Strategic Plan: Promoting the use of Welsh in the Workplace

Introduction: vision and aim

Bangor University's Welsh Language Scheme (1 March 2013) states that the 'University acknowledges its responsibility to promote and facilitate use of the Welsh language and to create opportunities to use Welsh' (paragraph 1.6).

The starting point for this strategic plan is a desire to fully consider one basic fact: language is a living social phenomena. We have detailed statistics regarding the demography of Welsh speakers in the University (the number of staff who are fluent in Welsh, the number of staff learning Welsh, etc.), but these statistics do not show how much Welsh is used in the institution on a daily basis. As well as keeping an eye on our linguistic demography we must also promote the use of Welsh on a day to day basis. This plan, therefore, introduces a strategy and guidelines to promote the use of Welsh in the workplace in the University. It focuses on staff (bearing in mind that increasing the use amongst staff will enrich the experience of Welsh students at the University).

The plan suggests that we should take advantage of the University's present resources in new, creative ways and introduce guidelines to staff which will enable us to promote the Welsh language in our institution. The University already invests (both financially and in time allowed for staff to attend lessons) to ensure that staff have every opportunity to learn Welsh and improve their skills in the language. Therefore, this strategic plan should be regarded as a means of ensuring that the institution obtains the greatest possible benefits from that investment.

It is submitted in a positive spirit regarding staff development. It is not an attempt to criticize or find faults but, rather, a plan which will help staff to develop their linguistic skills and use them more often. As using a language depends on the individuals who speak it, the nature and conditions of that use vary from context to context, and consequently flexibility is a basic principle which is upheld here. A substantial number of effective schemes have been trialled at the University in recent years and it is important that we learn from these lessons and continue to facilitate (or resurrect) the good practices.

Context and Background

Bangor University takes pride in the fact that it is the most Welsh in nature of all Wales' universities and the most bilingual university in the UK. In addition to its desire and commitment to play a positive role in the local area (with the majority of the residents of the counties of Gwynedd and Ynys Môn being native Welsh speakers), the University's bilingual culture is an obvious link with other universities worldwide who are based in bilingual or multilingual areas.

However, it must be acknowledged that every body or institution which tries to increase the use of Welsh amongst its staff faces a challenging situation. Workplace traditions, pressure

of work and, more than anything perhaps, a lack of confidence amongst staff - including fluent Welsh speakers - to use Welsh at work sometimes militates against the use of Welsh in bilingual workplaces. Despite these challenges, however, it must be acknowledged that there is a strong business case for promoting and facilitating a bilingual workplace. The benefits offered by a bilingual workplace include:

- flexibility in terms of staffing
- processes being administered more effectively (e.g. less dependence on translation)
- an increase in staff satisfaction, their effectiveness and their commitment to the institution
- better service for the customer

The fact that the Welsh language is an integral part of Bangor University's administration allows staff to develop and maintain skills and the institution's bilingualism enriches the experience of our students and everyone who comes into contact with Bangor University.

Before the establishment of the post of Welsh Language Commissioner (in April 2012) the Welsh Language Board during its final years of operation promoted 'bilingual workplaces' as one of its main themes. A grants fund 'Promoting and Facilitating Bilingual Workplaces' was established which gave institutions opportunities to look at ways of encouraging their staff to use Welsh. Bangor University took advantage of opportunities to initiate a number of promising schemes during the past few years to develop opportunities for staff to use Welsh and to encourage them to do so, including:

- developing language awareness courses
- developing one-to-one training in using Welsh on the computer
- developing the Cymorth Cymraeg website
- developing a Welsh medium leadership course for managers.

The Strategic Plan: Promoting the Use of Welsh in the Workplace builds on this strong foundation.

