

Socioeconomic Interventions in High-Density Areas: recruitment criteria and other actions

The case of Wales

Dr Cynog Prys

Dr Rhian Hodges

Dr Elen Bonner

Bangor University



Welsh language context

- The Welsh language is currently undergoing **revitalization**
- **Ambitious target** to double the number of Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017)
- Welsh Government recognize significance of supporting the **economic infrastructure** of areas with a higher density of Welsh speakers (Welsh Government, 2017)
- **ARFOR Funding** to "create opportunities for young people and families (aged ≤ 35) to stay in or return to their indigenous communities" (Arfor, 2022, p.10)



ARFOR

High-density communities

- **Reduction** in the number and percentage of speakers in the 4 counties with the highest concentration of Welsh speakers
 - **Gwynedd (64.3%)**
 - **Môn (55.8%)**
 - **Ceredigion (45.3%)**
 - **Sir Gâr (39.9%) (StatsCymru)**
- Concern regarding **sustainability** of Welsh speaking communities
- Concern around the outward **migration** of young Welsh speaking adults
- **What could be done to support Welsh in these high-density communities?**





Arfor Challenge fund

- Welsh Government created a challenge fund to **develop a practical intervention** to support Welsh and the economy
- **Aim: Sustain linguistic vitality in Arfor communities**
- It is possible to interpret the call as providing interventions or '**breathing spaces**' for the Welsh language within high-density communities
- Some of our ideas were based on our work with a PhD student - **Dr Elen Bonner**
 - The economic impact on the Welsh language (Bonner et al, 2024a)
 - A typology looking at migration decisions of young Welsh speakers (Bonner et al, 2024b)

Practical Intervention: A Contradiction

1. Perception of lack of job opportunities for **young people** from Arfor areas (and that they are leaving as a result)

2. Perception that local **employers** face challenges in trying to recruit Welsh speakers into certain jobs (especially when Welsh is a requirement for employment)

- We produced a Bilingual Workforce Recruitment Pack (Prys et al, 2024)
- The pack was based on **interviews with young adults** and **individuals involved with recruiting staff** within workplaces.



Supporting Linguistic Sustainability in Welsh-Speaking Communities

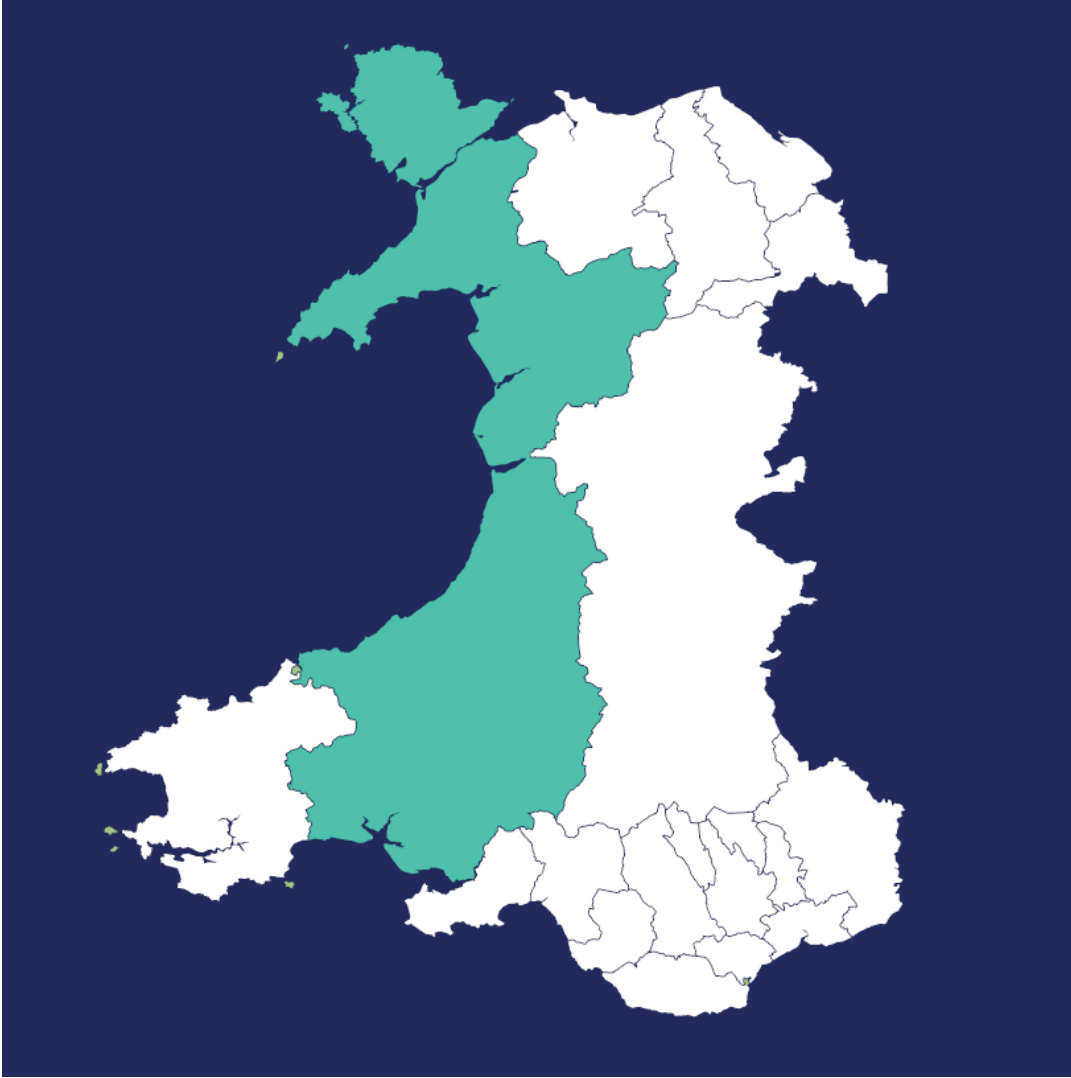
Aim of the Bilingual Workforce Recruitment Pack:

