

## WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Issue Date:** 10 November 2022

**STATUS: ACTION**

**CATEGORY: WORKFORCE**

**Title:**

*More than just words* Welsh language awareness course

**Date of Expiry / Review:** N/A

**For Action by:**

Board Secretaries ABMU Aneurin Bevan  
Betsi Cadwaladr Cardiff & Vale Cwm Taf  
Hywel Dda Powys Public Health Wales  
Velindre Trust WAST Secretary to Board  
Secretary Group Chief Execs ABMU  
Aneurin Bevan Betsi Cadwaladr Cardiff &  
Vale (& Business Manager) Cwm Taf  
Hywel Dda Powys Public Health Wales  
Velindre Trust WAST Chairs ABMU  
Aneurin Bevan Betsi Cadwaladr Cardiff &  
Vale Cwm Taf Hywel Dda Powys Public  
Health Wales Velindre Trust WAST  
Welsh Government DG/Chief Exec NHS  
Wales Deputy Chief Exec NHS Wales  
DHSS Operations Team DHSS Comms  
Team Relevant Directors WELSH  
HEALTH CIRCULARS DISTRIBUTION  
LIST Annex 2 Wales Audit Office  
Technical Manager Central Govt & NHS  
sector South Wales Cancer Network  
Director Wales Cancer Network Director  
Medical Director WHSSC Mrs Karen

**Action required by:** With immediate effect

Howell, Managing Director Miss Pam Wenger, Committee Secretary EASC Mr Stephen HARRY, Interim Ambulance Services Commissioner Professor McClelland, Chair Miss Pam Wenger, Committee Secretary Velindre NHS Trust Cally Hamblyn, Legal Services & Governance Manager All Wales Health Collaborative NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership Jacqui Maunder, Head of Corporate Services/Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Corfforaethol Neil.frow, Managing Director Jennifer Roe, NWSSP - SES - Business Management Generic Mailbox : <a href="mailto:whssc.generalenquires@wales.nhs.uk">whssc.generalenquires@wales.n</a> Workforce and OD directors health boards / trusts Welsh Language Officers health boards / trusts		
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**Sender:**

Judith Paget CBE Director General of Health and Social Services and NHS Wales  
Chief Executive

**HSSG Welsh Government Contact(s):**

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255712

**Enclosure(s):** None

Dear Colleague

Communicating with individuals is a key part of delivering good care. It helps people to understand what is happening to them and around them and makes them feel safe and content. The Minister for Health and Social Services recently launched [More than just words](#) – our plan to strengthen Welsh language services in health and social care. At its core is the Active Offer principle which places a responsibility on health and social care providers to offer services in Welsh, rather than on the patient or service user to have to request them.

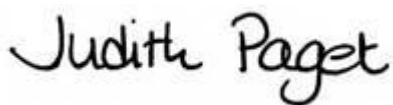
The Welsh language skills of the workforce are critical to effectively engaging with Welsh speakers to ensure the success of the *More than just words plan*. It is hoped that colleagues will want to learn Welsh or improve their existing skills. But that doesn't mean that everyone has to be fluent in Welsh. Being able to say a few words in Welsh can go a long way and even if staff don't speak Welsh an understanding of the needs of Welsh speakers can make a big difference.

One of the actions in the *More than just words plan* is that all NHS and social care colleagues undertake a language awareness course which will explain how important the Welsh language is in the delivery of services and to patient needs. The course should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete and includes background / context to the Welsh language, the importance of the Welsh language to the patient experience and a section on the Welsh language standards.

The course is accessible via the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system and Learning@Wales platforms. It is mandatory for all NHS staff (including those who don't deal directly with patients / service users) and it will need to be retaken every 3 years. It should be introduced as part of the induction process for new employees who have not already undertaken the training. Completion rates will be collated by NHS Shared Services Partnership with data reported to the Advisory Board to be established by the Minister to oversee the delivery of *More than just words*. In acknowledgement of the current pressures and the need to focus on delivery we will not start reporting this until March next year and the deadline for completion will be June 2023.

I know that our NHS staff will rise to the challenge of implementing the actions in the new *More than just words plan* and completing this mandatory course will help to ensure that everyone understands why it is important for our patients and service users to be able to receive high quality health and care services in Welsh.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Paget". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Judith Paget CBE**

**Director General of Health and Social Services and NHS Wales Chief Executive**