Internal Use of Welsh in the Workplace

Final Report

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y ganolfan cynllunio iaith
welsh centre for language planning

Aberarad Business Park
Newcastle Emlyn
Carmarthenshire
SA38 9DB

Telephone: 01239 711668
post@iaith.eu
www.iaith.eu

Authors:

Kathryn Jones and Steve Eaves
with Gareth Ioan

The company and the authors affirm their usual right to be identified when quotations
are made from this report.

Commissioned by
the Welsh Language Board
Market Chambers, 5-7 St Mary's Street, Cardiff, CF 10 1AT
Telephone: 02920 878000
www.byig-wlb.org.uk

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Research aim and objectives

1.1.1 The research's aim was:

- To contribute to improving the Welsh Language Board's understanding of the significance of the findings of the various projects it has funded for the promotion of the internal use of Welsh in the workplace and the practices established in addition by other employers in relation to the use of Welsh, and

- to consolidate the conceptual and research base as a foundation and focus for further action by the Board in this field.

1.1.2 The main objectives of the study were:

- To evaluate the information and findings arising from projects funded by the Board to promote bilingual workplaces. These projects, implemented by Ceredigion Council, North Wales Police, the Countryside Council for Wales, and Her Majesty's Courts Service, formed the basis for the Board's advice document, *Promoting and Facilitating Bilingual Workplaces*, published in January 2009.
- To gather and evaluate evidence on the projects sponsored by the Board and carried out in 2009-2010 by the Isle of Anglesey County Council; Bangor University; North Wales Fire and Rescue Service; Coleg Llandrillo; Hywel Dda Local Health Board; the North Wales Probation Service; Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council; the Big Lottery Fund; Dyfed Powys Police Authority. These were projects to increase the use of Welsh by concentrating on one or more specific aspects of internal operation.
- To utilize and evaluate evidence from other organisations, specifically: Gwynedd Council, the National Library of Wales, Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd and the Care Council for Wales. These are organisations that have developed their own methods of increasing the use of Welsh as an internal language in the workplace.
- To identify priority themes and areas for building on the work already carried out and further consolidating and extending the internal use of the Welsh language in the workplace as a basis for the Board's work in the future.

1.2 Approach

1.2.1 Desktop research was undertaken to gather:

- Relevant research material to lay an intellectual foundation for the work;

- Background and policy documentation (e.g. Report of the Project for Promoting Bilingual Workplaces (2007) and the Welsh Language Board's advice document: Promoting and Facilitating Bilingual Workplaces);
- Written sources of information on schemes and projects for promoting the internal use of Welsh in all the organisations in the sample including, for instance: relevant policy statements, guidance and support documentation, tools for setting up and operating projects, evaluation reports and end of project reports.

1.2.2   The written documentation was gathered from the 17 organisations listed above to create an electronic database for retention by the Welsh Language Board.

1.2.3   A semi-structured interview framework was created for conducting detailed interviews with representatives of 16 organisations[1] In the case of one organisation, the interview was conducted by phone. Fifteen other organisations were visited, conducting, in the main, two interviews with different combinations of staff. Each interview lasted 1-2 hours and was recorded for internal use to facilitate the process of recording and analysing the evidence that had been gathered. The range of officers interviewed included:

- directors/ chief executives/ principal officers (4)
- policy and strategy managers/ planning and performance managers (4)
- language advisors/consultants/heads of Welsh-language services/ Welsh language development and promotion officers/ equality and language officers/ language officers (12)
- head of administration and business (1)
- operational and administrative support officers and senior operational and administrative support officers (3)
- project officers (3)
- staff development and training managers and officers (8)
- human resources managers (6)
- IT manager (1)
- corporate communications managers and officers (2)
- translation managers and heads of translation (3)
- language champions (6)
- participants in projects sponsored by the Welsh Language Board (5)

1.2.4   The officers interviewed included staff who were fluent or less fluent in Welsh; staff who had learnt Welsh or had attempted to learn some Welsh; staff employed with the organisation since before the introduction of the first Welsh Language Schemes and staff who had been employed more recently.

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[1] Staffing issues arose that made it impossible for one organisation to adhere to the interview arrangements. However, it provided documentary evidence.

1.3. Consideration

1.3.1. As regards the nature of the sample of organisations studied for the purposes of this study, we emphasise that this is not a representative sample of Welsh public bodies in general. The organisations we studied were already convinced, to varying degrees, of the benefits of increasing their internal use of Welsh; they had already taken steps in this direction and that is why they were included in the sample.

1.3.2. We note that there is no statutory requirement for public bodies to increase their internal use of Welsh beyond what is required by the Welsh Language Act 1993. That is, beyond what is required so that they can provide services to the public in Wales in both English and Welsh in a manner that treats the two languages "on the basis of equality".

1.3.3. As the organisations in this study took steps to increase their internal use of Welsh still further, they have taken voluntary action beyond the statutory requirements. We know from experience, and from the monitoring information in the possession of the Board, that the organisations discussed here are at present only a small minority. . So the reader, in considering our findings and conclusions, should keep in mind the precisely what was the nature of the sample studied and the purpose of study.

1.4   Intellectual framework

1.4.1   While there is no room in this report to expand on the theoretical bases underlying our study, we note here some of the main concepts that govern the analysis. In this study, we assert that the Welsh language is not a discrete and independent entity but a means of communication. We acknowledge the tension and conflict that characterise efforts to establish a normative pattern of language use in all social contexts, including the workplace. Use of the Welsh language by Welsh speakers in the fields of law and public administration was statutorily prohibited by the 'Act of Union' of 1536. Since that time, it is English that has been the normative and main language of communication utilised in relation to the procedures and working practices that evolved within public bodies and professional workplaces in Wales. As a result, the fairly recent efforts to establish the Welsh language as a valid medium of communication in the professional workplaces of public bodies challenges practices established and accepted as the norm over a period of five centuries and more.

1.4.2   The theory of the 'French discourse analysis' tradition offers a means of understanding how patterns of language use are established in working practices, which are in their turn created by ideologies and values and power relationships within organisations. Social practice is not totally fixed, even though

it can appear to be established tradition. Social practice is regularly evolving. In the workplace (as in every aspect of social life), every meeting and action will either confirm one way of doing things, or adapt and change working methods somewhat, establishing new practices. Sometimes the evolution is difficult to define. In another instance, the acquisition of a new telephone system or new computer software, a change of staff, or the reorganisation of a department will establish new methods of working that in their turn, over a period of time, become established practice – the normative practice.

1.4.3 Although in one way, an organisation appears to be an isolated and self-governing entity, which is able to create its own structures and working practices, practices in a workplace are also influenced by the other organisations encountered in the course of its work. In every workplace, procedures and values are influenced by other organisations within the same sector and beyond, and by the norms of the wider society and the legislative framework that influences every aspect of society and every workplace. Thus, when considering a change in an organisation's current language practices, one must view the organisation and the change concerned as one element in the organisational and social web encompassing every aspect of social life.

1.4.4 Thus, every workplace has its ethos and its values, its systems and its practices, which are modern evolutions of practices in operation since the organisation was first set up (e.g. Bangor University 1884, the National Health Service 1947). Among the organisations considered in this study, only one, Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd, was established from the outset (in 1974) as an organisation operating mainly through the medium of Welsh or bilingually in response to the communication requirements of the public and some members of staff. Otherwise, the other organisations are at different stages in the process of revising former procedures and working practices (in the case of the National Library and: Gwynedd Council) or still treat the English language as the main normative medium for work.

1.5   Defining 'internal use of Welsh in the workplace'

1.5.1 In this study, what we mean by 'internal use of Welsh in the workplace' is the whole range of working practices carried out by means of spoken and written language. From the viewpoint of the employee, we could note the following three aspects:

- the execution of their own duties,
- receiving services and information from the organisation, and
- socializing informally with other people within the organisation. [2]

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[2] For further discussion, see *Final Report of the Project for Promoting Bilingual Workplaces* (2007), a report by Cwmni Iaith, commissioned by the Welsh Language Board, Cardiff (p .9 – 10 and Appendix 1).

1.5.2. For some employees, the execution of their own duties will include contact with the public, or providing support for such contact (e.g. by translating publications). Since 1993, the statutory requirements of the Welsh Language Act have led to an emphasis on planning to strengthen the organisation's ability to offer the public a full service in Welsh as well as English. As statutory Language Schemes are revised for the fourth or fifth time, there has been an increasing emphasis on extending the internal use of Welsh beyond just what is required for providing services to the public. The Welsh Language Board has sponsored a number of projects to this end.[3]

1.5.3. The organisations studied in this research vary greatly in how far they go beyond concentrating on their contact with the public, and the effectiveness and efficiency of their provision of bilingual services, to seeking to normalise bilingualism within their procedures and internal culture. The 'bilingualism' of these workplaces also encompasses a wide range of degrees of use of Welsh and English, and a wide range of abilities in the skills of speaking, understanding, reading and writing Welsh.

1.5.4 Within the compass of this study, we shall concentrate on developments to extend opportunities for the use of Welsh beyond the domains where it is used to serve the public, acknowledging that there is a good deal of overlap between the use of Welsh to provide a service, and its use in the administration and the support situations that sustain that provision. Thus, this report deals with the use of Welsh in every aspect of working practices, while tending to concentrate on aspects over and above the tasks involved in the organisations' services to the public.

1.6   Five aspects of planning the internal use of Welsh in the workplace

1.6.1 From the evidence gathered, we can summarise the key conditions for enabling the use of Welsh in the workplace under five aspects:

- Allowing, legitimising and setting out clear expectations for the use of Welsh
- Planning the ability to use Welsh
- The dynamic of the interaction between individuals and among groups
- Planning to increase and maintain opportunities for use
- Language use practices

1.6.2 These aspects are inter-related and every one of the five has a number of further facets that encompass a social, organisational and individual dimension The main message of this report is the presentation of our findings, from the evidence we have gathered, about the responses of the officers of organisations to

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[3] Further details of these projects can be found in the Welsh Language Board's auxiliary report, which expands on the context of the 'Internal use of Welsh in the Workplace' Research Project.

different interventions to increase the use of Welsh in their workplaces. In the remainder of the report, we present our analysis of the evidence gathered under 5 main aspects.

