



Welsh Language Volunteering Framework

A guide for third sector organisations



Gwirfoddoli Cymru
Volunteering Wales



MENTRAU IAITH



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mentrau Iaith Cymru wrote this document
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planning.



MENTRAU IAITH



y ganolfan cynllunio iaith
welsh centre for language planning

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Table of Contents



<u>Introduction</u>	4
<u>The research</u>	5
<u>The main findings of the research</u>	6
<u>Why consider the Welsh language?</u>	9
<u>Welsh Speakers and Volunteering</u>	10
<u>Benefits to voluntary organisations</u>	12
<u>Benefits to Welsh speaking voluntary organisations:</u>	15
<u>Benefits for volunteers:</u>	16
<u>Success Pathway</u>	17
<u>Identifying need</u>	18
<u>Recruitment</u>	20
<u>Training</u>	25
<u>Help and support</u>	27
<u>Rewards</u>	29
<u>Support network</u>	30
<u>Thank yous</u>	39

Introduction

This framework is part of a wider initiative by Mentrau Iaith Cymru to create a situation where:

- voluntary organisations have a full understanding of how to actively attract volunteers who wish to use the Welsh language, and
- there is an increase in the number of people who volunteer and do so through the medium of Welsh.

The framework is based on research gathered through interviews and focus groups with voluntary organisations. Through that work, we have gathered examples of good practice and proactive ideas about how to recruit Welsh speaking volunteers. We have also looked at the barriers currently facing voluntary organisations in this context.

This framework offers practical ideas on how to solve those challenges.

We very much hope that you enjoy and that your organisations will be able to benefit from these ideas.

We have included existing useful guidance and documents on this topic in this document. Attachments appear throughout the guide.



The research



Discussions were held in three areas:

- Pembrokeshire
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Conwy

These areas were selected based on their variations and the differences in the numbers and percentages of Welsh speakers, and in terms of their geographical distance from each other.

Focus groups were held in the three areas in collaboration with the local voluntary council (CVC) and the local Menter Iaith. The discussion focused specifically on:

- current recruitment practices in general,
- the barriers to recruiting Welsh speaking volunteers, and
- good practice in terms of recruiting Welsh speaking volunteers.

Thirty voluntary organisations were involved in this process. A full list of these can be found at the end of this guide.

In addition to the discussions above, 1-to-1 conversations were held with Welsh-speaking entities working at a national level. In particular, this included:

- Mudiad Meithrin
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- National Centre for Learning Welsh
- Mentrau Iaith Cymru
- National Eisteddfod of Wales



The main findings of the research

Local networks

There are strong and supportive networks in the three areas. Robust voluntary networks were identified led by the Local Voluntary Councils and networks of Welsh language organisations working well with the Mentrau Iaith. Examples of joint working were found mainly on 'task and finish' events eg finding volunteers for local festivals eg Parti Ponty and the National Eisteddfod. There was little evidence of proactive collaboration in recruiting volunteers on long term volunteering experiences. Although the CVCs and the Mentrau Iaith knew each other and shared information, partners felt that there was an opportunity to develop the relationships in order to be able to reach communities of Welsh speakers and learners.

Advertising opportunities

Several organisations referred to the fact that their opportunities were identified as being Welsh medium by using the 'badge' available on the Volunteering Wales platform. They also acknowledged that they were not always able to set the text bilingually due to time pressures or lack of translation skills within the team.

Although a number of them were looking for Welsh speakers, the organisations did not identify what linguistic skills they were looking for and there was no further detail on the Welsh language requirements of the opportunities.

Most third sector organisations (beyond the Welsh medium entities) used official platforms to promote opportunities eg Volunteering Wales and local versions. A number of organisations requested support for specific access to Welsh speakers and learners at a local level.

How organisations are perceived

A discussion was had regarding how large national/UK organisations struggle to engage with local communities.

There was also an example of how some organisations have had to use their own initiative to change their image at a local level.

