

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

4. Volunteers

4.5 Attracting Welsh speaking volunteers



In recent years voluntary organisations have increasingly come to recognise the importance of promoting equality and diversity. This affirms the Welsh Government's vision outlined in the [Voluntary Sector Scheme \(2000\)](#), which recognises that everyone has a right to participate and be included in the life of their community through volunteering.

In order to respect equality and ensure social inclusion here in Wales, organisations are increasingly looking to operate bilingually. The publication of the Welsh Government's document 'Iaith fyw; iath byw' ([Welsh Language strategy 2012 – 17](#)) states – 'Our vision is to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales' also to 'Strengthen the use of the Welsh language in everyday life'.

Although the main argument for promoting diversity and equality is one of social justice, by operating bilingually your organisation can also benefit by:

- Adopting good practice. Giving a client real choice regarding the use of language is the essence of good practice.
- Improving its image as a Welsh organisation.
- Reflecting the community it serves
- Appealing to a wider spectrum of volunteers.
- Improving its chances of attracting funding from bodies who look favourably on an organisation with a policy of attracting volunteers from a cross section of society.
- Improving its quality of services to the public.

These may be reasons why your organisation will be eager to recruit Welsh speaking volunteers as part of a team, but there is also a need to consider the recruitment strategy used. If Welsh speaking volunteers are required to fulfill special tasks through the medium of Welsh, such as answering the phone, speaking to Welsh media or working with Welsh speaking clients, this should be made clear from the outset. Not all Welsh speakers will be happy to perform these roles. It is better to aim to increase bilingualism generally throughout the organisation than to limit your interest to fulfil specific tasks in Welsh.

How do we recruit Welsh speaking volunteers?

Volunteering is a part of life in Welsh communities where traditionally people have helped each other and been involved in community activities.

All kinds of voluntary groups spring from communities in order to meet the needs of local people. The people involved are often unaware that they are volunteers; “volunteering” is often seen as something to do with the establishment and formal organisations.

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

- Ensure that Welsh speaking volunteers feel welcome in your organisation. This could be made explicit in your equal opportunities or diversity policy.
- A bilingual image for the organisation will reflect its commitment to treating the Welsh and English languages as equal.
- Providing bilingual information, using informal, friendly language will reflect the organisation’s commitment to providing language choice both internally and externally.
- Use the ‘iaith gwaith working welsh’ logo in all promotional materials.

How do we reach Welsh speakers?

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

- Young Farmers’ Associations
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Welsh medium youth organisation – local groups all over Wales)
- Chapels and Churches
- Local schools (including Parent/ Teachers Associations)
- Language Centres
- Merched y Wawr (Welsh women’s organisation)
- Gwawr (Welsh women’s organisation)
- Mentrau Iaith (Language initiatives)
- Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (Welsh medium nursery school organisation – local groups all over Wales)
- County voluntary councils
- Local volunteer centres
- Welsh medium choirs and societies.
- Local Eisteddfodau and sub-committees of National Eisteddfodau and national music festivals (such as the Gŵyl Gerdd Dant) visiting the area. The sub-committees are made up of local people.



2. Advertise through the Welsh speaking media:

- Radio Cymru (national radio station which also offers regional programming at various intervals during the day)
- Welsh slot on local radio station
- Welsh slot in local newspapers
- Local Welsh monthly newspapers (Papurau Bro). The website of Y Lolfa publicises [a list of these](#)
- Golwg (National Welsh magazine)
- Y Cymro (National Welsh newspaper)
- Yr Herald Cymraeg (now a supplement in the Daily Post)
- S4C programmes such as Prynawn Da, Heno a Stwnsh.
- Golwg360
- [Lleol.net](#)
- Different Welsh pages on Facebook and Twitter, such as [Radio Beca](#), Be sy 'mlaen (What's on), [Yr awr gymraeg](#) - Welsh language hour on a Wednesday evening (#yagym)

3. Include at least one bilingual page on your website, for example the front page

4. Add your volunteering opportunities bilingually to the www.volunteering-wales.net website. You could indicate in the description if there is encouragement, opportunity or an expectation to use Welsh language.

A model role description is available in [Welsh](#) and in [English](#) which can be used as a template.

5. Take advantage of national events such as Volunteers Week (1-7 June), National Eisteddfod of Wales (first week in August), the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (mid July), the Urdd National Eisteddfod (the week of the late Spring Bank Holiday), International Volunteer's Day (5 December) and arrange visual activities that will grab attention.

6. Use public places within the community to place adverts e.g. library, schools, doctor's surgeries, newsagents and volunteer centres.

7. Utilise social media effectively posting/tweeting both in Welsh and in English.

8. Considering posting video clips online of current volunteers experience to promote volunteering through the medium of Welsh.

Points to consider when including Welsh speaking volunteers

- Recruitment and selection of Welsh or English speaking volunteers should adhere to equal opportunities practice.
- Try to ensure that volunteers have access to a Welsh speaking support worker.

- Translation work is a skill and should not be the responsibility of Welsh speakers without the necessary training and support.
- Dealing with the Welsh speaking media on behalf of an organisation is a great responsibility. Welsh speakers should receive the necessary training and support and a full briefing before this is required of them.
- Organisations should aim to provide training courses through the medium of Welsh and English if there is a need. (WCVA has a database of consultants and trainers)
- Volunteering is a matter of choice and volunteers should have the time and opportunity to consider whether to undertake the tasks offered them.
- They should feel no obligation to undertake tasks which they feel are inappropriate.
- Organisations should be aware that Welsh speaking volunteers need the same training and support provided to other volunteers doing similar work.
- Welsh speaking volunteers may need training to enable them to carry out their activities through the medium of Welsh, for example, to acquire specialist vocabulary or written skills.

Further information

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

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

See Information sheet [2.10 Welsh Language – the Legal Context](#)

Mentrau Iaith

<http://www.mentrau-iaith.com/>

Welsh Language Commissioner

www.comisiynyddygybraeg.org

See recent research compiled by the Welsh Language Commissioner - '[The Welsh language and volunteering 2014](#)

Estyn Llaw

www.estynllaw.org

Disclaimer

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

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