2.0 Allowing, legitimising and setting out clear expectations for the internal use of Welsh

2.1 The socio-political context

2.1.1 It seemed that the backcloth to the values and practices of every one of the organisations in this study was the contemporary socio-political context. Among the main relevant aspects are:

- The value placed on diversity, multilingualism, and equality in international declarations and conventions (e.g. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities 1992);
- Legitimising intervention in favour of minority languages at a European level (e.g. the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1992);
- Legitimising some use of Welsh in the provision of services to the public in the area of law and public services by the Welsh Courts Act 1942, the Welsh Language Acts 1967 and 1993 and the Government of Wales Acts 1998 and 2006.
- Fifteen years' experience in planning for the use of Welsh in the workplace as Language Schemes were implemented following the Welsh Language Act of 1993.
- The influence of the Welsh Language Board's marketing campaigns and projects promoting the value and advantages of bilingualism
- A policy framework for planning for the safeguarding, acquisition, use and promotion of the Welsh language (*Iaith Pawb, A Welsh-medium Education Strategy,* A Welsh Federal College)
- The additional prestige conferred on the Welsh language as the process of devolution became established in Wales and as Welsh Assembly Government policy statements included planning to safeguard and promote Welsh and a commitment to mainstream consideration of the Welsh language in every aspect of the Government's policy, including placing Welsh on the equality agenda;
- The current debate about the scope and powers of the *Proposed Welsh Language (Wales) Measure* highlights the competing ideologies and viewpoints about Welsh that still exist in Welsh society.
- High expectations on the part of the public and of employees about the opportunities and permission to use Welsh in the workplace, and the fairly recent move towards treating employees as 'the public in our workplaces' and offering a choice of language internally;
- The economic context and, specifically at the period of writing this report, the expected cuts in the public sector budget.

2.2 The value the organisation places on the Welsh language

2.2.1 From the evidence gathered, we noted that the use made of Welsh in the workplaces of the organisations studied depended upon the degree to which the organisation valued the Welsh language and, more than that, created a permissive corporate atmosphere that allowed the use of Welsh as a work medium and set out clearly for its employees expectations that the organisation embrace good bilingual practice.

2.2.2 The evidence gathered shows that the degrees of corporate permission in their turn reflect the degrees to which values favourable to the Welsh language were successfully integrated into the ethos and values of the sector or area. Some organisations clearly stated their identification with the values and objectives of the Assembly Government's policies and that their efforts to promote more use of Welsh in the workplace were a means to contribute to the implementation of the Assembly Government's policy of promoting 'a bilingual Wales', or to be part of the wider 'project' to establish a devolved Wales.

2.2.3 In those organisations operating on both sides of the English/Welsh border, tensions were observed when the organisation did not identify the same extent with the ethos and values of the Assembly Government, or with efforts to promote the Welsh identity of the devolved or 'regional' parts of the organisation in Wales, and thus did not acknowledge the value of the Welsh language. HM Courts Service, for instance, reported that it was easier to obtain permission to recognise the value of the Welsh language after the restructuring of the court system so that Wales was now a separate entity from the old 'Wales and Cheshire' court circuit. Other agencies in the administration of justice sector testified to an occasional lack of understanding among officers at their headquarters in England – for example the Home Office – inhibiting and sometimes being at loggerheads with efforts to foster the Welsh and Welsh-speaking identity of those organisations.

2.2.4 It was clear that robust policy guidance, setting out clear expectations for employees, is absolutely crucial for creating a permissive corporate atmosphere. In all the organisations we studied, the *Welsh Language Scheme* was the main policy document that set out specific aims and objectives as regards maintaining and/or increasing the use of Welsh. In the case of the three organisations operating mainly through the medium of Welsh, the Language Scheme offered a means of formalising and safeguarding the intention of supporting Welsh as the organisation's main medium of communication and operation. In the other organisations, the Language Scheme was the starting point for implementing the establishment and change of language practices in the workplace.

2.2.5 Policy guidance was at its strongest in those organisations that had integrated the Language Scheme into their framework of policies and had mainstreamed

considerations about Welsh into every aspect of workplace planning and management. It was also noted that policy guidance tended to be more effective where there was a structured corporate culture and the management style, with clear guidance on the one hand and specific structures to ensure ownership and implementation on the other.

2.2.6 In some organisations, agreeing a Welsh Language Scheme with the Board had been the main, or only, motivation for changing language practices in the workplace. In these cases it appeared that these changes had been limited to responding to the requirements of the Language Scheme and to the Language Board's priorities as it monitored their implementation As an organisation revises its Language Scheme for the second, third, fourth or fifth time, a clear evolution can be seen in the objectives and the practical steps taken to promote the use of Welsh beyond the interface with the 'Welsh-speaking public'.

2.2.7 It is also typical that the corporate permission is limited, on the whole, by the organisation's interpretation of the statutory requirements, i.e. it is limited to the good practice of offering the public a service in English or Welsh as far as it is practicable to do so. A number of officers reported that their efforts to promote further use of Welsh had therefore had to be justified in terms of improving the quality of the service to the public. A number of those interviewed testified to the frustration experienced because there is no statutory right for the public to receive services in Welsh nor for employees to use Welsh in the workplace and receive internal services in Welsh.

2.2.8 On the other hand, when a Language Scheme contains robust guidance for increasing – or, in some cases, maintaining – the internal use of Welsh, the evidence gathered shows that this has been a means of facilitating projects, practices and arrangements to that end. In every public body, it is the Welsh Language Scheme that is the main authority on the use of Welsh, both at a corporate level and within individual services. Thus the incorporation of such measures for increasing or maintaining the use of Welsh has been a means to confer prestige and status on projects like those considered in this study. The status of Language Schemes as statutory documents has great influence.

2.2.9. Further, it is also interesting to note that when measures are included in a Language Scheme to commit the organisation to the use of Welsh on a wider scale than is required by the 1993 Act, this is a means of setting such measures on a par with all the 'usual' measures found in the organisation's 'statutory' Scheme. That is, although such measures go beyond what is statutorily required, they have been included in a scheme that has 'statutory' status and has been approved under the 1993 Act.

2.3   Staff embracing and/or accepting the organisation's vision and values.

2.3.1   All the organisations accepted the need to ensure that staff share a corporate ethos and values in favour of the Welsh language and the fact that efforts to introduce changes to language practices in the workplace are completely dependent on this. We noted a great difference between the situation in those organisations where Welsh is the default language and the rest. In the other organisations, people said they faced quite a challenge in changing corporate expectations to favour the Welsh language, or bilingualism, as the default medium for the organisation's procedures and activities.

2.3.2   Without exception, representatives of the organisations interviewed agreed that it was leadership from the top – having a principal officer or officers enthusiastically and proactively in favour of the use of Welsh in the workplace – that was the most crucial factor, whether the leader(s) was/were actually able to speak Welsh or not.

2.3.3   The challenge of ensuring that staff shared or accepted the organisation's values varied. It was easier in those organisations that:

* were smaller
* served areas where Welsh was the natural language of the local community;
* were situated in areas where sufficient Welsh-language skills existed in the local population for the organisations to be able to appoint Welsh speakers;
* attracted, by the nature of the work, employees who embraced values supportive of the Welsh language.
* possessed robust policy guidance, effectively implemented within the corporate culture.

2.3.4   In only two organisations were the vast majority of staff Welsh speaking; neither of these organisations faced the same necessity for purposive planning to ensure that employees shared in their support for the Welsh language. A rather different challenge faces these organisations, that of forward planning to safeguard and maintain that level of support and shared vision among their staff.

2.3.5.   Of the 15 other organisations, nine of them had set about offering members of staff Language Awareness Training (LAT). Without exception, the representatives of these nine organisations consider LAT an effective means of sharing and disseminating among their staff values and understanding that mean Welsh is valued. In addition, they said that LAT was one of the crucial tools in fostering ownership of the organisation's language policy among staff.

2.3.6   There was oral evidence that LAT had:

* laid a foundation of common understanding for staff;

- been an opportunity to acknowledge and ponder on the origins of negative experiences, viewpoints and values;
- empowered Welsh speakers by giving them 'permission' and a rationale for their pride in their Welsh identity and 'validating' their use of Welsh at work;
- empowering non-Welsh speakers by kindling a sense of pride in their Welsh identity and an understanding of the historical and social processes that have deprived so much of the population of Wales of the Welsh language;
- increased understanding of the public policy context in favour of promoting the Welsh language and increased support for that policy;
- elicited the awareness, understanding and sympathy of staff not born in Wales;
- stimulated some staff to set about learning Welsh or to improve their Welsh-language skills.

2.3.7 On the whole, the individuals interviewed felt that the staff of their organisations now held few negative attitudes towards the Welsh language. They felt that this reflected:

- the general wide public consensus in favour of the Welsh language in Wales;
- that the LAT already received had given staff an opportunity to acknowledge and voice viewpoints and experiences that had led to negative attitudes and behaviour;
- that experience showed that extending the use of Welsh had had a positive, rather than a negative, effect on the operation of the workplace; and
- that employees tended to comply with and accept linguistic requirements at work when:
  - o the requirements were compulsory for everyone, and the
  - o expectations had been clearly explained, with
  - o support to enable staff to fulfil the expectations.

2.3.8 Where some staff continue to be a more negative, it was felt on the whole that these were not numerous, and that they had a negative attitude towards other changes in the workplace as well, not just to Welsh alone. There were examples of lead staff members challenging the negative perceptions of other staff by, for example, proving (from the statistics gathered in-house by the human resources department) that setting a compulsory language levels for employees, for a new post or for promotion within the organisation, had not led to difficulties in making an appointment but, on the contrary, had led to an increase in demand for language training.

2.3.9 Interviewees said that Language Awareness Training had been more effective where the organisation had ensured that:

- the organisation's management had received LAT;
- LAT was compulsory for all members of staff;

- LAT had become established as part of the induction process for new staff.

2.3.10 We heard evidence that eight organisations also influenced staff perceptions by celebrating their ethos and values in their in-house magazines and publications and on their electronic intranet, emphasising examples of good practice and success with the Welsh language. Representatives of the eight organisations felt that sharing messages and marketing the value of the Welsh language helped them to create a positive atmosphere and strengthen the Welsh and bilingual identity of the organisation.

3.0 Planning the ability to use Welsh

3.1 The skills gap in organisations

3.1.1 In Section 2 above we considered those factors that give staff 'permission' to use Welsh internally within their organisations, or that 'legitimise' such use. We shall now consider the factors that enable staff to make constructive use of such a permissive atmosphere in order to use Welsh.

3.1.2 This needs to be considered in the context of the extent, distribution and levels of Welsh-language skills amongst the population in general, and more specifically, in organisations' workplaces. Since the 1960s, there has been a steady increase in the number of designated Welsh-medium schools and bilingual schools. More significantly, since 1988, the Welsh language has been a core subject on the curriculum of Welsh schools, and generations of young people who have passed through the Welsh education system since then possess, to very varied degrees, skills in the Welsh language.

3.1.3 Despite the increase in Welsh-language and bilingual education in Welsh schools, there has not been a commensurate increase in the further education and higher education sectors. There are still few vocational and professional courses available through the medium of Welsh; Within public bodies, professional, technical and clerical officers who have received vocational training through the medium of Welsh are rare exceptions.