It was also discussed how a Welsh image can attract Welsh speakers and learners by providing a location where they feel comfortable using their skills.

The need for organisations to send welcoming and inclusive 'signs/signals' to be able to attract volunteers was discussed. This does not need to mean major changes but small things such as the use of social media, the type of Welsh used to communicate, standard and accurate translations, and messages written specifically for Welsh speakers.

Training

There were few examples of training tailored to Welsh speakers or for volunteers who wanted to develop their Welsh medium skills. There was one example of how important training was not only to attract volunteers but also in terms of quality of service.

Formal volunteering

It became apparent that Welsh speakers continue to see the term 'volunteering' as too formal to the kind of experiences they relate to within their communities. The need for organisations wishing to recruit Welsh speakers was discussed in order to find a way of operating within those communities in a way that attracts Welsh speakers.



Why consider the Welsh language?

Wales is a bilingual country and has a strong ambition to increase the use of the Welsh language.

“The Welsh language is one of the treasures of Wales. It is part of what defines us as people and as a nation. Our ambition as Welsh Government is to see the number of people able to enjoy speaking and using Welsh reach a million by 2050. This is certainly a challenging ambition, but a challenge we believe is worthwhile and necessary if we are to secure the vitality of the language for future generations.

[Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers](#)”

The third sector has a prominent role to play in this ambition especially as we discuss increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace, in services and of course, the social use of the Welsh language. With nearly 44,000 voluntary organisations working in Wales and 124,800 working in the third sector, there is no doubt that it has a significant influence. (The Voluntary Sector Data Hub - [The voluntary sector in Wales - WCVA \(wcva.wales\)](#))



Welsh Speakers and Volunteering

The research for this work showed that voluntary organisations see the recruitment of Welsh speakers to volunteer as challenging. The main message from voluntary organisations is that they receive little response to advertisements for Welsh speaking volunteers. In discussing their recruitment methods, it became apparent that they did not feel that these applications for Welsh speakers reached the target audience.

The discussions that took place reflect what was presented in research commissioned by the Welsh Language Commissioner in 2014 which states:

“

“One interesting finding was that more Welsh speaking volunteers found their way to volunteering through informal, traditional routes, through family links, the chapel or other societies, rather than by using organisations promoting volunteering or via large British charities.”

Cynog Prys School of Social Sciences, Bangor
University and Wales Council for Voluntary
Action 2014

”

“

One interesting thing is that the people from the community who were part of the arrangements did not see themselves as volunteers, they were pleased to be involved in a new, exciting event and did not see themselves doing voluntary work.

Fel'na Mai Festival

”

The work of Volunteering in Welsh 2022 therefore addresses building bridges between Welsh speakers and volunteering opportunities encouraging:

- voluntary organisations to plan how they engage with volunteers

- Welsh speakers to use methods that are new to them to find more volunteering opportunities

This guide addresses these issues and recognises that Welsh speakers tend to use direct Welsh language networks rather than step into the world of WCVA, Local Volunteer Centres and the official networks that exist within the third sector in Wales.



Benefits to voluntary organisations

- Increasing your ability to provide bilingual services
- Demonstrating an awareness of the potential language needs of your audience
- Enabling you to support or serve Welsh speakers who 'need' a Welsh medium service - the Active Offer

The 'Active Offer' simply means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it.

Making the Welsh language as visible as the English language and placing the service-user at the heart of the service is fundamental to the Active Offer.

- It means changing culture, which removes the responsibility from the service user to request a service through the medium of Welsh.
- Providing a service that focuses on the individual is fundamental to the 'Active Offer'. In practice, this means providing a specifically tailored service that enables the individual to be sure that he/she is in control of the situation and fully understands what services are being offered.

