4. Volunteers

4.5 Attracting Welsh speaking volunteers

This information sheet addresses the practicalities of attracting welsh speakers. See also Information sheet 4.27 Promoting the Welsh Language through volunteering, which focusses on how the use of volunteering by volunteers can help your organisation to become more bilingual in its services and its ethos.

The Welsh Government Welsh language Strategy [Cymraeg 2050](): https://gov.wales/topics/welshlanguage/welsh-language-strategy-and-policies/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy/?lang=en anticipates an increase in the number of Welsh speakers in Wales, with a target of 1 million by the year 2050.

By attracting more welsh speaking volunteers, organisations can play their part in this national strategy, by increasing the use of Welsh in informal, social contexts and by increasing the delivery of bilingual services.

Proper support for volunteering through the Welsh language will enable Welsh speakers to use their preferred language, as well as enabling others to learn and develop their language skills.

Attracting Welsh speaking volunteers involves a) creating attractive opportunities and b) communicating these effectively, to the right people.

a) Creating opportunities for Welsh speakers

- You may develop opportunities which require Welsh language skills.
  In this case make it clear what level of proficiency is required and whether in oral and/or written communication. For example, do you want someone to develop a relationship with clients through the medium of Welsh, or to be able to handle written information in Welsh?   Volunteers', skills, confidence and desire to use their Welsh language skills will vary greatly.

  Remember:
  - Translation is a specialist skill and formal translation work is best undertaken by those who are qualified and paid to do this.
  - Dealing with the Welsh speaking media on behalf of an organisation is a great responsibility. Welsh speakers should receive the necessary training and support and a full briefing before this is required of them. Welsh speakers may be happy, however to 'tell their story' without prior experience or training.

- You may develop opportunities for those who can speak Welsh to use their language with members of the public, clients or with staff and other volunteers, even if it is not essential to the role. This will involve creating a conducive environment which encourages Welsh to be spoken, for example having Welsh materials to hand and on display and identifying Welsh speakers (using the Cymraeg badge) so that members of the public can approach them in Welsh. It means building a culture where the use of Welsh and English is the norm, in both informal and more formal communications. In this way you can provide the opportunity for Welsh learners to improve their skills. Roles where more casual Welsh could be used may be a great chance for learners to 'give it a go' and become more confident. Volunteers at events could be encouraged to use as much Welsh as they are able. 'Dysgwr' lanyards (available to order, free of charge, via the Welsh Language Commissioner's website with the [Iaith Gwaith branding](#)) could be used.

b) Reaching Welsh speakers

Volunteering is a part of life in Welsh communities where traditionally people have helped each other out and been involved in their communities. Often this takes place without it being recognised as 'volunteering'! 'Volunteering' is often seen as something to do with the establishment and formal organisations.

Organisations may need to take a different and sensitive approach to recruiting Welsh speaking volunteers.

- Ensure that Welsh speaking volunteers feel welcome in your organisation. This could be made explicit in your equal opportunities or diversity policy.
- A bilingual image for the organisation will reflect its commitment to treating the Welsh and English languages as equal.
- Providing bilingual information, using informal, friendly language will reflect the organisation's commitment to providing language choice both internally and externally.
- Use the 'iaith gwaith working welsh' logo in all promotional materials.
- Make your initial approach through the medium of Welsh, for example through Welsh speaking networks and groups, newsletters or social media. Some possible channels are outlined in section C.

c) Communicating opportunities for volunteering through the medium of Welsh

Make personal contact

Find out about Welsh speaking organisations in your area (your local Menter Iaith/ Language Initiative can provide contacts) and work with them to reach the Welsh speaking community, arrange meetings, exhibitions and appeal for volunteers.