- 1) Support employers to **improve recruitment practices** when recruiting staff that can speak Welsh
- 2) Enable Welsh speaking young adults to **stay or return** to live in Welsh speaking communities
- 3) In doing so, it can contribute to supporting the **linguistic stability** of Welsh speaking communities
- 4) Can be interpreted as an attempt to create "**breathing spaces**" on a **regional level** and **within individual workplaces**.



PECYN RECRIWTIO GWEITHLU DWYIEITHOG

BILINGUAL WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT PACK



- A practical resource to help employers match Welsh jobs with Welsh speakers
 - Learn from common challenges and share good practice
 - Sample - individuals involved in recruitment in Arfor counties
 - Public, private and third sector employers
- **Broader aim was to support linguistic sustainability in Welsh-speaking communities**

BILINGUAL WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT PACK

*The
resource
contains:*

*1. Good Practice Bilingual Staff Recruitment
Toolkit*

*2. Typology of Welsh speakers' migration
decisions*

Cymraeg



Saesneg/English



GOOD PRACTICE TOOLKIT



1

**When recruiting,
the language
skills required
for the post
should be
clearly
communicated**

2

**When
recruiting,
there is a need
to plan how
to reach the
target
audience**

3

**The Welsh
language
should be
used in
advertising**

4

**The recruitment
process should
support
applicants
who are less
confident in the
Welsh language**

5

**Workplaces
that are
attractive to
Welsh speakers
should be
created**

6

**When recruiting,
the support
given to staff to
develop Welsh
language skills at
work should be
demonstrated**

7

**Opportunities
should be
created to
develop staff
who already
have Welsh
language skills**

8

**Awareness
should be
raised of
potential
careers
available
locally**

9

**When
recruiting, the
good image
and values of
the employer
should be
sharedr**

10

**When
recruiting,
the benefits
and additional
support of the
post should be
demonstrated**

GOOD PRACTICE TOOLKIT – 10 GOOD PRACTICES

GOOD PRACTICE 2

**WHEN RECRUITING,
THERE IS A NEED
TO PLAN HOW TO
REACH THE TARGET
AUDIENCE**

“The [organization] is also now trying to encourage managers to go and create a mini film to put on social media [...] talking a little bit about the job rather than just giving the job details in writing. Get someone to talk about the job and explain what the job is. That’s perhaps a way of encouraging and attracting... and if you’re doing so in Welsh, you obviously attract Welsh speakers more than [...] Seeing this, saying – “Their language is similar to mine and so I could look at that job”.