3.1.4 It should also be noted that, on the whole, organisations, particularly the Unitary Councils, have not co-ordinated the language policies of the schools and the Local Education Authorities that produce Welsh speakers with the needs of workforce planning. The situation has arisen where ratepayers invest in fostering pupils' bilingualism but do not see it bearing fruit or boosting prestige within the workforce of the very organisations that have facilitated the fostering of those skills.

3.1.5 In addition, the expectations of Welsh speakers on the one hand, and the expectations of employers on the other, about the use of language skills beyond the education system have been heavily influenced by the language domains and language use patterns of the past. With a long-established tradition of providing public services through the medium of English, Welsh speakers are not used to considering their ability in Welsh as a "skill' for the workplace. For their part, employers too are unused to treating Welsh-language skills in the same way as other skills that might be required for some posts There is a good deal of consensus among the organisations interviewed as to the importance of

acknowledging, at a corporate level, that the ability to speak Welsh is a skill for the workplace.

3.1.6   These contextual factors are discussed in more detail in the background report by the Welsh Language Board.. Basically, they mean that many Welsh speakers and learners have insufficient confidence to use their Welsh-language skills for work purposes. All those interviewed agreed that many of their Welsh-speaking staff felt their vocabulary, terminology and grammatical knowledge of the Welsh language was too poor or inadequate for use in the technical or professional context of their workplaces They often referred to the gap between their spoken Welsh and the more formal sort of Welsh that, in their view, characterises organisational idiom. Thus, according to the organisations interviewed, a quite common perception among their Welsh-speaking staff is that the Welsh-language skills they possess are not suitable and appropriate for the professional purposes of the workplace.

3.1.7.   In addition, all of the organisations interviewed employ, to different degrees, a number of staff who do not speak Welsh. This affects the extent to which Welsh-speaking staff and learners are comfortable in using Welsh in those situations where they are working with non-Welsh speaking staff It also affects their perception of how effective the practice of using Welsh would be in situations where effectiveness demands a good deal of communication, either oral or written, with their non-Welsh speaking colleagues, or a good deal of sharing information among a group or team of staff of whom are number are non-Welsh speaking.

3.1.8   These characteristics mean that there is a 'skill gap' in every organisation, i.e. a difference between the skills required for providing Welsh language services externally and internally, and using the Welsh language as the language of internal administration, and the skills that the staff in fact possess.. The three main elements that create the skill gap are:

(i)   staff without Welsh-language skills – lack of language acquisition;
(ii)   staff whose skills and ability levels in Welsh are lower than required;
(iii) staff whose perception is that their Welsh-language skills are unsuitable, inappropriate or inadequate.

3.2   Planning the workforce's resource of language skills

3.2.1   In order to close the skill gap, 14 of the organisations interviewed have set about planning for the acquisition and development of Welsh-language skills in a strategic and purposive manner by drawing up and adopting a 'language skills strategy' or a 'bilingual skills strategy'. They have done this, to varying degrees, on the basis of an   outline methodology proposed by the Welsh Language

Board.[4] The three other organisations are just on the verge of taking action or intend adopting such a strategy in the near future.

3.2.2 A number of the officers interviewed said that adopting and starting to implement a language skills strategy had been a turning point in the history of their organisation as regards its attitude towards increasing the use of Welsh, both internally and externally. Further, according to the evidence gathered, it appears that the more sophisticated the implementation of such a skills strategy, the more effective the control over planning an increase in the use of Welsh by staff, whether that be internal or external use. Interviewees also said that the largest organisations, such as the Health Trusts in particular, face an enormous challenge in bringing so many varied agencies and services together in one corporate structure.

3.2.3 The evidence made it clear that an all-important element in such strategies is how the language skills levels in question are defined. Specifying levels for different language skills facilitates a number of aspects in the operation of the strategy – conducting a review of the skills levels of existing staff, specifying the levels required to fulfil job requirements and for recruitment, and specifying levels as targets for staff training and development programs. We found that the majority of the organisations interviewed have adopted a framework of skills levels based on the framework of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), which defines levels in accordance with brief descriptions of language-use competencies.

3.2.4 One interesting development brought to light in the evidence is that the five organisations in the justice sector have specified the lowest levels on their skills levels framework (usually 'Level I' or 'Level II') as the required entrance level when making appointments to posts within the organisation. That is, applicants for posts have to possess some level of ability in Welsh before they can join the workplace. The organisations refer to this level as the level required to be able to show 'basic linguistic courtesy' when dealing with the public – that is, a level that usually corresponds to the ability to pronounce Welsh names of people and places correctly, and the ability to exchange simple greetings and elementary remarks in Welsh, whether face-to-face or over the phone. This development naturally creates a situation where the use of Welsh has been integrated into the norm of polite behaviour. The view of those interviewed in the sector is that this is an important contribution towards 'normalising' internal use of Welsh in very large organisations employing a high proportion of non-Welsh speaking staff and serving a wide variety of communities as regards the density of numbers of Welsh speakers.

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[4] The Welsh Language Board (1996). Welsh Language Schemes – their preparation and approval in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993, Cardiff, Welsh Language Board. Cf. pp.36-38, where the methodology is outlined in the Advice and Measures following Guidelines 8(i) and 8(ii).

3.2.5   The representatives of these organisations noted that where Welsh is already the main, or only, language of internal administration, adopting a language skills strategy and specifying a framework of skills levels to support its operation has been a means for their organisations to safeguard and justify their use of Welsh as their main or only internal language. That is, by putting down on paper their arrangements for maintaining normative use of Welsh, they have confirmed the rationale behind their language use practices.

3.3   Increasing use by developing staff language skills

3.3.1   Alongside arrangements like those above to manage an organisation's language skills resources in a strategic way, the representatives who were interviewed testified to the importance of the contribution made by an appropriate programme of staff training and development to the process of increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace.

3.3.2   According to those organisations that have proceeded along the lines described in section 3.2 above, a skills levels framework based on language use competences – i.e. typical communication tasks – is also a valuable resource in guiding the types of language training offered to staff. Training in the acquisition or improvement of language skills can aim at enabling the trainee to put his or her new skills to work afterwards for specific purposes in the workplace – for instance in reception, answering phone enquiries, making presentations before committee, composing documents in Welsh and so on.

3.3.3   As regards identifying training needs from the point of view of the employer, the need to acquire particular skills can arise from a job description or from a team competences description. From the point of view of the individual, there was evidence that the organisations interviewed use a variety of methods to assess the needs of prospective trainees. Among these methods, interviewees mentioned:

- assessments by an in-house or external tutor;
- assessments made during annual appraisal meetings, which discuss performance and matters of personal development; and
- self assessments reported by prospective trainees to managers or tutors.

3.3.4   Some representatives of organisations interviewed said that their arrangements for assessing training needs were not entirely robust, suggesting that this aspect needed strengthening. It appears that there is a more robust system among those organisations that said the development of Welsh-language skills is something that has been integrated into their annual appraisals system. Under this type of arrangement, it is the custom for some managers, during the annual appraisal meeting, of discussing with their members of staff any general training needs, with particular attention to the needs of the service for bilingual skills on

the one hand, and staff requirements for professional and personal development opportunities on the other.

3.3.5   In order to formalise and give status to any subsequent arrangements for staff to learn Welsh, or to improve their Welsh, a number of the organisations interviewed then make such training the subject of a learning agreement or a personal development plan agreed between the manager and the trainee. A number of the organisations studied said that setting out clear expectations like this was important as regards ensuring a joint understanding of the purpose of language training. Interviewees said that such an agreement was an appropriate means for expressing expectations on the part of both employer and employee as regards the competences to be sought and also, in some cases, the subsequent use expected to be made of the skills gained. An agreement can also note the practical arrangements for attending courses, as well as being a tool for reviewing progress, attainment and subsequent use of the trainee's skills as part of the staff appraisal process.

3.3.6   As noted in Section 3.2.3, a number of organisations in the justice sector have taken a further step by specifying general corporate expectations as to levels of language skills. Recognition must be accorded to the role of North Wales Police in taking the lead in this in the sector. Dyfed Powys Police, HM Courts Service and the North Wales Probation Service reported that they had specified Level 1 on their skills levels framework as the entry level for all the organisation's posts, while the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and North Wales Police specified Level 2 as the level all new members of staff are expected to attain, with the NWP providing support for new staff to reach Level 3 by the end of their probation period (i.e. within 9 months).

3.3.7   Our survey highlighted the fact that definite steps like those mentioned above, to acknowledge and grade language skills within the justice sector, are much easier to carry out within a corporate culture based on a tradition of senior management 'leading by command' – like those mentioned in the paragraph above. indeed, the corporate culture of each organisation and the management culture that leads it are an all-important context for the way the requirements for Welsh-language skills are considered and treated. Such characteristics will also have arisen in part from other factors in the history of the organisation – for example, the organisation's geographic location, traditions of language use in its catchment area, the nature of the services and the categories of users served, and the demography of the recruitment catchment area. These considerations will be expanded upon in section 7.4 below.

3.3.8   Be that as it may, the evidence gathered highlights the fact that establishing compulsory linguistic requirements:

- is more effective than voluntary schemes as regards an organisation's language skills

- is acceptable to both staff (when given an explanation and support in meeting the expected standards) and to the public;
- does not lead to difficulties in recruiting and appointing new staff;
- has increased staff enthusiasm for starting to learn Welsh or continuing learning;
- is a means of operating an equal opportunities policy when recruiting staff and managing human resources.

3.3.9 As well as developing staff language skills through formal teaching courses, the majority of organisations studied had established extracurricular methods of developing their language skills further in the workplace. Interviewees mentioned mentoring schemes, the appointment of departmental champions, the increased visibility of the Welsh language on signs, both large and small, on posters, on the intranet and so on. In fact, we received some very varied evidence about an enormous number of other ingenious and imaginative methods and techniques. Space allows us to mention only a few examples here:

- Providing guidelines for champions on how to assist learners in reaching Level I or Level II in Welsh;
- Providing guidelines for mentors and their mentorees;
- Guidance for Chairs and Members on holding bilingual meetings;
- Leaflets with Welsh vocabulary and phrases for learners;
- Posting a 'word of the day' and 'phrase of the week' on the staff intranet;
- An instruction leaflet on how to record a bilingual voice message on a telephone answering machine;
- A series of instruction leaflets for learners on how to carry out different tasks through the medium of Welsh (e.g. making an appointment);
- Providing learning resources in the workplace – training software, books, CDs, electronic courses etc.

