

Easy Read



ADSS Cymru

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Leading Social Services in Wales

Social Care and Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

A report by the Association of Directors of Social
Services



This document was written by the 'Association of Directors of Social Services'. It is an easy read version of 'Delivering Social Care in an Anti-racist Wales'.

June 2023

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 26**.



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Introduction



ADSS Wales stands for **Association of Directors of Social Services Wales**. Our work is to do with Social Care in Wales.



The Welsh Government recently bought out a plan called **Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan**.



They asked us to help them look into **interpretation** and **translation** services that are used in social services. Also, to find out if people are treated equally and fairly.



Social services are any services that are provided to people when they need help and support.



Interpretation and **translation** services are to do with giving information in a different language.



For example, if a person cannot speak English, it could mean hiring someone who speaks their language.



We wanted to learn more about the things that stop people from **ethnic minorities** from using social services.



Ethnic minorities means people who live in Wales but come from other backgrounds, countries or cultures than most people in Wales. They may speak other languages than English or Welsh.

These were our main goals:



- To check things like research and reports.



- To look at the 2021 **Census**. This is an official survey carried out to find out basic information about everyone in society. For example, how many people speak other languages.



- To speak to people from all local councils in Wales.



- To speak to various charities and community groups.



- To speak to people from various backgrounds in the language of their choice.



- To find out more information from councils about languages. For example, if people had made complaints about language.

Language in Wales



Just over 3 million people live in Wales.



Just under 3 million people are white.



Most people speak English or Welsh.



A small number of people are only able to speak a small amount of English or Welsh.



When people are unable to speak the main language of a country it can stop them from getting the help that they need. For example, by Social Services.



Public organisations like councils, have to follow laws to make sure they understand the needs of people they work with.



For example, their language needs. Public organisations must support people in their own language.



To help with this, **interpretation** and **language services** are often used.



Interpreting could mean hiring someone who speaks English and another language.



Translating could mean writing something in English into another language. Or the other way around.



Research has been done on the best ways to support people with language differences.



It shows that it is better to use professional services for **interpreting** and **translating**. Rather than asking family and friends to help.



This is because of issues like:

- Keeping information private.
- Making sure the information shared is the same.



It should be recorded in a person's file what their main language is and if they need support.

What Local authorities told us



Local authorities are also known as councils.



We spoke to staff from all local authorities in Wales.

These were some of the main issues staff talked about:



- People's **ethnicity** – How much understanding the council has about the people in their area.

Ethnicity means a person's background or culture.



- What plans a council has in place for supporting people's language needs – a lot of staff were unsure what plans were in place.



- Employing interpreters for **ethnic minority** languages – most staff said this did not happen.



- **Welsh Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS)** - This is the service most councils use to find support for people with language needs. But there are some others used as well.

What people who use social care services told us



We asked the organisation **Women Connect First** to speak to people who have used **interpreters** and **translators** in the past.



Translators were used and they asked people questions in the language of their choice.



20 people were interviewed. They were from 11 different **ethnic minority** groups.



Everyone had received support from social care services.



People were asked who have provided **interpretation** for them when they were seen by social services.



Most said **interpretation** services were used.



A few said family and friends helped with **interpretation**.



3 people said a social worker did the **interpretation**.



Most people said the service they received was ok.



3 said it was excellent. But they were family members.



3 said it was good.



3 said it was poor or very poor.



People were asked about their experiences of using **interpretation** services.



Some said they needed to understand more about their needs and backgrounds.



They said more patience and respect was needed.



Someone said it would be helpful to use **interpreters** from their own culture or religious group.

Views on social services staff



People were asked for their views on how well social services staff understood people's needs and backgrounds.



Some people said they had good understanding.



Some people said they didn't have good understanding.



2 people said they had made a complaint.

Making things better



People were asked what changes could be made to improve the service they received.



Some people said it should be easier to get the support needed and when people need it.



Someone said they would have found it helpful if social services had been more understanding to their situation.

The main ideas people had were:



- Have more staff who speak different languages and understand a range of people's different backgrounds.



- For staff to be more patient, helpful and understanding.



- Plan better - for example, check the right **interpreter** is booked.



- Make it clearer and easier to complain when unhappy



- Make sure information is **translated** correctly.



- Try and keep the same staff rather than changing staff.

What third sector organisations told us



Third sector organisations means charities, community groups and organisations like these.



These organisations often provide services that support people from **ethnic minorities** with a range of issues like health, housing, and more.



We spoke to people from these organisations.



We also spoke to people who are carers for **ethnic minority** people.



We spoke to 18 organisations and 4 carers.



Some feedback was about the reasons why some people do not want to receive social care.



It is often because of fear. For example, fear that if social services are involved, maybe their children could get taken away.



Some said more needs to be done to help social services understand the backgrounds of people. For example, why their children are raised in certain ways.



There was some feedback about how **interpreting services** had not been used well enough for people from Roma backgrounds.



Some people from Roma backgrounds did not trust **translation** services because of bad experiences in the past.



They said social services carried out home checks without an **interpreter**.



Some organisations said that there is not an **interpretation** service for all languages.



Some people were told they had to provide their own **interpreter**. This was more of an issue in health services like the dentist.



They also said some **interpreters** are not given enough time to **interpret**. Also, that it was important to build up trust.



Some said it would be helpful if there was training for all **interpreters**.



Some said social workers and care staff did not understand the beliefs of people they worked with. For example, taking off their shoes in Muslim households.



Some organisations said that the first meeting is really important. If a social worker doesn't show understanding for a families beliefs they may not ask for any help.



There was a lot of negative feedback about social services and the lack of understanding of people's beliefs.



One organisation talked about the importance of being **person-centred**. This means putting the person at the centre of planning for their lives.



A number of organisations said more training was needed to help social services staff understand the backgrounds of the people they work with.



However, some organisations said training was not enough. It was said more needs to be done to change the behaviour and attitudes of staff.



Some organisations said social services should collect more information about the various languages spoken in their area.



Also, there should be more social services staff from **ethnic minorities**.



They said organisations like them should also be asked to be more involved in having a say about **interpreter** and **translation** services.

What interpreters and translators told us



Interpreters and **translators** were asked what works well at the moment and what could be done to improve things.



A lot of people said things worked well and that there were no problems.



But they wanted social services staff to understand the job of the **interpreter** better.



They also wanted them to give them more time to do their jobs well.



There was feedback about how a language can vary from area to area. This is known as **dialect**.

Stop Hello Eat
Words
person Day open

For example, some words may mean different things in different areas, even though people are speaking the same language overall.



It is important that an **interpreter** understands these differences.



Interpreters talked about the importance of being given information in advance of meeting someone. Also, given time to prepare.

Interpreters said it would be helpful for social services to think more about things like:



- Where meetings were going to take place.
- Giving information to the **interpreter** – for example, an update.
- Make sure people know who the **interpreter** is and what their job is.
- Not rush them and not interrupt them.

What we think should happen next

These are some of the main things we think should happen next:



- People must be supported to speak in the language of their choice.



- Social services must know and record people's language choices and needs.



- Staff must have a good understanding of the backgrounds and beliefs of people from **ethnic minorities**. They must also be respectful towards them.



- Local authorities should have written information in place about what staff need to do to support people from **ethnic minorities**. These are known as **policies** and **standards**.



- Professional **interpreters** and **translation** services should be used to support people. Families and friends should usually be avoided.

Hard words

Ethnicity

This means a person's background or culture.

Ethnic minorities

This means people who live in Wales but come from other backgrounds, countries or cultures than most people in Wales. They may speak other languages than English or Welsh.