(Public sector / Ceredigion)

GOOD PRACTICE TOOLKIT – 10 GOOD PRACTICES

A number of commercial companies specialise in recruiting staff to posts where Welsh language skills are needed. Using these services can be a way of targeting staff with Welsh language skills.

ACTION POINT:

Employers should think strategically about how to reach Welsh speakers. This may include advertising in specific places on Welsh language job platforms, using the services of recruiters, attending careers fairs or thinking about various ways of reaching this particular audience.



GOOD PRACTICE TOOLKIT – 10 GOOD PRACTICES

GOOD PRACTICE 5

WORKPLACES THAT ARE ATTRACTIVE TO WELSH SPEAKERS SHOULD BE CREATED

ACTION POINT:

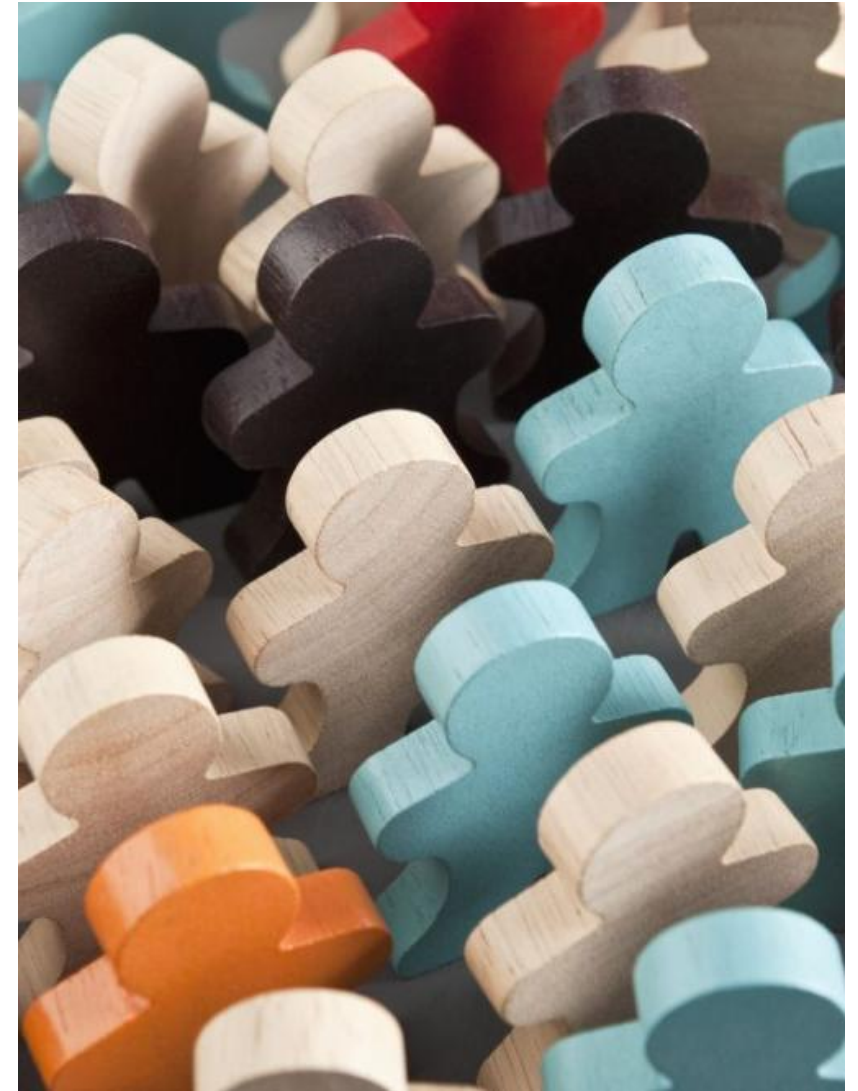
As part of the recruitment process it should be emphasised that your workplace is welcoming to Welsh speakers and individuals with various Welsh language skills.

“So we’ve tried to be just a bit more Welsh. Make sure some of our Welsh essential jobs are in Welsh. Make sure we mention Welsh on the website. Make sure that we’ve got bilingual business cards for example. Making an effort really”.