3.3.10 Where organisations arranged such extra-curricular development methods, their representatives said this supported and added value to the corporate investment in formal courses, by ensuring the continuation of the learning process and providing valuable practice opportunities and encouragement for trainees outside the classroom. They said that employees needed a good deal of encouragement and support to make more use of Welsh and that the interventions listed above did not change use practices 'overnight' but, over a period, they had led to increased use of Welsh. It seems that the production of leaflets and instructions is useful for sharing and establishing 'standard' good practice, but that support is needed from individuals, whether 'champions', 'mentors', 'ambassadors' or managers, to stimulate and encourage change.

4.0 Planning in response to the dynamic of the interaction between individuals and among groups

4.1 Raising staff confidence and resolution to put their language skills to work

4.1.1 It is crucial to try to understand the dynamic of the interaction between individuals and among mixed-language groups so as to understand the factors that can influence employees' preparedness to make use of their language skills in the workplace. There was a wide consensus that lack of confidence is one of the main hindrances preventing staff from setting about using the Welsh-language skills they possess, and that their lack of confidence influences their resolution to make the effort. It was recognised that lack of confidence could prove a hindrance to fluent Welsh speakers as well as to learners, depending on the context in which they were required to work in Welsh, and on the people with whom they would be communicating. The individuals interviewed agreed that it was not enough to provide opportunities for staff to learn and to improve their language skills, and that opportunities must also be planned for staff to develop confidence in their use of Welsh.

4.1.2 As already noted in Section 2, Language Awareness Training (LAT) offers a way forward towards the creation of a local permissive atmosphere within the team, office or department, to give prestige to efforts to use the Welsh language, whatever individuals' levels of fluency or correctness. It was also noted that LAT can empower Welsh speakers and learners to feel more confident in using the Welsh-language skills they possess in the face of the power of tradition and habit. Several organisations testified to the importance of creating a supportive and tolerant atmosphere that confers prestige on efforts to use the Welsh language.

4.2 Increasing confidence through vocational training

4.2.1 Everyone interviewed agreed that vocational training held through the medium of Welsh or bilingually is a means to develop Welsh-language skills and the confidence to make use of them. All the same, only a few of the organisations interviewed said they were successfully providing this for staff to a significant degree. A number of organisations referred to the difficulty of finding competent trainers, able to provide training through the medium of Welsh in different vocational fields such as management, personnel matters, information technology and so on. A number of interviewees said that vocational training through the medium of Welsh was easier to arrange when the organisation had its own bilingual in-house trainers to provide training.

4.2.2 However, one organisation said that the specifications for all their vocational training contracts always included the requirement that training should be through the medium of Welsh. This, they say, never causes any difficulty in ensuring appropriate training, since it means that providers who are unable to offer provision in Welsh do not apply for the work at all. These representatives noted how important it was to ensure that the contractual requirements and the criteria for selecting contractors clearly state the expectation that provision will be through the medium of Welsh.

4.2.3 Some organisations whose headquarters or central administration was outside Wales said their staff had to receive some types of centrally-organised vocational training that were only available through the medium of English. Some of these organisations had been pressing their central administration for Welsh-medium provision, and according to the evidence provided mainly by some of those in the administration of justice sector, there are some early indications that their efforts are beginning to influence the situation, although that influence is so far very limited.

4.2.4 All those interviewed agreed that increasing the provision of vocational training would be a means for both Welsh speakers and learners to familiarise themselves with vocabulary and terminology, and to get experience of a relevant vocational idiom at work, and that this could be advantageous in contributing to their confidence and their resolution to make use of the Welsh language. Indeed, some managers said it was unfair to expect staff to be able to deal with some aspects of their work through the medium of Welsh unless the organisation provided training in Welsh to enable them to do so. They referred to chairing meetings and dealing with the media as two examples of working practices that required specific training.

4.3   Increasing confidence and use by planned support and assistance

4.3.1 All the organisations took steps, to different degrees, to ensure that support was available and maintenance measures in place for staff who wanted to develop more confidence and to increase their use of Welsh in their work.

An internal translation service

4.3.2 The majority of the organisations under consideration had an internal translation service. In some of these organisations, the service provided by the translators had expanded to include offering services to check, proofread and edit documents drafted in Welsh by members of staff. In a number of cases, we were told that the translators also offered feedback to staff on their drafts, and that this is a service that helps to develop staff writing skills, to foster their confidence and to foster the habit of drafting documents in Welsh. Interviewees said that this was effective and had led to an increase in the number of staff who made the attempt

to draft written documents in Welsh, particularly when use of the proofreading service is optional.

<u>Support from ITC departments</u>

4.3.3   In the majority of the organisations studied, ITC departments were also crucial in installing – to different degrees from organisation to organisation – Welsh language interfaces on staff computers, as well as language resources software such as *Cysgliad* to facilitate the drafting and checking of documents in Welsh. Some departments had also been active in helping staff add basic bilingual 'signatures' to their e-mail messages, as well as a badge attached to each signature to denote that the author was a 'Welsh Speaker', 'Bilingual' or a 'Welsh Learner'. According to the evidence gathered, staff were more likely to use Welsh in connection with their use of ITC resources when the stimulus for this came in the form of encouragement from chief officers, language champions / mentors, and their colleagues.

<u>Support from mentors and language champions</u>

4.3.4   As we have already noted, many organisations have set up a mentoring or 'language champions' scheme to help staff who are learning Welsh to practice using the language. These provide staff with support at an individual level and can be responsible for arranging informal opportunities for staff to come together to practice speaking Welsh. The nine organisations that operated these schemes said that the creation of a good relationship between mentors / champions and staff was a very effective means of providing an extra boost to staff who are diffident about using their Welsh and a means of creating a bilingual ethos that confers prestige on the Welsh language within departments. They also said that the team of mentors and champions needed a good deal of guidance and support to ensure that the work they carried out was standardised across the organisation and maintained in the long term.

4.3.5   One organisation, which was not operating a mentoring/champions scheme, reported that their departmental managers and teams were now working hard to encourage staff to speak, read and write in Welsh at work; this had led to an increase in the internal use of Welsh across the organisation. Our perception of the evidence gathered is that having a driving force, in the form of a member of staff with specific responsibility for encouraging, supporting and promoting employees' use of Welsh, is absolutely crucial.

4.4 Seeking to understand other aspects of the linguistic dynamic between individuals that can hinder use

4.4.1 The interaction dynamic between individuals and among groups of people is a complex one, but is crucial to a full understanding of the other factors beyond 'confidence' and 'resolution' that influence language practices in a workplace.
A full exploration of this is beyond the compass of this study. In enquiring into what personal factors can hinder use, it appears that organisations had not paid this a great deal of attention. One organisation said that it foresaw that there would be an opportunity to ask staff about the factors preventing personal use in the wake of the launch of its revised language scheme. We list here some of the factors that came to the fore in our study:

- It is easier for learners to use Welsh in one-to-one situations than in groups or in front of an audience;
- Some fluent Welsh speakers lack patience with learners;
- Habit – it is very difficult to change from the language in which one first got to know someone;
- Courtesy – Welsh speakers tended to turn to English with other Welsh speakers in the company of a non-Welsh speaker/learner
- Concern about other people's perceptions;
- Status – some managers were concerned that their lack of skills in Welsh would lead to an undermining of their authority and their expertise in other fields.

4.4.2 A number of organisations had begun to adopt certain methods in response to the above, e.g. having a bilingual officer introduce a new member of staff to other staff in the workplace so that people knew from the first day who were Welsh speakers and Welsh was established as the language of the work relationship among staff. On the whole, however, we feel that the linguistic dynamic between individuals and amongst groups is a topic that merits further research. We also gained the impression that there was room for some further reinforcement of the joined-up support and encouragement given to individual staff beyond their language-skills training in some workplaces

5.0 Planning to increase and support opportunities for the use of Welsh

The evidence gathered in this study underlines the need for purposive planning of several aspects in order to increase and safeguard the opportunities to use Welsh in the workplace.

5.1 Increasing use by planning key human resources

5.1.1 Every organisation emphasised the need to invest in staff resources to promote the use of Welsh. Almost all the organisations studied have a 'Language Officer', 'Language Development Officer' or lead officer(s) responsible for providing guidance on the organisation's Language Scheme and on corporate language planning matters. A good deal of strong evidence was received on the crucial role these officers play in providing guidance and coherent strategic direction for all the efforts to increase the use of Welsh.

5.1.2 A large number of the organisations concerned had some time ago set up a 'language working party', consisting of representatives from the different departments, to promote and facilitate the operation of their Language Scheme. Where these working parties exist, it is usually they who provide the guidance and impetus for efforts to increase the use of Welsh.

5.1.3 As already noted, a number of the organisations studied have set up a network of 'departmental champions/ambassadors' to promote the efforts in the different departments, services and locations. There is a good deal of consensus among these organisations that such a system has contributed considerably to extending 'ownership' of the efforts to increase the use of Welsh and, as noted above, to supporting the efforts of staff to learn and develop confidence in their use of Welsh.

5.1.4 In a number of organisations, a good deal of careful planning has gone into the back-up provided for these champions. Documentary evidence of this was provided in the form of guidelines for champions; a formal agreement for champions outlining their role; guidance on how to help learners and so on, and in one case, arrangements for champions to receive financial acknowledgement of their contribution. We interviewed five of the 'champions' and can testify to their enthusiasm and commitment. All the organisations that had set up a champions system felt that this was a means of fostering a more inclusive and co-operative attitude towards increasing the use of Welsh. In the same way, setting up a mentoring system and a network of mentors plays a not dissimilar

role. In the number of these organisations, the role of the mentor has been integrated within the function of the 'champion'.

5.1.5 Some organisations had purposively set about marketing the support available, using the intranet, in-house news-sheets, posters etc to do this. As we saw, support and assistance can take many forms – whether they be ITC resources, guidance and guidelines, teaching materials and staff training and development programmes, or procedures to encourage and facilitate the use of Welsh. A number of responses referred to the advantages of putting together a support and assistance 'package' in an orderly way, so as to create a 'learning environment' and 'encouraging and supportive conditions' in the workplace.

5.2   Increasing opportunities by planning the interface with internal services, systems and procedures

5.2.1 Every one of the organisations studied had identified the link between its staff and its internal services and systems as an area where considerable influence could be exerted on the internal use of Welsh. To varying degrees, they had all moved towards embracing the idea of offering their staffs a choice of language in the same way this is offered to the public, as required in every organisation's statutory Language Scheme. This to some extent redresses the former practice of not treating staff like 'the public' from the time they cross the threshold of the workplace on their way to work – a concept that these days appears artificial and unreasonable to the majority of organisations considered here.

