face to face. Can take details or make a note from Welsh conversation.</td>
<td>Can deal with enquiries effectively. Can understand dialect differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Meetings/Talking to the Media</strong></td>
<td>Can open and close meetings and welcome participants bilingually.</td>
<td>Can introduce oneself and others by name, rank, role, and location/organisation. Can contribute in a meeting partly in Welsh.</td>
<td>Can converse or present in part in Welsh but turns to English when discussing detail of core business, answering questions or using complex information.</td>
<td>Can chair a meeting and respond to questions in Welsh. Can describe a situation or event in Welsh, but turns to English for technical or policing terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Can write a simple routine request to a colleague, such as ‘Can I have…. please?’</td>
<td>Can write a short note of request to a colleague or known external contact.</td>
<td>Can write informal internal memos, e-mail messages and deal with routine requests.</td>
<td>With editorial help, can write business letters, e-mails and posters for external customers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>