(Sector preifat / Gwynedd a Môn)

TYPOLGY OF WELSH SPEAKERS' MIGRATION DECISIONS

- *Building on Dr Elen Bonner PhD research (supported by the Coleg Cymraeg)*
- What drives Welsh language speakers' decisions to **stay, leave** or **return**?
- ***How do we retain or attracting young Welsh speakers and families back to the Arfor counties?***
- *Convert the framework (Bonner et al, 2024) into it a **practical resource** for employers*





Help employers attract potential applicants to positions that require Welsh language skills



Gives examples of good practice on how to reach different groups

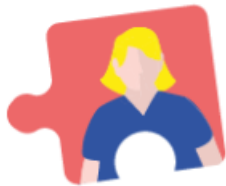


Which messages to emphasise to spark their interest

STAYERS



1. **Flagbearers**



2. **Those wanting to build confidence**



3. **Those with a plan**



4. **Those who do not see an opportunity**

LEAVERS



5. **Those who are reluctant to leave**



6. **Those wanting new experiences**



7. **Those wanting to socialise**



8. **Those that are happy to go with the flow**

RETURNERS



9. **Those needing support**



10. **Those seeing an opportunity**



11. **Those returning to raise a family**



12. **Those with a longing for home**

1. Flagbearers

Rooted in the community due to strong social networks. Want to stay local voluntarily or due to a sense of duty. Welsh language skills are often an asset when seeking employment locally.

How to reach this group:

- Take advantage of platforms that specifically promote Welsh language jobs
- Attendance at Welsh language job fairs.
- Promote opportunities through schools and further and higher education establishments.

Messages to emphasise to this group:

- Acknowledge the contribution made by this group to the sustainability of Welsh speaking communities.
- Communicate the importance of the Welsh language and culture to the organization.
- Emphasise the opportunities to work in Welsh.



6. Those wanting new experiences

Want to leave to experience new adventures, and employment/education offering the opportunity to do this. Feel comfortable with changes in their lives.

How to reach this group:

- Maintain contact with this group as they are likely to be open to return later on (e.g. by developing an attractive on-line profile for potential staff who do not live locally).
- Collaborate with recruitment agencies targeting young adults who have left Wales.

Messages to emphasise to this group:

- Emphasise the exciting and dynamic elements of the post and its contribution to society.
- Emphasise the exciting and dynamic elements of living in the Arfor counties.
- Emphasise the flexibility of the post to allow them to pursue their interests outside working hours e.g. purchasing holidays, 35-hour week, compressed hours etc.



10. Those seeing an opportunity

Returned against expectations as a result of the offer of an attractive post.

How to reach this group:

- These individuals have obtained a post locally, however they will want to develop their career and seek the next opportunity.
- The usual channels reach this group effectively; the challenge is to retain them in the face of career development opportunities available beyond the area.

Messages to emphasise to this group:

- Demonstrate that there are opportunities for career development locally either within the organization or across the sector.
- Highlight the pleasant characteristics of the area e.g. landscape, standard of living, culture and language.



Conclusions

- The recruitment pack offers a practical resource to support a wider linguistic ecosystem by offering employment within Welsh language "geographic breathing spaces" (Fishman 1991:59) in higher density areas
- The workplace is a useful "breathing space" in its own right - it provides language socialisation and language use opportunities for speakers from different linguistic backgrounds





Future Directions



Need for micro level, bespoke interventions to create breathing spaces in multiple domains



Need to be **planned and coordinated** to be effective



Focus on cultural practices and networks, sports clubs and leisure activities, digital practices, the arts etc



In high density areas, and also low density



Collaboration between our language communities is needed



**DIOLCH!
ESKERRIK
*ASKO!***



Dr Cynog Prys
c.prys@bangor.ac.uk

Dr Rhian Hodges
r.s.hodges@bangor.ac.uk

Dr Elen Bonner
elen.bonner@bangor.ac.uk

**PECYN
RECRIWTIO
GWEITHLU
DWYIEITHOG**

Cynog Prys
Elen Bonner
Rhian Hodges

ARFOR
CREU GWAITH - CEFNOGI'R IAITH

PRIFYSGOL
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UNIVERSITY

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Welsh Government