[Active offer information pack – Social Services and Social Care](#)



- Increasing your appeal to a wider audience and increasing your ability to compete for grants

As a distributor of public funds, we place some expectations on the projects we fund. These expectations include:

- The ability to operate bilingually and be open and accessible to Welsh speakers and non Welsh speakers
- To not treat the Welsh language less favourably than English (including ensuring that materials, information and services are available in Welsh) Cronfa Gymunedol y Loteri Genedlaethol The National Lottery Community Fund 4
- Increase opportunity to use Welsh (including providing services in Welsh and increasing opportunity to use Welsh in the funded activities)



- Being part of a national 'movement' to support the Welsh Government's strategy to create 'A Million Welsh Speakers by 2050' and support the Well-being of Future Generations Act and its seven well-being goals



"We have big ambitions for protecting our environment and the future generations in Wales and are leading the way with our Environment Act and Well-being of Future Generations Act"

— Sophie Howe | Future Generations Commissioner for Wales



- Opening the door to a vibrant and inclusive Welsh culture
- Demonstrating your understanding and appreciation of the Welsh language, history and culture, making your organisation appealing to audiences across Wales and beyond.



Benefits to Welsh speaking voluntary organisations

- Practical support for your everyday work
- Increasing your capacity to operate
- Raising awareness of your organisation's work amongst the public
- Ensuring community ownership of your organisation's work
- Ensuring the support of communities and individuals to your organisation's work locally, regionally and nationally



Benefits for volunteers

- An opportunity to volunteer in their chosen language, increasing the appeal of volunteering
- An opportunity for new speakers to practice their language skills
- To be involved in the work of an organisation that values Welsh medium skills and services
- To gain new skills and experiences
- To increase self-esteem and purpose
- To gain a qualification or reward for your work



Success Pathway

There are many things you can do to succeed in recruiting and supporting your volunteers. To highlight the possible steps we have created a Success Pathway that identifies different elements to consider.

The pathway has 5 steps:

1

Identifying need

2

Recruitment

3

Training

4

Help and support

5

Rewards

1

Identifying need

Firstly, you need to look at **exactly** what you need. For organisations where the Welsh language is not the main language of work, this involves **looking at the workforce and volunteers** who currently work with you to **understand what skills they have**. You can do this by using a 'Language Skills Questionnaire'. This is a simple process and an opportunity for the workforce to identify and share their skills with you.

It is important that they understand why you are asking. Tell them that you wish to know **where your organisation needs additional support** to provide services or to work bilingually. Explain that this is not an evaluation exercise but an opportunity for them to offer something extra to their work if they have skills that you were not aware of.

The results of the questionnaire will provide an opportunity for you to identify gaps and develop a Volunteering Strategy that considers how to seek volunteers who can offer something special to your organisation.

It is also an opportunity to start the conversation about the Welsh language in your organization, embedding language awareness amongst Welsh and non-Welsh speakers.



This involves considering exactly where you are looking for support in your organisation and then thinking about what sort of language skills volunteers need to carry out the work. Draw up a list of skills required.

This is your volunteer profile.

The following link leads to a guide document created by Volunteering Wales.

[Develop a Volunteering Strategy - Third Sector Support Wales](https://thirdsectorsupport.wales)
(thirdsectorsupport.wales)



2

Recruitment

Once you have identified the gaps, you can create a description of what you need from volunteers. It is vitally important that you identify exactly what you are looking for in order to encourage Welsh speakers to take up your opportunity. A list of specific tasks may be sufficient. The skills that bilingual people have vary significantly and each individual has different strengths. Not every bilingual speaker will wish to write a report in Welsh or make a presentation in front of a group of people. Some will be very happy to do so, while others are more keen to use their spoken language eg to offer a telephone service with the elderly or to support children in a leisure activity. It is great to specify that you are looking for a Welsh speaker, but you need to go a step further too – be clear about what you are looking for and tailor each advert to inspire volunteers.

Please also note that the advert needs to be bilingual. Seeing an advert in Welsh will show the volunteer that you are inclusive and consider linguistic needs from the outset. Use direct Welsh without being too flowery. Writing in a language that everyone can understand will make your organisation more appealing to less experienced speakers. This is to model your values as an organisation focussed on the Welsh language.