Focus of the work

This Strategic Plan focuses on four specific areas, namely:

1. Raising Awareness
2. Building Confidence
3. Maintain a critical mass of domains with Welsh medium administration
4. Identifying workplaces which can benefit from intensive collaboration with Canolfan Bedwyr, Welsh for Adults Tutors and others and develop a relevant research infrastructure

In the context of the two former fields, we will be working on cross-institutional plans. In the context of the latter two fields we will be working on a 'micro level' with specific departments at the University. In this respect, this plan provides Bangor University with an opportunity to break new ground in the field of bilingual workplaces, not only in Wales but on an international level. By combining research specialisms and specialisms resulting from the University's practical work in the field of language planning and learning Welsh, our aim is to develop an action framework and support models which will provide guidance to other institutions who wish to increase their capacity in working bilingually. Only a little research and detailed and long term practical work has been done in this field and, therefore, there is an opportunity here for Bangor University to get to grips with the factors which encourage staff to speak Welsh, or which impede them, and offer guidance on the issues. To accomplish this we will:

(1) Develop a framework for long term planning to safeguard domains with Welsh medium administration
(2) Develop a framework to support and change language use practices in various departments at the University

The Action Plan linked to this document provides details on how the vision and strategy outlined above will be implemented.

Measuring Success

The success of this Strategic Plan will be seen in the *increase in the use of Welsh in the workplace* by staff who take part in the projects which derive from the Plan. By working with the Behaviour Change team at the School of Psychology, specific targets and a methodology for measuring the use of Welsh will be developed on a project, team and individual member of staff basis.

Indeed, establishing a methodolgy for measuring the use of Welsh and measuring the impact of interventions will be a sign of success. Qualitative and quantatative data is very rare in this field. By combining research and practice in a way which gives measurable results, Bangor University will make a significant contribution to developing Welsh in the Workplace as a field of study and practice.

Another measure of the success of the Plan will be the extent to which it will influence working practices in the University and beyond in relation to Welsh in the Workplace.

Strategic Plan: Promoting the use of Welsh in the Workplace: Action Plan

Area of Work 1: Raising Awareness

RAISING AWARENESS			
Activity	**Relevant to whom**	**Responsibility for actioning**	**Targets**
Preparing guidance on implementing the Language Scheme	All	Canolfan Bedwyr	Delivering presentations on the Language Scheme in various fora every year (e.g. for managers, administrative staff, heads of department) and aiming for 3 formal presentations a year in addition to delivering the presentation on the Language Scheme which is a standing item on the agenda of the monthly induction for new staff members.
Ensuring that relevant staff receive training on how to deal with the Welsh language during the recruitment process.	Managers	Human Resources	Deliver training on recruitment
Ensure that training and guidance is available so that bilingual meetings are chaired in a maner that promotes the use of Welsh	Chairs of bilingual meetings	Canolfan Bedwyr and Human Resources	Deliver training and provide guidance on chairing bilingual meetings
Establishing a network of 'Language Champions' in	Managers to choose	Canolfan Bedwyr and managers in	Establishing the network as the

departments and colleges	individuals who are willing to be responsible for promoting Welsh in their school / college / department. This role would have a practical (rather than a strategic) focus: e.g. providing information about Welsh events, helping with mentoring, holding informal chat sessions, distributing Iaith Gwaith badges etc.	the Colleges / Departments	Strategy for Promoting the Use of Welsh in the Workplace is launched. Holding 2 meetings annually for the Network Champions.
Welsh Jobs Fair	Staff who teach through the medium of Welsh and students	Canolfan Bedwyr and UMCB	Hold the Fair annually. Even though the focus of this event is students, it is nonetheless an event that raises awareness across the institution of the importance of Welsh in the workplace and of preparing students for the opportunities available to them.

Area of Work 2: Building Confidence

Building Confidence			
Activity	**Relevant to whom**	**Responsibility for actioning**	**Targets**
Language Lessons	All	Welsh Tutor for Staff and Canolfan Bedwyr	Continue to hold the full and varied provision which is available.
Welsh in the Workplace qualifications	All	Welsh Tutor for Staff and Canolfan Bedwyr	Continue to develop Welsh in the workplace qualifications at various levels.
Welsh and Computer Resources	All	Canolfan Bedwyr	Canolfan Bedwyr to organise and offer one-to-one training at their desks for staff members who wish to use more written Welsh.
Mentoring	All	Canolfan Bedwyr	Develop a network of mentors who are eager to assist staff to develop their use of Welsh. Pilot the plan in the Library and recruit and train mentors to expand the plan.
Guidelines for speakers on every level to assist them to use Welsh in the workplace and to encourage others to do so as well: 1) Confident fluent Welsh speakers. 2) Fluent Welsh speakers who lack confidence, fairly	All	Canolfan Bedwyr, Welsh Tutor for Staff, Welsh for Adults Centre	Produce guidelines for each of these staff groups and then: • Place the guidelines on the Cymorth Cymraeg website • Discuss the guidelines in language classes,

