



Y Coleg

Merthyr Tudful

The College

Merthyr Tydfil

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Welsh Language Report 2020/2021

Submitted to Board of Directors

Monday 7th June 2021



The College Merthyr Tydfil

Annual report on Welsh Language activity and bilingual developments in 2020-2021

The board is asked to note the progress and the development against the college's Welsh language priorities for 2020-2021

Priority 1 - To enhance and promote opportunities for learners to develop their Welsh language Skills and to provide opportunities for Welsh speaking learners to maintain their Welsh language.

The college successfully applied for, and received, grant funding of £25,000 from Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to appoint a full-time Bilingual Support Assistant to work within the Public Services division. The Bilingual Support Assistant has been able to support course tutors in raising awareness of Welsh language skills in the Public Services sector and support in academic writing both bilingually and through the medium of Welsh. This has included translating and working with learners to develop a greater understanding of the key Welsh terminology in the Public Services sector, supporting them to complete modules and assignments through the medium of Welsh and also supporting them to learn and understand how the Welsh language is used and required across key organisations within the Public Services sector. The Bilingual Support Assistant has also worked with staff within the division to support them to complete the Work Welsh scheme and Workplace Welsh courses online as part of their CPD. This has helped to develop a truly bilingual environment across the division. During the lockdown, all of the Welsh medium support and lessons continued to be delivered on-line and engagement from learners was excellent.

The learners studying Public Services have adapted naturally to having a Bilingual Support Assistant in the department and learning bilingually. The impact has been very beneficial. They now recognise and understand the importance of being able to speak and understand Welsh within the Public Sector and also how these skills will be advantageous to support their future career and employment opportunities. All data in relation to this provision has been imported on to the LLWR to demonstrate Welsh language activity at the college.

The interest from Welsh speaking learners for the course has grown over the last year, with the popularity of the course also increasing in light of the current pandemic and the positive way in which the role of Public Services has been highlighted. In light of this, the college has now applied for a further £25,000 from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to continue the Bilingual Support Assistant role for another academic year.

Following on from the success of the Public Services initiative, the college successfully applied, and has been awarded a further £25,000 from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to appoint a Bilingual Support Assistant in the Health and Social Care division. This post is currently out to advert with a closing date of Friday 21st May 2021.

An application for a further £25,000 to appoint a Bilingual Support Assistant in the Childcare area was also subsequently submitted to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol on 18th May and we are awaiting feedback on this application.

These areas were chosen as they are one of the three Welsh Government priority areas for Welsh language development and are also areas where the college has seen increased applications and demand over the last two years.

A further £10,000 has been applied for to develop the Welsh language A level department to begin to implement A level Welsh first language. This application has been based on demand from learners who progress to college from the local Welsh medium school.

As and when further funding becomes available, the college's long term vision is to appoint a Bilingual Support Assistant for every college area. This in turn will support the Merthyr Tydfil local authority long term Welsh Education Strategic Plan and 10 year vision.

In September 2020, the college introduced a single module WJEC Iaith ar Waith (Welsh at Work) course into the curriculum across a range of vocational areas. This was delivered on a weekly basis firstly in the classroom and then on-line due to the COVID restrictions implemented.

Many students found this change challenging due to many factors including technical issues and loss motivation and hence their attendance was sporadic. However, having returned to the classroom, many have regained their momentum and are now continuing

To date, a total number of 76 students have studied the WJEC Iaith ar Waith (Welsh at Work) course including 8 at a higher level.

In addition to the WJEC Iaith ar Waith (Welsh at Work) course, all students were required to register for on-line Cymraeg Gwaith (Work Welsh) courses provided by The National Centre for Learning Welsh. A total of 10 hours self-study is required which entails 2 courses and to date 38 students have provided evidence of completion.

At present, a small number of learners have successfully completed the Welsh Baccalaureate skills challenge certificate through the medium of Welsh.

Moving forwards, the college is currently working alongside other FE colleges in order to identify and develop an alternative provision to Iaith ar Waith that will provide a more appropriate and relevant pathway for learners across all vocational areas.

Priority 2 - Provide opportunities for all staff to develop their Welsh skills and to increase the numbers of staff at the college able and qualified to assist with teaching, learning and assessment through the medium of Welsh.

The college has worked with Colegau Cymru to deliver The Work Welsh Further Education scheme for staff and is delighted that this scheme has now been extended for a further year.

Over the last year, engagement from staff has decreased slightly as some staff found it difficult to engage with the scheme on-line. Out of an initial 22 staff joining the scheme, 18 have now successfully completed.

The perseverance and engagement of all those who completed bodes well for the next academic year and provides a solid platform from which to grow and enhance staff engagement in the Welsh language.

Priority 3 - To provide a sustainable infrastructure for the development of the Welsh language standards.

Good progress has been made in relation to compliance with the Welsh language standards. To date there has been no complaints made to the college. A follow up meeting with the Commissioner`s office also took place in the Spring term with positive feedback provided as a whole. Unfortunately, it has been brought to the college`s attention (and many other colleges and universities using this software) that the Recite Me software on the website is not acceptable as a platform for translation of the pages on the Website. Work is therefore now being undertaken to ensure that the Website is fully translated and bilingual.

The bilingual champion continues to regularly attend a range of external network meetings, including the Colleges Wales Bilingual Champions network, the Welsh Standards in Education Sub Group and the local authority Welsh Education Steering Group. These have been, and continue to be, an excellent means of identifying and sharing resources and best practice across the further education colleges in Wales.

Covid 19 – Communication with partnerships and scheduled online meetings are taking place to remain connected, share information and to continue consistency of approach.