Please do not depend on free online translation software, these are often incorrect, and this could lead to creating a negative impression of your organisation. But help is available! You could ask your local Welsh organisations for guidance, and we have listed useful contacts and links, including the 'Helo Blod' free translation service, at the end of this document.

Consider where the advert appears. We encourage everyone to place their advertisements for volunteering opportunities on the Volunteering Wales platform.

Here are the badges on the system to help you:



Use this badge to promote volunteering opportunities through the medium of Welsh



Use this badge to promote an opportunity that needs occasional Welsh.



Use this badge for opportunities where you are looking for volunteers who are learning Welsh.

Within the description of your opportunity, you then have the option to expand upon the description of how much Welsh can be used, by specifying.

By having one location where everyone advertises volunteering opportunities, marketing campaigns can be created that help each entity attract volunteers, as well as making it easier for potential volunteers to find suitable opportunities. In addition, **you need to target Welsh speakers specifically** by accessing the Welsh medium networks locally.



Good practice – Fel 'na Mai Festival

Fel 'na Mai Festival started out as a joint venture between the Menter and members of Crymych RFC Choir. Volunteers from the Menter and members of the choir have been instrumental in ensuring the success of the Festival. In working together in this way, a wide cross section of volunteers were used with different skills, covering financial aspects to on-site expertise, marshalling and parking. The volunteers also had so many connections - people who would not otherwise have been involved in the organising and running of the event. This, of course, has strengthened the number of volunteers the Menter can ask for help again in the future. Of course, we must have Welsh speaking volunteers, but a few learners helped too and had the opportunity to speak Welsh in a very informal atmosphere and to meet new people. It is great to get young people volunteering, some of whom have played an active role in the organising committee and others, such as members of the junior Rugby Club team working with the local Menter and Cylch Meithrin to run activities for the children. In doing so, they were able to develop skills that we hope will benefit them.



Young People

Many organisations note difficulty in attracting young people to volunteer. For your organisation to appeal to this audience reach out to the local Welsh networks that they use, be clear about the opportunities you have and how helping you could benefit the young person and the community.

Contact organisations who work with young people who speak Welsh, like the Young Farmers and Yr Urdd. Contact local Welsh medium high schools, further education colleges and Welsh Language Student Unions within universities.

Remember to use social media, videos work well, show the young people what's possible in a fun and appealing way.



ADVANCED BACCALAUREATE SKILLS CHALLENGE CERTIFICATE

As part of the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate young people pursuing the qualification complete four components, one of these being the Community Challenge.

The purpose of the Community Challenge is to build the skills of the learners, while encouraging the learners to identify, develop and participate in opportunities that will benefit the community.

The Community Challenge is not the same as having a person volunteer directly to an opportunity your organisation has advertised. The young people are expected to research and identify needs in the community; plan activities themselves (supervised by an organisation) and participate in community activities for at least 30 hours over a period of at least 4 weeks.

It is possible for organisations to indicate that they are open to giving young people the opportunity to support the aims of their organisation on the CAVAC website. See [Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate \(wjec.co.uk\)](http://WelshBaccalaureateAdvancedSkillsChallengeCertificate.wjec.co.uk) for examples from a variety of organisations, and you can contact Llinos Griffiths for more information – llinos.griffiths@wjec.co.uk



3

Training

Offering training that considers the Welsh language is another way of attracting Welsh speaking volunteers. It clearly shows that you have considered their linguistic needs and value their linguistic skills from the outset. It shows that your organisation is a welcoming and safe place for Welsh speakers **modelling exactly the type of service** you wish to offer.

In addition, offering Welsh or bilingual training may be a way of attracting speakers who are less experienced or confident to operate through the medium of Welsh.

In some situations, the provision of Welsh medium training is necessary in order to **give volunteers the appropriate skills** to provide a service through the medium of Welsh. This is particularly the case in organisations where there is a very specialist language or where the use of language directly influences the service.



