



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Understanding language needs

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Go to <https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/improving-care-and-support/people-with-dementia/understanding-language-needs> for the latest version.

In Wales, local authorities and care providers must actively offer and deliver Welsh language services to the same standard as English language services.

Making the active offer

[View transcript](#)

CARE WORKER:

[00:00:00] *Hiraeth* for the Welsh person is so dreadfully important, and – how can I say – the importance of talking to somebody about perhaps where they lived.

[00:00:14] They've probably lived in that house for so many year and if there are photos in their room, get to talk to them about it and what their home was like.

[00:00:25] Their garden, did they like their garden? Flowers?

[00:00:29] Every little thing like that.

[00:00:32] But *hiraeth* is dreadful.

[00:00:34] The importance of the Welsh language can't be under estimated.

[00:00:39] When you start to speak Welsh to somebody, they instantly make a rapport with you.

[00:00:48] They open up, things are far, far easier

[00:00:51] I've worked with other carers who are English speaking and the person that you're supporting and helping will, you instinctively know when

somebody speaks Welsh.

[00:01:08] You can get on far easier.

[00:01:11] Things are so much easier when you know somebody does speak Welsh.

[00:01:17] There's an instant rapport and things are much, much easier.

[00:01:21] Things are so closer, it's like a big family, it's like a big Welsh family and that can't be under estimated.

[00:01:30] Offering choices is extremely important to somebody and getting to find out the way that somebody, how can I say, took their tea -

[00:01:40] Did they take sugar, "*Llaeth neu siwgr yn eich te?*" which means do you take sugar or tea, sugar or milk in your tea?

[00:01:48] "*Pa mor gryf?* How strong do you like it?

[00:01:52] A choice of meals, lots of different little things,

[00:02:02] "*Beth y'ch chi'n mo'yn wisgo y tro 'ma?*" What do they like to wear that morning, that's appropriate, that's appropriate to the weather conditions.

[00:02:12] And always offering, perhaps go to the wardrobe, I'm thinking "What about this?" Offering choices, "*Dewis, dewis am beth mae'n mo'yn wisgo*".

[00:02:23] That is a choice in what you want to wear, even if you hang them up and show the person so that they can point "Yes, that would be a nice outfit".

The 'active offer' means that staff provide a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it.

This might mean answering the phone in Welsh or carrying out a full care assessment through the medium of Welsh.

Learn more about the 'active offer'.

[Delivering the 'active offer' information pack – Social services and social care](#)

PDF 944KB

Whatever your level of Welsh ability, whether you're fluent or don't know any Welsh, a big part of the active offer is being language sensitive.

This means first asking the people you support if they're Welsh speakers, and, if they are, trying to use Welsh phrases when you talk to them.

Even just saying 'bore da' (good morning) or asking someone if they'd like a 'paned' (cup of tea) in Welsh can be a big comfort to people.

This will also help reassure families that their loved ones are receiving support in the language of their care need, not in the language they're using out of necessity.

The free app Gofalu Trwy'r Gymraeg/Caring through Welsh can help you learn phrases and terms specifically about care.

[Caring through Welsh app \(Android\)](#)

[Caring through Welsh app \(Apple\)](#)

Being language sensitive

Being language sensitive is very important in dementia care and equally affects people who speak a language other than English or Welsh.

It also affects people who use British Sign Language.

One of the features of dementia is a progressive reduction in the ability to express ideas as words, and to recognise the meanings of spoken and written words.

Where English was learned as a second language the person may initially mix up English and their first language and then lose the ability to speak English completely, making communication difficult with support workers and younger family members who do not speak their language.

Learn Welsh online: free course for social care workers

The National Centre for Learning Welsh has a [free 10 hour online Welsh taster course](#). This includes a section for social care workers where you can learn:

- how to ask how people feel
- parts of the body
- how to find out if someone is in pain or feels ill
- asking where their glasses are, walking stick, medication and so on.

Here's how to register for the course:

- open the link above. It works best in Google Chrome or the latest version of Internet Explorer
- click the 'Get Started' button on your chosen course

- click the 'Create Account' button
- complete the form with your details
- create log in details and accept terms and conditions
- under 'Getting Started', please select 'Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru Cymraeg Gwaith' as your employer
- you might need to log in to select your employer
- You will receive an e-mail with a link to start the 10 hour course.

Useful resources

Find out more about understanding the language needs of people with dementia.

[More than just words... resources \(the Welsh Government's strategy to strengthen Welsh language services in health, social services and social care\)](#)

[Welsh language skills in your workforce - using them effectively \(Quick Guide\)](#)

PDF 275KB

[Welsh language skills in your workforce - using them effectively \(Full Version\)](#)

PDF 1MB

[Cân y Gân](#) - a Welsh language music playlist and CD created for care homes and those that provide care to welsh speakers but may not know which songs to play. You can download the collection from the link above

Research links

Improve your practice by accessing the latest research findings.

[Exploring Deaf people's experiences of supporting their Deaf family member living with dementia](#)

PDF 142KB

[Access to dementia services for bilingual \(Welsh and English\) residents – research briefing](#)

[A Global and National Perspective on Dementia – research briefing](#)

[Welsh Speakers' Experiences of Health and Social Care Services](#)

We want your feedback

Help us to improve the Dementia resource for care professionals by telling us what you think about it in our short [four question survey](#).