

Evaluation report of the HCPC's Welsh Language Scheme

1. Background

- 1.1 The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) originally published our Welsh Language Scheme (the Scheme) in September 2011. The Scheme was revised in 2012-13 to reflect our new name and role as the regulator of social workers in England. The Welsh Language Commissioner (the Commissioner) approved our amended Scheme in February 2013.
- 1.2 Since our Scheme's original publication, we have compiled four annual implementation reports for the attention of the Commissioner. The content of this evaluation report is mainly based on these.
- 1.3 We have adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business and administration of justice in Wales, we will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality. The Scheme sets out how we give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales.
- 1.4 We understand that the forthcoming Welsh language standards will ultimately replace our Scheme. However, we have continued to implement our Scheme as we believe this will help us to meet the new standards.
- 1.5 One commitment in our Scheme requires us to produce an evaluation report focusing on our performance in implementing the Scheme since its inception. This report provides an overview and thematic analysis of our compliance and performance over the last four years through focusing on the service delivery and scheme management aspects only. We have also identified key priorities for the next couple of years as we await the implementation of the new standards.

2. Service delivery

- 2.1 We have completed a number of tasks to illustrate our compliance with the commitments under our Scheme which pertain to service delivery. These include:
- revising the Scheme in 2012-13 to reflect our new name and responsibilities in regulating social workers in England;
 - ensuring that the revised Scheme received appropriate approval by the Commissioner;
 - highlighting our Welsh language service standards for customer service and increasing their visibility;
 - developing Welsh language Registration Department service standards;
 - continuing to raise awareness amongst employees of our commitments under the Scheme, as appropriate;

- ensuring that relevant information on our Scheme is reported in our Annual Report; and
- amending the 'Equality and Impact Assessment' form for all major projects to include specific reference to Welsh speakers and the relevant commitments under the Scheme.

3. Scheme management

3.1 Proper implementation and monitoring procedures remain key prerequisites for the Scheme's effective management. We are committed to reporting annually to both the Council and the Commissioner on our progress in implementing the Scheme.

3.2 We have completed a number of tasks to illustrate our compliance with the Scheme's management. These include:

- raising awareness amongst our employees on the Scheme and its commitments;
- monitoring and responding to any feedback received about the Scheme;
- reassigning the responsibilities for monitoring the day-to-day implementation of the Scheme to one of the policy officers in the Policy and Standards Department; and
- carrying out regular internal reviews to identify any outstanding commitments under our Scheme.

3.3 In relation to the last point, some of the outstanding actions which we have implemented as a result of these regular reviews include:

- working to ensure that the following phrase will now be included at the foot of all emails: 'Correspondence is welcome in English or Welsh / Gallwch ohebu yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg'.
- strengthening the compliance requirements for third party contractors to adhere to our Scheme's commitments, where appropriate.

4. Conclusions

4.1 As referred to above, we will not be amending the Scheme due to the development and implementation of the forthcoming Welsh language standards. However, we have highlighted some key priorities together with a revised implementation timetable below for any outstanding actions under the Scheme.

4.2 We believe that we have made significant progress in meeting many of our existing commitments under the Scheme but there is further work to be done to fully embed these into all aspects of the HCPC's operations and processes.

Appendix 1: Implementation plan of key priorities under the HCPC's Welsh Language Scheme 2015-17

		Timeline	Lead Department
1	Monitor and ensure that organisational policies reflect our commitments under the Scheme	Q4 2015 onward	All
2	Strengthen the induction requirements for new employees on the Scheme. For example, including appropriate reference to it in the 'HCPC Employee Handbook'.	Q1 – Q2 2016	Human Resources
3	Ensure that all new public facing publications, campaigns and related material which are directed at service users and members of the public in Wales are provided bilingually in the first instance	Q4 2015 onward	Communications
4	Monitor demand for Welsh content on the HCPC's website and update content as appropriate	Q1 2016 onward	Communications
5	Provide annual updates to the Council evaluating our performance in delivering the Scheme's commitments and forward this report to the Welsh Language Commissioner for consideration	Q4 2015 onward	Policy and Standards
6	Ensure the Council maintains oversight of the Scheme and our commitments. For example, include appropriate reference to the Scheme in operational reports or work plans presented to Council.	Q1 2016 onward	All
7	Monitor demand for increasing the visibility of our Welsh language service standards on the HCPC's website	Q2 2016 onward	Policy and Standards and Communications
8	Amend the email footer for all employees to ensure that it is clear to stakeholders that we welcome correspondence in English and Welsh	Q4 2015 onward	Communications and IT
9	Promote vocational training in Welsh for all employees to encourage uptake	Q3 2016 onward	Human Resources

10	Identify any posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential or desirable and identify the level of proficiency required for any new posts resultant from implementation of the forthcoming Welsh language standards	Q4 2016 onward	Human Resources
11	Raise awareness and provide training, where appropriate, to employees on our Scheme and existing commitments	Q4 2015 onward	Policy and Standards and Human Resources, where appropriate