fluent speakers and passive speakers 3) Welsh Learners 4) Individuals with no Welsh at all			awareness sessions etc. • Inform staff about the guidelines through the Champions Network
Cymorth Cymraeg Website	All	Canolfan Bedwyr	Continuous: develop the website to include guidelines and good practice which are relevant to the plan to Promote the Use of Welsh in the Workplace, especially the 'Building Confidence' activities listed above.
Raise awareness amongst staff who are fluent Welsh speakers of the support needs of those who are learning Welsh	All	Canolfan Bedwyr, Welsh for Adults and Staff Development	Ongoing through various projects (e.g. the mentoring project above).
Promote the use of Welsh through 'informal' sessions	All	Welsh for Adults, Canolfan Bedwyr, Ponito	Continue with informal sessions currently in place and identify new opportunities – e.g. through innovative use of spaces / events in Pontio

Area of Work 3: Maintain critical mass of domains with Welsh medium administration

MAINTAIN CRITICAL MASS OF DOMAINS WITH WELSH MEDIUM ADMINISTRATION			
Activity	**Relevant to whom**	**Responsibility for actioning**	**Targets**
Pay particular attention here to the requirements of the Code of Practice for appointing staff in accordance with the Language Scheme. This is important as one of the main benchmarks of the viability of any language in any community is the extent to which it is used as the main language in different contexts or domains. Some sociolinguists and language planners refer to these domains as places where a minority language can consolidate and/or as domains where speakers of a minority language can go with the certainty that the language of their choice will be spoken there.	Examples of domains with Welsh medium administration include Canolfan Bedwyr, Welsh for Adults Centre, Pontio, Corporate Communications and Marketing, some elements of the School of Music, SBBS	Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for the Welsh language, Human Resources	On-going In the context of this target, there would be an opportunity for staff who wish to immerse themselves in a Welsh medium work environment in order to improve their language skills to spend a few days in Canolfan Bedwyr.
Long term planning to ensure the viability of the Welsh language amongst staff at the University. Analysing staffing data to identify risks and opportunities	All	Establish a supervisory group, chaired by the PVC Welsh Medium, which will plan bilingual capacity in the mid and long term. This group	Establishing the group during 2014-15.

regarding bilingual capacity.		will be steered by Human Resources and will look up to 10 years ahead at the changes in demography that are likely to impact on bilingual staffing capacity. One of the group's remit will be planning – e.g. on the basis of vocational groups – how the University will respond to likely changes in the workforce.	

Area of Work 4: Identifying workplaces which can benefit from intensive collaboration with Canolfan Bedwyr, Welsh for Adults Tutors and others and develop relevant research infrastructure

MICRO LEVEL PROJECTS WITH INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS AND RELEVANT RESEARCH			
Activity	**Relevant to whom**	**Responsibility for actioning**	**Targets**
Together with relevant research teams, especially the Centre for Behaviour Change, plan and implement projects to increase the confidence of staff with different levels of language ability to use Welsh.	Workplaces that have been identified as ones which would benefit from intense co-operation with Canolfan Bedwyr and the Welsh for Adults Centre.	Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for the Welsh Language, Canolfan Bedwyr.	Carry out a pilot project in the University Library in 2015/16.
From 2015/16, a PhD student funded by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol will be working on a project in the field of Behaviour Change and Language Planning. This work will feed directly into the development of this strategy.	School of Psychology and Canolfan Bedwyr	Supervisory team and PhD student	PhD to commence in October 2015
Hold an international symposium to encourage discussion between language planning, language teaching and behaviour change specialists about how to turn passive speakers into active speakers.	Specialists invited to the symposium	Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for the Welsh Language	Symposium to be held in December 2015

Hold a national conference on using Welsh in the workplace. The conference will bring together workplaces from across Wales and from across different sectors in order to discuss interventions which has changed the 'language behaviour' of staff in the workplace.	Bangor University staff and staff from other workplaces in Wales	Canolfan Bedwyr	Conference to be held in October/November 2015