Personnel department services

5.2.2 All of the organisations under consideration had identified the services of personnel departments as the services that, for various reasons, have contact with every member of staff. And, to varying degrees, every organisation has taken steps to establish or increase the use of Welsh by these services. Amongst the evidence received, we note references from different respondents to the provision of the following in Welsh or bilingually:

- A variety of forms – e.g. travelling expenses forms, job application forms, application forms for maternity leave;
- Internal policy documents – e.g. maternity policy, health and safety policy, sickness policy etc;
- Recruitment materials – e.g. job descriptions, standard invitations to interview, internal recruitment advertisements;
- Contracts of employment;
- Codes of Practice or Codes of Conduct;
- Disciplinary procedure documentation;
- Induction training for new staff;
- Information on the intranet.

5.2.3 In addition, a number of organisations said they had developed, or were in the process of developing, procedures (with appropriate guidelines to back them up) for offering a choice of language to staff and potential staff for recruitment interviews, disciplinary meetings, and annual appraisal meetings. Among the organisations interviewed were a few that already operate all or almost all of the above. In relation to recruitment material, it is interesting to notice the evidence received from a number of organisations that the Welsh Language Board's guidance document, *Recruitment and the Welsh Language – Guidance under Section 3 of the Welsh Language Act 1993* had influenced the number of personnel officers who had formerly, been a rather hesitant about acting in the spirit of their Language Scheme, because they were certain and unclear about what is appropriate in this complex field.

Internal translation services

5.2.4 The majority of the organisations under consideration had the services of in-house translation service, and for many staff, perhaps, this is the most obvious internal service of their Welsh interface. As noted in Section 4 above, in a number of these organisations, the translation service has expanded to offer checking, proofreading and editorial services and to offer feedback to staff on their draft documents, and this is a service that creates opportunities for employees to use Welsh for written aspects of their work.

Information and communications technology (ITC) services

5.2.5 These days, an internal service that is in contact with every member of staff, is the information and communications technology (ITC) service. Here again, there was a good deal of evidence of a movement among the organisations interviewed towards offering a choice of language and Welsh/bilingual provision for services such as:

- A helpdesk;
- One-to-one technical assistance;
- Internal communications from the ITC Department itself on the intranet;
- Setting up or facilitating procedures to input bilingual documents on the web and the intranet
- Assisting internal services to acquiring ITC systems that facilitate bilingual operation.

5.2.6 Linked with the work of ITC departments, is that of the procurement departments, since it is the latter who are concerned with the work of preparing specifications for ordering or adapting ITC systems. There was evidence that a few ITC departments are purposively cooperating with service departments and procurement officers to ensure that new and/or adapted systems enable officers to create bilingual inputs and outputs. There was one example of an officers'

working party being set up and meeting regularly for just this purpose. There was also an example of another organisation that includes linguistic requirements in all ITC systems specifications, which means that it ensures it has the ability to use Welsh in connection with its various ITC systems without having to make further investments in procurement.

Communication with management

5.2.7 Undoubtedly, the most significant internal interface staff of every organisation possess is their communication with management. This takes place naturally through the medium of Welsh in those organisations where managers speak Welsh. A number of the organisations that have recently adopted a statement or policy on the internal use of Welsh acknowledge this and are taking steps to increase opportunities for staff to communicate with their managers in Welsh. Admittedly, this is a complex matter, since the relationship between managers and their staffs is essentially not a 'service' as such; however, there are elements of 'providing a service to the staff' to some aspects of management posts. We were told that one organisation had set a target of ensuring that its managers possessed Level 3 skills in Welsh by a particular date. Another organisation intends operating a development scheme to support staff who possess Level 3 in Welsh to reach Level 4. Schemes of this sort acknowledge the crucial influence of management in creating a favourable climate for the Welsh language and opportunities to use it at every level within their departments.

Internal meetings

5.2.8 One context that received specific and thorough attention from a number of the organisations studied is internal meetings, and a number of specific projects were in progress to increase the use of Welsh at such meetings. The documentary evidence gathered in this connection shows how these organisations have sought to encourage staff to speak Welsh at meetings. That evidence includes:

- the production of handbooks or guidance on how to hold bilingual meetings (including one handbook published jointly by three of these organisations);
- guidelines for Chairs on chairing meetings bilingually;
- guidelines for staff on 'summarising' in English, for non-Welsh speakers, contributions made in Welsh, should a simultaneous translation service not be available;
- the offer of training sessions on skills for chairing meetings.

5.2.9 The dynamic is very different at meetings consisting of mainly Welsh or mainly English speakers, and it was noted that some organisations had sought to respond to this in their guidelines. In addition, while there was evidence that the guidance noted above had led to an increase in the use of Welsh at internal meetings, we were also told that, in the case of some Chairs of committees, such

guidance is not sufficient in itself to stimulate a change in usage, but that they also require further training to improve their Welsh.

It is fair to note that all the organisations under consideration are aware of the way all the above interfaces with internal services, internal systems and internal procedures influence the use of Welsh internally. We noted that all the organisations were working, to different degrees, to increase the use of Welsh in these contexts. It is significant that a number of very specific aspects of these interfaces have been the subject of specific projects sponsored by the Welsh Language Board and implemented within some of the organisations under consideration to increase the internal use of Welsh.

5.3   Planning work responsibilities and fostering staff expertise to safeguard practices and create new opportunities

5.3.1   We noted that increasing and maintaining the use of Welsh for specific working practices requires purposive planning to anticipate opportunities to (i) increase the use of Welsh, and (ii) safeguard usage practices from returning to English. Only some of the organisations interviewed undertook purposive planning in this connection.

5.3.2   According to the evidence presented by the contributors, lack of forward planning in the field of ITC to ensure Welsh or bilingual inputs and outputs is one field where a host of obstacles arise. There were some examples of definite forward planning to this end. We were told that the Countryside Council for Wales had set up an 'Internal Systems Group' specifically to deal with the challenges of information technology by anticipating and forward planning to ensure that there are means of inputting and outputting information in Welsh/bilingually. The Group is considering what requirements will be included in the procurement requirements of any new system, as well as how current systems can be adapted. At the time of our interview, this Group was paying special attention to the Council's intranet and blog

5.3.3   The North Wales Police (NWP) too has long ago identified barriers connected with the use in their catchment areas of standard ITC systems, that are 'centralised' in the UK sense, and they have been forward planning to tackle this at a high level. In the same way, they are examining the protracted process of adapting for their officers professional training models that have been designed 'centrally', again at a UK level. These are just two examples from several fields where NWP has identified shortcomings and stumbling blocks and is forward planning to come to grips with them.
These are matters for which there will be no early solution, but NWP is forward planning to intervene in, and to influence, the relevant processes in order to rectify the lack of consideration given to the use of Welsh.

5.3.4 One of the other main threats to an organisation's ability to maintain its use of Welsh is the situation that arises with a change of staff, as employers experience difficulties in appointing employees who are able to work in Welsh at the level of principal officers, senior managers and technical/specialist staff. We received evidence of a number of cases where new appointments had meant that English was once again used for management meetings etc, superseding the previous practice of using Welsh at those meetings. We were told that some organisations were very much aware of these threats and were working purposively to try to mitigate the risk by, for example:

- appointing Welsh-speaking graduates and training them in-house over a period of time to undertake senior posts; and
- sponsoring specialist degree courses to create a workforce with Welsh-language skills and qualifications in specialist fields.

5.3.5 We were told that opportunities also arise with a change of staff to review job responsibilities in order to reallocate individual's duties (e.g. chairing meetings) to take advantage of language skills within the workforce in order to increase and/or maintain Welsh language working practices. We believe there is an opportunity to expand on the tool for strategic planning offered by a Language Skills Strategy (LAS). In addition to identifying the linguistic needs of particular posts, there is a need to plan in order to foresee how officers' use of Welsh can best be increased or safeguarded. While those organisations that have set up an LAS are able to define the workforce's levels of language skills on a departmental basis and on the basis of individual posts, there is so far little ability to define, and thus to plan, the staff's current language use practices, as we shall be noting further in the Section 6.

5.3.6 Another area where considerable difficulties arise in maintaining the use of Welsh is cooperation with other organisations in partnerships. This will be expanded upon in the next section below.

5.4 Planning to safeguard good practice when dealing with other organisations

5.4.1 Another challenge faced by all the organisations in this study, particularly those that embrace the Welsh language as their main language of internal administration, is to maintain their use of Welsh when working in partnership with other agencies. The Beecham report (*Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-Centred Local Services for Wales* 2006) encouraged public bodies to work together for the benefit of joined-up and cost-effective services to the public. Since they began operating in accordance with the 'Beecham report agenda' the organisations in this study have increasingly being cooperating in partnerships with other public agencies. Local boards, multi-agency initiatives, community partnerships, care partnerships and regional joint committees are examples of forums that set up means of cooperation between different organisations. Very often, the different partners who come together embrace and follow different linguistic practices from

one another. This sort of cooperation is a particular challenge to partners who are operating Language Schemes.

5.4.2   A number of the staff interviewed said that in their experience good bilingual practice was often neglected at meetings with partners. Although almost every Language Scheme now stipulates arrangements to be followed when an organisation joins with others in such partnerships, the staff interviewed - employees who had been making efforts to increase their use of Welsh in their day-to-day work - said this was an area that created difficulties for those wishing to embrace the use of Welsh. We were told of the experiences of staff in discussion with representatives of other organisations where there was less use of Welsh, some of them with low levels of awareness of good bilingual practice and of the concept of offering a language choice at the partnership's meetings, activities and outcomes.

5.4.3   The employees concerned said that a very confident and determined personality was required to continue to use Welsh and to draw attention to one's wish to follow good bilingual practice in making contributions at such meetings. A number of officers felt uncomfortable about having to make a 'stand' to speak Welsh and having to keep drawing attention to the need to make provision for the Welsh language in the work of the partnership. This was true even of those staff who are urged by their employers to continue to use Welsh in dealing with partners

5.4.4   Naturally, if a high proportion of an officer's working hours is spent dealing with partnerships, the tendency for partnerships to follow less progressive linguistic practices can be a considerable stumbling block for an officer who wants to increase his use of Welsh. This is one aspect of planning opportunities for the use of Welsh that requires a detailed attention in order to safeguard good Welsh/bilingual practices The evidence provided suggests that robust expectations and guidelines need to be agreed among partnerships (with support from the Welsh Language Board) to safeguard the use of Welsh in these situations.

6.0 Increasing Welsh language use practices in the workplace

In this section, we shall try to describe the types of language practices that encompass the use of Welsh in the workplace, noting the evidence provided as to the priorities and the progress seen in the organisations.

6.1 Increasing staff use of Welsh in the execution of their own jobs

Personal working practices

6.1.1   We were told by several organisations that they had seen a certain amount of increase in the use of Welsh by staff in their **personal working practices,** including: work plans, diaries, task lists, personal notes, the drafting of documents, and their use of computer programs. A number of projects have been implemented to this end, such as providing individual training for staff at their computers to ensure that they are able to use Welsh interfaces for computer programmers and to use particular software (Cysill, CysGair, electronic dictionaries) to help them to feel more confident about writing documents in Welsh. Although a number of the organisations interviewed were confident that such projects lead to an increase in the personal use of Welsh, it is difficult to measure and quantify that use.

