Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting
LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

Date and Time
10.00 am, MONDAY, 30TH JANUARY, 2023

Location
Virtual Meeting

Contact Point
Rhodri Jones
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(DISTRIBUTED 20/01/23)

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Menna Baines	Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn
Alan Jones Evans	Jina Gwyrfai
Olaf Cai Larsen	Gwynfor Owen
Llio Elenid Owen	Meryl Roberts
Elfed Williams	Sasha Williams

Independent (5)

Councillors

Richard Glyn Roberts	Peter Thomas
Eirwyn Williams	Gruffydd Williams
Vacant Seat – Independent	

Ex-officio Members
Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Member

Councillor Menna Jones, Cabinet Member Corporate Support - The Welsh Language

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES**

   To receive apologies for absence.

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

   To receive any declaration of personal interest

3. **URGENT BUSINESS**

   To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration

4. **MINUTES**   5 - 14

   The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 10 October 2022 be signed as a true record (attached)

5. **WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**   15 - 24

   To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy.

6. **WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: CORPORATE SUPPORT DEPARTMENT**   25 - 30

   To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy.

7. **WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: HOUSING AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT**   31 - 38

   To present information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy.

8. **CENSUS RESULTS 2021 - THE WELSH LANGUAGE**   39 - 51

   Sharing information from the Census about the numbers and proportion of Welsh speakers in Gwynedd.

9. **WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER ASSURANCE REPORT 2021-22**   52 - 101

   Information item only.

10. **WELSH GOVERNMENT: LETTER FROM THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE**   102 - 103

Information item only, there will be no discussion on the contents of the letter. This items has been translated into English by the Council.

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE: MONDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2022

PRESENT:

Councillors: Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn (Chair),
Llio Elenid Owen (Vice-chair)

Menna Baines, Jina Gwyrfai, Olaf Cai Larsen, Gwynfor Owen, Richard Glyn Roberts, Meryl Roberts, Peter Thomas, Elfed Wyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Sasha Williams.

Officers: Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser), Gwenllian Mair Williams (Language Adviser), Llio Mai Dafydd (Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

OTHERS INVITED:
Councillor Elwyn Jones (Chair of the Council) and Richard Medwyn Hughes (Vice-chair of the Council).

Item 6:	Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment Department), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department) and Carwyn Meredydd (Senior Executive Officer Environment Department).
Item 7:	Meirion Williams (Assistant Head of Highways and Municipal Department).
Item 8:	Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department).
Item 9:	Llio Mai Dafydd (Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer).

1. **APOLOGIES**

   Apologies were received from Councillor Eirwyn Williams.

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

   No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. **URGENT ITEMS**

   No urgent items were received.

4. **MINUTES**

   The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 20 June 2022, as a true record.

5. **WELSH GOVERNMENT: LETTER FROM THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE**

   This letter was submitted for information to Committee members from the Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser with the main points noted below:

− It was explained that prior to the election in May 2022, former committee members had written to the Minister for Welsh Language and Education to express concern that Microsoft Teams did not provide a simultaneous translation facility and meetings had to be held in English.

− It was expanded that the letter sent by the former members requested a default simultaneous translation facility in every meeting for the meetings to be held through the medium of Welsh.

Committee members were given an opportunity to discuss and ask questions:

− Disappointment was expressed in the Government's decision to wait two and a half years before holding their meetings via Zoom. Microsoft Teams had not coped well with simultaneous translation systems during this period and in the meantime a second rate interpretation standard was provided over the phone as attendees joined the meeting on their computers. It was added that contributors had to inform the organisers if they wished to talk in Welsh. It was noted that if 10% of the meeting attendees did this, then this is when the simultaneous translation was provided. It was explained if there was not a sufficient number of requests to participate in Welsh, then there was no choice but to contribute in English.
  − In response to these points, the Democracy and Language Services Manager confirmed that the new Microsoft Teams had updated their interpretation systems. It was expanded that the Council was currently trialling this prior to use in meetings. It was confirmed that the user's experience was very important and therefore Microsoft Teams would not be used for Council meetings until the quality of the service corresponded to what is provided by Zoom.
  − In response to these points, the Language Adviser emphasised that it was not the Government's choice to set a requirement for 10% of attendees to make a request to speak in Welsh in meetings before getting a simultaneous translation service. It was confirmed that this was part of the language standards and the Welsh Government and local authorities must follow these. As a result, it was stated that the Government was in compliance with the standards.