For example, you could approach:
- Young Farmers' Associations
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Welsh medium youth organisation – local groups all over Wales)
- Chapels and Churches
- Local schools (including Parent/ Teachers Associations)
- Welsh Learning Providers https://dysgucymraeg.cymru/amdanom-ni/darparwyr-cyrsiau/
- Merched y Wawr (Welsh women's organisation)
- Gwawr (Welsh women's organisation)
- Mentrau Iaith (Language initiatives)
- Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (Welsh medium nursery school organisation – local groups all over Wales)
- County voluntary councils
- Local volunteer centres
- Welsh medium choirs and societies.
- Local Eisteddfodau and sub-committees of National Eisteddfodau and national music festivals (such as the Gŵyl Gerdd Dant) visiting the area. The sub-committees are made up of local people.

Use the Welsh speaking media:

For example
- Radio Cymru (national radio station which also offers regional programming at various intervals during the day)
- Welsh slot on local radio station
- Welsh slot in local newspapers
- Local Welsh monthly newspapers (Papurau Bro). The website of Y Lolfa publicises a list of these
- Golwg (National Welsh magazine)
- Y Cymro (National Welsh newspaper)
- Yr Herald Cymraeg (now a supplement in the Daily Post)
- S4C programmes such as Prynhawn Da, Heno a Stwnsh.
- Golwg360
- Lleol.net

- Different Welsh pages on Facebook and Twitter, such as Radio Beca, Be sy 'mlaen (What's on), Yr awr gymraeg - Welsh language twitter hour on a Wednesday evening (#yagym)

The Volunteering Wales Website: www. volunteering-wales.net

This bi-lingual website supports volunteer recruitment and placement. Organisations post volunteering opportunities for people to access volunteering through their phone, computer or tablet. Volunteers can sign up in English or Welsh. They can search in either language, although bear in mind that only opportunities, which are posted bilingually, will be searchable in both languages. Volunteers can use the system to record their volunteering hours and digital awards are achieved to mark certain milestones (50, 100, 200, 500 and 1000 hours).

Opportunities which offer the opportunity to speak welsh should be tagged 'Cymraeg' to enable them to be found in search results. It is helpful to also add more information in the narrative description, such as "This position offers you the opportunity to use the Welsh language on a regular/occasional basis".

Other things to consider or use

- Include at least one bilingual page on your website, for example the front page.
- A model role description is available in Welsh and in English which can be used as a template.
- Take advantage of national events such as Volunteers Week (1-7 June), National Eisteddfod of Wales (first week in August), the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (mid July), the Urdd National Eisteddfod (the week of the late Spring Bank Holiday), International Volunteer's Day (5 December) and arrange visual activities that will grab attention.
- Use public places within the community to advertise volunteering opportunities e.g. library, schools, doctor's surgeries, newsagents and volunteer centres.
- Utilise social media effectively posting/tweeting both in Welsh and in English.
- Consider posting video clips online of current volunteer's experience to promote volunteering through the medium of Welsh.

Recruitment

- Recruitment and selection of Welsh or English-speaking volunteers should adhere to equal opportunities practice.
- Try to ensure that volunteers have access to a Welsh speaking support worker if they wish.
- Volunteering is a matter of choice and volunteers should have the time and opportunity to consider whether to undertake the tasks offered them. They should feel no obligation to undertake tasks which they feel are inappropriate.
- Organisations should aim to provide induction and training courses through the medium of Welsh and English if there is a need.

- Welsh speaking volunteers may need training to enable them to carry out their activities through the medium of Welsh, for example, to acquire specialist vocabulary or written skills.

Further information

For more information or further advice on good practice, recruiting and supporting volunteers contact your local volunteer centre or your county voluntary council.

The Investing in Volunteers standard requires that the organisation is open to involving volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, and commits the necessary resources (Indicator 3.1)

See Information sheet 2.10 Welsh Language – the Legal Context
4.27 Promoting the Welsh Language through volunteering

Mentrau Iaith
http://www.mentrau-iaith.com/

Welsh Language Commissioner
www.comisiynyddygymraeg.cymru
See recent research compiled by the Welsh Language Commissioner - 'The Welsh language and volunteering 2014

Disclaimer
The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

For further information contact

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