Networking with other staff

6.1.2   Another aspect of the language use of members of staff in carrying out the duties of their own posts was networking with other staff, including: **oral communication at formal and informal staff meetings:** team meetings, management team meetings, and board meetings. We were told that the use of Welsh at internal meetings varied greatly. In the National Library, Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd and Gwynedd Council, Welsh is the default language for internal meetings. Interviewees said they continue to speak Welsh in the presence of the occasional non-Welsh speaking staff member, or someone less confident in Welsh, using techniques such as *language buddies* at smaller and less formal meetings to enable non-Welsh speaking staff to contribute. These organisations also have robust arrangements to ensure that simultaneous translation equipment is used and that the documentation for meetings is bilingual.

6.1.3   In the other organisations, where Welsh is not seen as the normative language for internal administration to the same extent, it appears that the use of Welsh is less robust and more dependent on individuals giving a lead. On the whole,

interviewees said that there was a tendency for staff who can speak Welsh to make use of the language with one another at internal meetings when conditions allow this. However, it was also noted that some Welsh speakers continue to feel diffident about using Welsh at more formal and technical meetings. We were told of examples where a change of staff had led to less use of Welsh, and examples to the contrary when a new principal officer or Chair of a committee had established the practice of using Welsh with simultaneous translation equipment, even at meetings where the majority of the participants were not Welsh-speaking.

6.1.4 As noted in the Section 5.2, a number of organisations had identified the crucial role of chairs of committees, and had tailored guidelines and training to assist them in using the Welsh language in this connection. While these steps seem to be succeeding in increasing the use of Welsh at internal meetings, it seems to be more of a challenge for smaller and less formal meetings, where we heard that the language of meetings 'easily turns to English' if there are one or two non-Welsh speaking staff present, and Welsh speakers continue to find it difficult to challenge the normative order of English's being the medium for mixed meetings.

6.1.5 As regards recording and measuring change in the use of Welsh in the workplace, it appears that meetings, particularly board meetings and more formal meetings offer an opportunity to achieve this.

6.1.6 A number of organisations reported that they had also seen an increase in the number of staff who are starting to **write in Welsh** when: composing memos; internal e-mail messages; minutes and work reports etc. Interviewees said that using Welsh regularly for internal e-mail messages fostered employees' skills and confidence in Welsh over a period of time and could introduce Welsh as a default language for such internal communication (see *Final Report of the Project for Promoting Bilingual Workplaces* 2007 for further comments on this). Although there was not a great deal of quantitative evidence to measure the exact increase, references were made to a number of indicators such as the following:

- the statistics of some translation departments show they are translating more documents from Welsh to English than previously;
- an increase has been noted in the demand for some translation units to check and support the efforts of staff to compose documents in Welsh, after the units offered this as an internal service for staff rather than making it compulsory.

6.1.7 It appears that consideration could be given to drawing up indicators with data from translation units to monitor some changes in the use of written Welsh

Staff contact with the organisation

6.1.8 Another aspect of employees' language use in their work is the communication that is part of their contact with the organisation itself, as described in Section 5.2. Those organisations that embraced a completely Welsh-language ethos ensured that every aspect of staff contact with the organisation was either in Welsh alone or bilingual according to the needs of the staff. A number of other organisations also add paid attention to this aspect of language practices in the workplace. A number of organisations provided corporate documents in both languages on the work intranet and were increasingly expanding opportunities for staff to use Welsh when dealing with this aspect of their work. There was evidence that organisations introduced Welsh in these contexts gradually, over a period of years, and that it was the organisations with the longest and most structured experience of operating Language Schemes that paid the most attention to this aspect.

6.1.9 Further evidence was received that increasing the number and proportion of staff able to speak Welsh in an organisation led to an increase in staff expectations that they would be able to use Welsh in every aspect of their work. Most of the officers interviewed were comfortable with the concept of treating employees as internal service users. However, some were diffident about the concept and felt it was easier, in their context, to justify steps to expand the use of Welsh in the workforce on the basis of their contribution to improving the availability and quality of Welsh-medium and bilingual service to the public. Tensions surfaced in some organisations as the opportunities expanded for staff to use Welsh, leading to an increase in expectations and the demand for other internal services in Welsh. In some workplaces, it was noted that increasing the opportunities for workers to use Welsh at work led to the need to manage the expectations of those workers.

Contact with other organisations

6.1.10 We noted in Section 5.4 that networking within and across sectors was also an increasingly important element in the working practices of some officers, and an element that demands a good deal of their attention back in their own workplaces. Concerns were expressed to us that cooperation with partners could undermine Welsh and bilingual practices. Again, this appears to be an aspect where it is more difficult to identify and plan the opportunities to use Welsh. Sometimes arrangements are decided on there and then after a discussion at partnership meetings. The willingness of officers to draw attention to 'the language issue' is influenced by the atmosphere and mood of the meeting and Welsh-speaking officers' perception of the expectations, normative practices and attitudes of the participants.

6.1.11 A number of organisations said it was advantageous to plan good bilingual practice sector by sector as well as within each individual organisation in the field. On the positive side, it also appears that setting up networks to plan and

coordinate action to promote the use of Welsh within sectors can offer a means of sharing good practice and strengthening practices across a number of organisations. We saw that value could be added to projects by joint development of resources and, in the present economic climate, savings could be made without cutting back on plans to normalise the use of Welsh.

6.2 Increasing the use of Welsh during informal socialising with others

6.2.1 This is the aspect of staff language use that encompasses conversations and communication that have nothing to do with work, the socialising that goes on between staff when they greet one another and chat about this and that at work – the conversation at breaks, over lunch and while travelling to meetings together. Generally this sort of contact between staff is oral, although it can also include written communications – text messages, a note on paper, reading and discussing the contents of a newspaper or some other written document (including electronic documents). This is also where personal and professional language and identity overlap.

6.2.2 All the organisations said that use of Welsh by Welsh-speaking staff chatting together is comparatively high, and that staff who speak Welsh tend to take advantage of the opportunity to do so with other Welsh speakers when the opportunity arises. However, no organisation kept a quantitative record to confirm any change in language use patterns.

6.2.3 We were also told that organisations that value the Welsh language and create a permissive corporate atmosphere have a positive effect on staff attitudes towards the language and make Welsh speakers feel comfortable at work and free to use Welsh socially, if not for work purposes.

6.2.4 We were given a number of examples by Welsh speakers of the pleasure it gave them to realise how much Welsh is now being used among staff. A number of interviewees who were not fluent in the language said that having the opportunity to use it at work had improved their Welsh and they had gained confidence in using it. There were also examples of the use of Welsh at work leading to additional use of Welsh outside the workplace, with oral evidence that a large number of parents regarded learning Welsh in the workplace as useful for supporting their children's efforts to learn Welsh at school. There was one interesting example of an organisation that had produced guidelines for staff with children on how to help them do their homework in Welsh.

6.3 Increasing the use of Welsh when providing a service to the public

6.3.1 Apart from the three organisations that operated mainly through the medium of Welsh or bilingually, it appears that the use of Welsh in the workplace continues to be at its strongest in those working practices connected with the provision of services to the public, for example:

- oral discussions with members of the public (phone, meetings);
- reading and replying to written enquiries etc.;
- preparing written material for a website, publications etc.

6.3.2 All the interviewees believed that the steps taken to promote the internal use of Welsh were improving the quality of the service provided to the public, although they were unable to offer any quantitative evidence to support this belief. The perception was that any extension of opportunities for staff to use Welsh at work offered more opportunities for them to practice their Welsh and thus enabled them to become more proficient and at home in the language, with the quality of their services to the public then improving as a result. It was also felt that increasing the number and proportion of staff who speak Welsh leads in its turn to further use of Welsh in the workplace and strengthens the organisation's ability to provide a Welsh and bilingual service to the public.

6.3.3 We do however emphasise that the above perceptions on the part of the organisations themselves are perceptions about the value and benefit of the projects and/or practices within their own individual organisations. They are perceptions arising from the work of evaluating and deliberating on their own projects and/or practices. They are not conclusions with a wider significance about the value of increasing the use of Welsh in organisations in general.

6.4 Recordings and measuring increase in the use of Welsh

6.4.1 It is quite a challenge to try to record patterns of language use and establish a baseline for measuring its increase or decline. This is particularly true of those organisations that employee a large number of staff in a multitude of locations, and where those locations vary considerably as regards the number and proportion of Welsh speakers and, as a result, language use practices.

6.4.2 From the evidence gathered, comparatively few methods on the whole have already been inaugurated to record and measure 'internal' use of Welsh, and we did not find that any organisation was making a systematic effort to record and measure the language use practices of its staff at work.

6.4.3 An occasional indicator was noted in the most recent language schemes, such as:

- recording the percentage of staff training and development events held through the medium of Welsh; and
- the percentage of managerial meetings chaired in Welsh.

6.4.3 In addition, a number of local language-use indicators could be created to accompany the targets listed in some of the recent language plans, such as:

- provision of internal documentation in bilingual form; and
- use of automatic out-of-office computer messages, and bilingual signatures on e-mail messages.

6.4.4 Some of the officers interviewed agreed that it would be possible, eventually, to include an element of gathering information about language-use practices, setting personal targets and checking attainment/progress as part of the process of annual appraisal and personal development plans. A number of organisations could already see how to use human resources data management programs to enable them to analyse information about language competences and training when planning and managing skills and language use in the workplace.

6.5 Empowering Welsh speakers and learners in the workplace and beyond

6.5.1 One interesting and important effect for which there is a good deal of evidence is the way increasing the use of Welsh internally within many of the organisations in this study had empowered both Welsh speakers and learners in a number of ways. We have already noted (in paragraph 6.3.4 above) that noticing the increase in the use of Welsh in the workplace had been a matter of pride among a number of Welsh speakers who participated in the projects held. The projects have encouraged Welsh speakers and learners to make themselves more conspicuous than previously. One comment we received that is characteristic of what was said by about a third of respondents when discussing the effect of their projects, was

> *People have 'discovered' Welsh speakers that they weren't aware of – they've just 'appeared' somehow!*

6.5.2 A number of interviewees who were not fluent in the language said that having the opportunity to use it at work had improved their Welsh and they had gained confidence in using the language. Fluent Welsh speakers made similar comments about their confidence in using their Welsh. The following example is characteristic of comments made in this connection:

> *I think that the culture has changed. At* [headquarters] *things have really changed. Learners are more confident and more prepared to use their Welsh. Fluent Welsh speakers are more open and more prepared to use*

> *their Welsh with learners. Attitudes have changed on the part of both Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers.*

6.5.3   There was evidence that increasing the internal use of Welsh not only gave staff more confidence to use their language skills, but also empowered them to act more confidently in safeguarding and promoting the use of Welsh. The following excerpts from an interview with a group of champions, including both fluent Welsh speakers and learners, are revealing:

> Champion A: *It's been good for Welsh speakers. Before, when you arrived at the office*, *you had to forget who you were* [as a Welsh speaker].