Good practice – Samaritans Cymru (Bangor Branch)

Recruitment of Welsh speaking volunteers has become more difficult within the overall Samaritans process. The Branch therefore established a specific procedure for recruiting Welsh speakers - Welsh medium recruitment information, briefing, interviews, and offering the initial training course through the medium of Welsh - a course adapted/translated into Welsh by the Branch itself. Raising awareness and advertising this course has certainly ensured a number of volunteers who would not otherwise have joined us.

The Branch has also developed an ambitious Language Scheme given the current situation within the Samaritans in order to ensure that Welsh speakers are treated equally within the Branch's day-to-day activities, after receiving training.



4

Help and support

The next step is to retain your volunteers.

“Volunteers are the lifeblood of voluntary and community organisations in Wales. They bring so many benefits – but recruiting and retaining volunteers means creating a positive and supportive environment.”
WCVA

Ensuring they enjoy volunteering for you and feel supported in the role is essential. This includes creating an environment that is inclusive and welcoming. There are various ways of doing this:

- A member of staff who is responsible for them and acts as a mentor - this includes a clear point of contact in your organisation and a place for the volunteer to go for support or to share concerns. If you have a member of staff who speaks Welsh or is learning Welsh, give them the opportunity to use their skills by supporting the volunteer.
- Bespoke resources to support them – resources you share with volunteers should be engaging and accessible, for some that means that Welsh medium resources are available. Where possible, you should develop bilingual resources.

- Share stories about your volunteers in the Welsh press. This will add value to their service and will act as an advert for your organisation and volunteering opportunities.

Good practice – Gartholwg Centre

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“We offer learners the opportunity to come and help with events and give them the opportunity to practise speaking the language in an informal environment. We also attract sixth form pupils who study Welsh second language in nearby secondary schools. They often say that it is difficult to find ‘safe’ opportunities/places to practise speaking the language.”

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5

Rewards

Volunteers (not just Welsh speakers!) like to be rewarded for their work. However, this can vary considerably. Examples of rewards:

- Training that leads to a qualification
- Certificate
- Volunteer tickets (vouchers/experiences/hours as rewards)
- Food vouchers
- Tickets to local events
- Free admission to an event
- Discounts on a service/product
- Recognition in the paper/social media

Before deciding on a reward – consider your volunteers, their interests and background and base your decision on that. Consulting them would ensure the reward is appealing and would make them feel that they are central to your organisation.



Support network

Having a network of organisations that can help you is an important step towards recruiting Welsh speaking volunteers. The net needs to be cast widely in order to find the people and skills that you are looking for. Using organisations that individuals are familiar with is a way of increasing your appeal and leading you closer to potential communities and volunteers!

This can change the way individuals perceive your organisation. This is particularly relevant if you are:

- a large organisation that is perceived as being an official or formal place
- an organisation that has its roots beyond Wales or works internationally
- an organisation approaching the Welsh language for the first time and you do not currently have Welsh speaking staff or Welsh language resources
- an organisation that works in a particular area that is perceived as being English or British eg health or technology.

There are a number of Welsh organisations that can support you in your campaign to recruit Welsh speakers. They have access to Welsh speakers and are organisations that are familiar and well known to the volunteers you are looking for.



Mentrau Iaith Cymru

Potential support



Mentrau Iaith Cymru (MIC) is a national organisation that supports a network of 22 local Welsh language initiatives, Mentrau Iaith, across Wales.

[Mentrau Iaith Cymru | The Mentrau Iaith](http://MentrauIaithCymru.org.uk)

MIC supports the Mentrau Iaith network in a variety of ways, such as marketing and communications, training and lobbying for the sake of the Welsh language. Sharing information, experiences, ideas and resources between the Mentrau Iaith and other partners in Wales helps us all to promote the language and support our communities.

Visit the MIC website to find out more about the Menter that operates in your area and see how they can support you in finding volunteers. It is likely that they are using volunteers in their own activities. Pick up the phone and ask for advice.





dysgucymraeg.cymru
learnwelsh.cymru

The National Centre for Learning Welsh is responsible for all aspects of the Learn Welsh sector – from the curriculum and resources for tutors to research, marketing, communications and e-learning.