> Champion B: *This issue* [the use of Welsh] *won't go away. Everyone's confidence has gone up so much that they have the confidence to challenge things, and they get support from local managers as well, whether they speak Welsh or not. It's on the agenda now.*

> Champions C: *I would be more comfortable challenging things now than I would've been a few years ago. You'd get the support now.*

6.5.4   The comments of Champions B and C reinforce our findings regarding the importance of ensuring there is leadership and support from managers. We hasten to add that the staff concerned did not regard the above internal changes as being the result of the implementation of the project alone, but of gradual development work over a number of years. However, it is fair to say that the champions had been able to foster their 'ownership' of the process by their contribution to implementing a specific project with that very aim.

6.5.5   The following comments were recorded when interviewing a group of staff who had undertaken a project to introduce language awareness training:

> Trainee A: *There's someone who sits by me – who always speaks English and now I reply in Welsh and we get on fine like that.*

> Trainee B: *On* [our team] *we've had two people joiners who weren't used to using their Welsh, but because we've carried on speaking Welsh, the two of them have started to speak Welsh – and one has even started making presentations in Welsh.*

6.5.6   When the authors of this study worked with the staff of Ceredigion County Council and North Wales Police in 2006–07, we gathered a certain amount of similar evidence about the way increasing the internal use of Welsh empowered Welsh speakers and learners in the workplace and beyond.[5] In this study, some of the respondents among the staff who took part in projects said they were now

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[5] See *Report of the Project for Promoting Bilingual Workplaces* (2007) on the website of IAITH - the Welsh centre for language planning, www.iaith.eu

less likely to be over-reticent in their use of Welsh in general, both at work and outside their jobs. The following are some further comments from three members of a staff group that had undertaken a project to introduce language awareness training:

> Trainee A: *One thing the course has done is – yes we're still in the habit of saying 'Sorry' for speaking Welsh, I feel, 'No I'm NOT sorry, I live in Wales and I'm speaking my own language'. The course has made me feel that I'm apologising a lot, and I shouldn't be.*

> Trainee B: *We shouldn't change to English and say sorry – we should give them the confidence to start speaking Welsh.*

> Trainee C: *When someone phones now I speak Welsh first – and if they reply in Welsh I carry on; if not then I turn to English.*

6.5.7 There was also some evidence that using Welsh at work leads to additional use of Welsh outside the workplace, with oral evidence from participants from a number of organisations that a considerable number of them feel that learning Welsh or improving their Welsh at work enables them to provide their children with better support in their efforts to learn Welsh or to do their schoolwork in Welsh. (See also 6.3.4). There was evidence to this effect from, for example, participants in projects within the Isle of Anglesey County Council, the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, the North Wales Probation Service and Bangor University. One project organiser said:

> *People have said how this has affected them in their personal lives – people saying they now talk Welsh with their children attending a Welsh school. They say its also affecting them at home and in their personal lives, not just at work.*

6.5.8 There was one interesting example of an organisation that had produced guidelines for staff with children on how to help them do their homework in Welsh. (See 6.3.4). A number of the messages conveyed, either directly or indirectly, by this employer, and by several other organisations in the study, tell staff that increasing their use of Welsh is an advantage for them personally, not just in the workplace, but beyond that, in their personal lives.

6.5.9 We believe that these perceptions are very significant aspects in our study, and like several other aspects touched on in this study, merit the attention of further research.

6.6 The advantages of promoting the 'internal' use of Welsh in the workplace

6.6.1 Despite the lack of quantifiable evidence of the impact and influence of promoting the internal use of Welsh in their workplaces, the interviewees without exception

expressed their support for the concept of promoting 'bilingual' workplaces. All those interviewed identified a number of advantages for the organisation and the individual. As a result, we can summarise the perceptions of Welsh speakers about the main advantages of promoting the extended use of Welsh in the workplace:

- Staff satisfaction
- Improved quality of customer care
- More inventive thinking by staff
- Flexibility in language and in other aspects
- A feeling of being comfortable and a sense of belonging to the organisation
- Increased staff participation and expression of opinions
- Holistic links between the language of the family, the community and the workplace
- A fostering practices to be celebrated for winning the organisation prestige and giving it a unique marketing advantage
- Skills development : offering people an great opportunity to learn Welsh and improve their Welsh.

6.6.2 Perceptions similar to those above were expressed by the non-Welsh speaking staff interviewed:

- *Getting the best out of people – language is an important part of that – recognising their right to use their own language in their own country and their workplace.*
- *In HR terms it helps us to be a better employer - we provide Welsh language training and hopefully that'll encourage more people to apply for vacancies here.*
- *I think we have a responsibility to create and promote opportunities for people to work in a bilingual environment.*
- *It has helped create a less divisive workplace, as compared with 6-7 years ago. It raises morale by recognising our identity.*
- *More Welsh in workplace helps deliver a better standard of service to customers*
- *It helps us promote engagement in, and inclusivity of, the communities we serve and provide choice to the public. It breaks down barriers in communication and the divide between Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers in the communities we serve.*

7.0 Conclusions

7.1   The influence of projects sponsored by the Welsh Language Board

7.1.1. Interviewees said that the Board's interest in this field, together with its investment and support, had created momentum and progress and that this in its turn had been a means of identifying a number of good practices to which value could be added by sharing them with other organisations. They also said that the projects sponsored by the Board had successfully resulted, to different degrees and in specific locations, in an increase in the use of Welsh in each and every one of the organisations sponsored.

7.1.2   Investment received from the Board towards implementing projects had enabled organisations receiving the sponsorship to move forward with specific schemes that could not been carried out without that financial support. More than half the organisations receiving sponsorship said that the status and good name of the Board and the opportunity to be part of a national campaign/vision to enhance the prestige of internal use of Welsh had been a means of ensuring the support of the organisation's directors and senior managers to their local schemes.

7.1.3   We found the Board's guidance document *Promoting and Facilitating Bilingual Workplaces*[6] had been welcomed and had had a certain amount of influence, but it appeared that only a few of the officers interviewed had made great or detailed use of that resource in planning to increase the internal use of Welsh . This was the response from the variety of officers interviewed, and across all the organisations under consideration.

7.1.4   We hasten to add here that 9-10 of the 17 organisations in the sample studied had already been either considering or implementing steps to increase the internal use of Welsh before the publication of the Board's document. As a result, it is not surprising that the document, which introduces the subject in a general way and in outline, was not a source of useful detailed directions for these organisations. A number of contributors said their organisation was already ahead of the document by the time it was published.

7.1.5   A number of responders amongst these 9 to 10 organisations said that the fact that the document existed, and that it was one of the Board's official publications, had more influence than the content of the document itself. That is, the publication of the document had conferred status on efforts to increase the use of Welsh internally. Two other contributors, one from the administration of justice sector and the other from the higher education sector, said that the document

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[6] Cardiff, Welsh Language Board (no date)

had been useful as a 'checklist' of the main steps or considerations to be tackled, but that the steps for implementation had already begun independently of any reference to the document.

7.1.6   For the 5–6 organisations less experienced in the internal use of Welsh, the Board's document had been a very useful introduction as regards outlining concepts that were new to them. They appreciated the fact that the document drew attention to the main considerations to be discussed internally before confident moves can be made towards increasing the use of Welsh. This, in their view, can facilitate agreement on a wider process that will be a basis and context for the small projects they were already operating.

7.1.7   There was a general consensus among all the organisations operating Board-sponsored projects, that it had been an advantage for them to be able to 'package' the idea of increasing the internal use of Welsh in the form of a project or campaign with very specific objectives that, in the beginning, concentrated on only one or more specific domains. A commitment to increasing the use of Welsh may be one of a large number of general commitments in a Language Scheme, or a general intention that has not yet been formalised in a Language Scheme. In such cases, said contributors, it is useful to ground the experience and set up a project that will provide a focus for general aspirations. In addition, this can be a means of introducing change in a way that is comprehensible and easy to support, and to test out different methods and make staff feel comfortable about them.

7.1.8   We believe it is too soon for us to be able to identify to what extent the practices to increase the internal use of Welsh have become established and assimilated once and for all in the working practices of the majority of organisations studied. However, in a few of them – in particular one organisation within the criminal justice sector and three organisations that were already operating mainly through the medium of Welsh independent of the Board's intervention in the field – a good deal of basic work had been done to try to integrate the use of Welsh within key systems and procedures. A number of other organisations had started on this process. These key domains include staff personnel services, the recruitment and appointments system, the intranet computer inputs and outputs produced by staff, internal meetings, and vocational training.

7.1.9   It would be interesting to undertake further research in due course to discover to what extent the use of Welsh has been integrated and mainstreamed in areas like the above within the organisations which have been the subject of specific intervention to this end.

7.2   The influence of lead officers

7.2.1   The evidence provided by representatives of the organisations operating projects sponsored by the Board highlights the fact that the influence of a lead officer within the organisation is a factor of crucial importance as regards:

- Providing general guidance on how to set up the project, and drive it forward;
- Presenting the subject and the concept to the relevant managers who will authorise the implementation of the project;
- Convening the necessary meetings of people who will be involved in the project, and ensuring that the agenda will be an appropriate one;
- Acting as a contact point between the Board and those implementing the project;
- Reporting on the project internally and to the Board, and identifying opportunities to report in a manner that will give the project status and a favourable profile.

7.2.2. During our survey of the organisations concerned, we had a number of opportunities to meet members of staff who had taken part in the projects. A number of these staff said that the contribution of such a lead officer, acting from strong professional/personal motives, with enthusiasm and imagination, had had a great influence on the project and on the morale of those involved with it.

7.2.3   In many cases, it was clear that it was an officer of this type who had first seen the potential for taking action within the organisation and who had put forward the idea of implementing the project. Frequently, this officer had also been responsible for the application to the Board for project funds

7.2.4   In the majority of cases, the organisation had a committee of officers responsible for promoting and facilitating the operation of the Language Scheme and language issues in general, and by operating the project under the guidance of such committee, and sharing responsibility with its members and devolving 'ownership' of the project with them, a valuable staff resource had been created for tackling the challenges of the project.

7.2.5   We have already mentioned the influence of language 'champions' within the organisation – that is, officers who will stimulate and facilitate action at an area, team or departmental level. They may have more 'local' knowledge than a lead officer, and will be more aware of the working environment of those taking part in the project at a departmental level. In every case where champions existed, they were also represented on the type of officers' committee described above. In addition to being a medium for referring information back and forth between the project committee and the relevant staff, it was felt in every case that the participation of such officers had contributed to fostering a team spirit among those who promoted the project, and this in its turn had created some excitement and positivity about the project.

7.3   The influence of Language Schemes

7.3.1   All the organisations studied said that measures or statements in a Language Scheme to 'legitimise', allow and 'authorise' an increase in the internal use of Welsh had been very influential as regards giving new practices an opportunity to take root. In 13 of the 15 organisations studied, there was a consensus that the Language Scheme is the main source of authority and guidance for staff on linguistic issues within the organisation.

7.3.2.   Within the organisations with most experience in the internal use of Welsh, i.e. two thirds of those studied, measures or statements in their Language Schemes to increase the internal use of Welsh had preceded and 'legitimised' practices that were established later – or projects undertaken – to increase internal use. That is, the practices to increase the use of Welsh had arisen from those statements of intent.

7.3.3.   In the other third of the sample, the operational steps to this end had preceded any formal declaration of intent or commitment in the Language Scheme. Within these organisations, a positive experience when testing out new practices has either already produced steps towards adopting a policy or measure to this end when they revise their Language Schemes, or has raised the possibility of such a development.

7.3.4.   The evidence gathered shows that commitments to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace are reinforced or evolve from one Language Scheme to the next, as the organisations studied revise their Language Schemes. We received evidence that confirmed that such change has been gradual and, on the whole, coupled with statements about how it would improve the quality of the service to the public – i.e. one of the Board's key arguments in its guidance document.[7]

7.4   Favourable periods and circumstances for intervention to stimulate change

7.4.1   The evidence gathered highlighted the fact that some periods and circumstances are more favourable than others for enabling organisations to introduce changes in the form of internal policy to increase the use of Welsh, or to change structures, practices and procedures in order to allow an increase in its use. Specific reference was made to the following circumstances as favourable ones of which advantage could be taken to plan and introduce positive interventions

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[7] It will ensure that customers and users receive a more prompt, courteous, equal and complete service, provided by a workforce which is more satisfied and confident in its work (…) By using Welsh internally, strong foundations will be established for offering public services. *Ibid.*, p.12

- When new statutory requirements are introduced – e.g. if there were to be new legislation establishing a staff 'right' to use Welsh when receiving internal services from their employer;
- When the Welsh Assembly Government introduces a new policy or new 'action plan' – e.g. a policy to succeed *Iaith Pawb*;
- When an organisation is established, re-established or reorganised;
- Internal restructuring – e.g. restructuring of departments and services;
- The introduction of new requirements/a new internal policy when revising a Welsh Language Scheme;
- When approving and adopting a Language Skills Strategy that incorporates steps to increase the use of Welsh;
- When inducting new human resources to encourage change – e.g. Welsh development staff and staff to promote bilingualism;
- When undertaking specific projects to target priority areas/aspects e.g.:

  - internal meetings
  - Language Awareness and ITC training
  - intranet development
  - setting up a network of champions and a remit for them
  - announcing a corporate commitment to increasing the use of Welsh
  - introducing new or revised ITC systems
  - setting up new or revised procedures.

7.4.2 In addition to all the above factors, our study also highlighted the fact that an organisation's nature and structure had a great influence on how its officers respond to efforts to increase the use of Welsh. In organisations in the criminal justice sector, particularly the two police forces studied, the decision-making process has a 'command' structure. Within such organisations, the lead officer leads by making decisions and then 'commanding' the workforce to implement them. It is an internal culture with an expectation that staff will obey commands without question. This is very different to the internal cultures of other organisations in the sample, such as the Unitary Councils, where there is a tradition of decision-making by consensus – in a committee, or at a team or departmental meeting – with, frequently, an element of consultation being an integral part of the decision-making process.

7.4.3 Within a 'command' internal structure and culture, officers at the top of the organisation can decide to adopt a policy of increasing the use of Welsh internally, and there is an expectation that everyone in the workforce will accept that and implement it. This is what has been seen to different extents within those organisations in the justice sector that implemented projects to increase the use of Welsh. Within such an internal culture, it is not the practice to question or discuss the appropriateness of policy decisions This means that such a move may possibly require less discussion and persuasion than in internal cultures based on leadership through consensus.

7.4.4 Another factor that influences an organisation's internal culture is its geographical location and the extent to which Welsh is spoken by the local population. Among those organisations operating in the more Welsh-speaking areas, a considerable proportion of their workforces use Welsh naturally in the different situations and circumstances of their daily lives. In many cases, staff in the workforce of such organisations are already using Welsh, particularly spoken Welsh, informally. A number of respondents on behalf of organisations such as the Isle of Anglesey County Council, Ceredigion County Council and the North Wales Probation Service, said this was helpful in establishing the use of Welsh as normative practice by extending and adding to it within their workplaces.

7.4.5 The demographic profile of the local area is also a crucial factor in maintaining continued normative use of Welsh at Cyngor Gwynedd, the National Library of Wales and Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd.

7.5 Interventions and schemes to introduce and maintain change

7.5.1 In this final section, we shall list the main themes and priorities for future action highlighted by this study, namely:

- Mapping different language-use domains and practices in order to identify opportunities to change from English to Welsh. This exercise will also be a means of identifying how to grade those opportunities by ease of implementation. Some of the organisations sponsored were already considering this, to varying degrees, before applying for sponsorship from the Board. [8]

  o To what extent could an immediate change be made in the language used (e.g. drafting e-mail messages, one-to-one meetings with managers, work conversations with colleagues who are Welsh-speaking or learners.
  o To what extent is short/medium term forward planning needed to effect a change of language (e.g. by changing operational procedures and practices in order to hold team or departmental meetings in Welsh or bilingually; planning to translate materials such as personnel services documents)
  o To what extent is long-term forward planning needed to effect a change in the language used (e.g. computer inputs and outputs; basic vocational training organised through centralised UK systems based in England).

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[8] In addition, staff from the two organisations that took part in the pilot scheme organized by IAITH in 2006-7 undertook an exercise of this type. At the beginning of the scheme, staff of the North Wales Police and Ceredigion County Council recorded their daily language use practices and graded the opportunities to change language in the situations concerned. See *Report of the Project for Promoting Bilingual Workplaces* (2007) on the website of IAITH - the Welsh centre for language planning, www.iaith.eu

- Strengthening purposive and strategic planning to include: –

  o Planning/reviewing work duties to take advantage of employees' language skills and to avoid relapses in the event of failure to appoint new staff who are to work through the medium of Welsh.
  o Developing the framework and approaches of the Language Skills Strategy as a tool to assist in managing the above – specifically by providing systems, procedures and guidance to relevant staff for implementing different sections of the Strategy;
  o As part of the above Strategy, developing a framework of language skills levels based on a formal acknowledgement by the organisation that linguistic ability is a skill for the workplace;
  o Mainstreaming the use of Welsh in staff appraisal processes and personal development plans, giving consideration to the fostering of staff Welsh-language skills and of their confidence and preparedness to put those language skills to work.

- Planning for internal marketing of the project's objectives, as well as the advantages and benefits to which it will lead, over a specific period and through various media.

- Normalising and mainstreaming the use of Welsh:

  o In the requirements and contracts of procurement systems, and
  o in arrangements to set up or revise procedures and practices.

- Investing in:

  o Language Awareness Training and making it compulsory for managers and all members of the workforce;
  o staff training and competencies development, particularly Welsh-medium vocational training;
  o and developing extra curricular methods of developing staff skills, confidence and practices.

- Planning and taking action at a micro level, with individuals and groups in their teams and departments, to foster skills, confidence, resolution and Welsh working practices. According to the evidence gathered, schemes to create a network of internal Language Champions are one effective way of promoting this and a tool that could be further developed and supported.

- Seeking a better understanding of the dynamic of the interaction between individuals and among groups, particularly mixed-language groups in various sorts of work contexts;

- Strengthening the co-ordinated support and encouragement given to individual staff over and above their language-skills training by key internal services such as translation units, human resources and information technology departments.

- There is room for the Welsh Language Board to work with the *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development* and the *BCS: The Chartered Institute for IT* to normalise Welsh language issues within these professions.

- Beginning to identify some means of recording and measuring progress in relation to the use of Welsh within those organisations that are in a position to act in this regard, as a basis for planning the maintenance and increase of Welsh-medium and bilingual working practices.

7.6 Planning to identify obstacles and threats and to mitigate risk

7.6.1 Alongside the above priorities for introducing and maintaining change, the evidence gathered highlighted the fact that all the organisations interviewed had identified a number of obstacles to increasing the use of Welsh and/or threats to maintaining the progress achieved. We note in the body of the report that very few organisations set about identifying obstacles and threats in an orderly way, or have made plans in advance to mitigate the risk to their efforts to increase the use of Welsh.

7.6.2 Among the main areas discussed above as giving rise to *internal* obstacles and threats, we note

- Lack of confidence on the part of staff in their Welsh-language skills
- A change in staff and, in consequence, the loss of good networking practices
- The levels of awareness of managers and colleagues and their attitudes
- Failure to forward-plan systems – particularly ITC systems
- Failure to forward plan procedures/arrangements – e.g. arrangements for translation at internal meetings; arrangements to check Welsh drafts of documents
- A lack of leadership and/or a lack of adequate support at the organisation's highest levels
- A lack of supporting resources – whether they be human resources, ITC resources, teaching materials, the ethos of the workplace etc
- The likelihood that resources will become scarcer, and uncertainty as to whether the financial support provided by the Board will continue.

7.6.3 In addition to the above, people mentioned *external* obstacles and threats. We would mention in particular:

- Working in partnerships – partnerships that do not pay sufficient attention to the use of Welsh (i) at their meetings, (ii) in their various types of contact with

members of the partnership, (iii) their 'product' and their outputs to the public, the partners, other organisations and other partnerships.

o Systems procured by a central administration outside of Wales.
o Standard procedures and provisions (such as vocational training) administered by central administration outside Wales.

7.7 Influences on the personal lives of members of staff

7.7.1 In section 6.4 above, we outlined some of the evidence gathered about the way increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace influences the linguistic behaviour of staff outside their place of work, in their personal lives.

7.7.2 As part of that short treatment of the issue, we also considered evidence that increasing their use of Welsh had increased the confidence of Welsh speakers and learners, and had strengthened their commitment to using the language.

7.7.3 In view of the possibly far-reaching implications of such findings, implications that will be of interest to the Board and to others in the field of language planning, we have identified through this work the need for further research into the relationship between 'language planning in the workplace' and the influence of that planning on staff as private citizens in their communities and their homes.

IAITH cyf.
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