[Welcome | Learn Welsh](#)

They have thousands of Welsh learners in their network – why not offer learners the chance to volunteer in your organisation? Ask the Centre for support by sharing your opportunity or by contacting social media sites.



Community Newspapers (Papurau Bro)

Potential support



[What is a Papur Bro?](#)
[| Papurau Bro Cymru](#)

Almost every area in Wales has its own Papur Bro, which shares stories about their local areas in Welsh. They include village and town news, international and national articles, puzzles, interviews, adverts, local history and much more.

It is a great place to advertise volunteering opportunities, reaching the heart of Welsh speaking communities.





www.urdd.cymru

Urdd Gobaith Cymru is a National Voluntary Youth Organisation with over 55,000 members aged between 8 and 25 years old. It provides opportunities for children and young people to enjoy experiences through the medium of Welsh, which will enable them to make a positive contribution in their communities.

Each region has a branch and officers specialising in a range of different activities such as arts, sports and humanitarian experiences. Get in touch to share information or to appeal for young volunteers.



As well as supporting you to recruit, there is also practical support for using the Welsh language. Some examples include:

Canolfan Bedwyr

Potential support



[Useful Resources](http://bangor.ac.uk)
(bangor.ac.uk)

Canolfan Bedwyr at Bangor University has provided a host of resources available to organisations in Wales to support their use of the Welsh language. These resources include:

- Software to support written Welsh (Cysgliad)
- Ap Geiriaduron
- Dictionaries and Thesauruses
- Written Welsh Tutorials
- Clear Welsh Guidelines

Small companies employing 10 or fewer people can download Cysgliad software free of charge.



Welsh Language Commissioner

Potential support



[Welsh Language Commissioner](#)

The Welsh Language Commissioner's Facilitation team can support you by offering:

- one to one meetings
- seminars
- training

The team can support charities to plan their Welsh language services and prepare a Welsh Language Development Plan approved by the Commissioner

They also have guidance and research which:

- share best practice
- look at the attitudes of customers and charity donors towards the Welsh language

The Facilitation team also provides a free proofreading service of up to 1000 words.

National Centre for Learning Welsh

Potential support



dysgucymraeg.cymru
learnwelsh.cymru

[Work Welsh Services |
Learning Welsh](#)

The National Centre for Learning Welsh runs a Work Welsh programme. Work Welsh aims to strengthen Welsh language skills in the workplace.

Work Welsh offers a range of flexible, fully funded training to employers.

Helo Blod

Potential support



[Welcome to Helo Blod
| Helo Blod \(gov.wales\)](#)

Helo Blod is a fast and friendly Welsh language translation and advice service to help you use more Welsh in your business or charity. And, it's free.

There is lots of support available to help you attract volunteers:

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) As the national membership body for voluntary organisations in Wales, WCVA exists to enable voluntary organisations to make a bigger difference together. WCVA Volunteering page: <https://wcva.cymru/volunteering/>

Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales. It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). You can find contact details for your local CVC here: <https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/>

Volunteering Wales: is the place to advertise your Volunteering opportunities: <https://volunteering-wales.net/> and now there is also a specific page about volunteering using the Welsh language: <https://volunteering-wales.net/welsh>

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PAVS
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Sandy Bear Children's Bereavement Charity
Scout Cymru
Wales Air Ambulance
Age Cymru
Pembrokeshire People First
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
Versus Arthritis
Home Start Cymru
Menter Iaith Sir Benfro
Urdd
Mudiad Meithrin
Menter Iaith Conwy
CAB
Samariaid Bangor
Cares Wales
Victim Support
FLVC
NSPCC
Canolfan Gartholwg
Menter Iaith RCT
The National Centre for Learning Welsh
Urdd Gobaith Cymru
Eisteddfod Genedlaethol
Papurau Bro Cymru