− Disappointment was expressed that the Government did not feel that they needed to go a step further than the standards to encourage more Welsh speakers. It was asked how proactive was the Government in promoting the Welsh language and to ensure a translation provision.
  − In response to the question, the Language Adviser noted that there were varied aspects to promoting the language within the Government. It was elaborated that the Government was very reliant on officers to promote the language, however, they still did not have the provision to make this effectively.

− It was agreed that the Government needed to support Officers and Ministers to speak Welsh in the workplace. It was confirmed that a simultaneous translation service was a contemporary way to be able to hold meetings in Welsh, however, there was a need to go further to ensure the future of the language.

− It was asked how the language standards were set.
  − In response to the question, the Language Adviser noted that the standards were part of the Government's legislation. It was confirmed that these

standards were monitored by the Language Commissioner and the same standards were imposed on Local Governments. They proceeded to confirm that the standards had been written with the mindset that meetings were held by default in English. Cyngor Gwynedd holds its meetings in Welsh by default and therefore went further than the requirements of the standards.

- Gratitude was expressed for the letter.

RESOLVED

- Disappointment was expressed at the response to the letter as their response was not more positive. This letter emphasised the need to encourage Welsh speakers to speak Welsh in the workplace as well as to improve the simultaneous translation service. It was confirmed that the letter also requested confirmation as to how the Government promotes the language with the exception of following the language standards when holding virtual meetings.
- To organise a discussion at the next meeting regarding the future of town councils to ensure the future of using the Welsh language at their meetings.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

The report was presented by the Head of the Environment Department, Assistant Head of the Environment Department and the Senior Executive Officer, Environment Department and attention was drawn briefly to the following main points:

- It was reported that 91.7% of the department's officers meet the language designations of their posts and pride was expressed that this was higher than the Council average. It was confirmed that 78.5% of all the department's staff had completed a language skills self-assessment and the department encouraged the remaining staff to complete this as soon as possible.

- It was confirmed that 14 officers in the department did not reach the language designations of their post, however, they were encouraged to attend various courses and training. The department encourages staff to take advantage of the language refresher course. The website was praised as it was a good resource that assisted officers as well as the language forum. It was emphasised that talks always commenced in Welsh and every effort was being made to ensure that everyone feels comfortable to foster their language skills and confidence.

- It was emphasised that these figures did not include the waste service officers who had transferred recently from the Highways and Municipal Department.

- Pride was expressed that the building control service had managed to encourage people to ensure that the names of their houses remained as Welsh names, or to encourage owners to change the names of their houses back into Welsh by demonstrating the importance of traditional names. The Planning service also promoted the Welsh language by following policy PS1 that gives detailed consideration to the language when dealing with planning applications.

- It was explained that a proportion of the department' work was externalised to contractors. Assurance was given that every effort was made to safeguard the language. It was emphasised that invitations to tender as well as the guidelines were bilingual. It was noted that difficulties could arise when trying to translate

standard national contracts as the meaning of the contracts could easily change. However, it was reported that the department had managed to get Welsh language contracts with bus companies by tailoring their own contracts.

− Details were given that one of the main barriers facing the department recently was the lack of recruitment. It was confirmed that it was generally difficult to recruit qualified officers across the department's services and the challenge had intensified by striving to recruit qualified officers who also possessed sufficient Welsh language skills.

− It was elaborated that the department had managed to recruit a professional trainee in the traffic service with strong language skills. The department continues to invest in the trainee to ensure that he is qualified to deliver the role confidently. Concern was expressed that situations arose where the department invests in people and ultimately they are lost to the private sector or other local authorities as the salary was higher in these settings. Unfortunately, several officers from the department had changed jobs to work in other locations as a result.

− It was explained that the department was leading on tackling the climate change and nature emergency. It had been ensured that all the discussions were being held through the medium of Welsh or that the use of the language was being encouraged, if it was not possible to hold them completely in Welsh.

Members of the committee were given an opportunity to ask questions:

− It was asked if recruitment difficulties were worse following the Covid-19 Pandemic. It was also asked what steps the department was taking to ensure that new officers learnt Welsh language skills when language requirements were reduced when advertising for the second or third time.
    o In response to the query, the Head of the Environment Department noted that there had been difficulties with recruitment for some years to ensure that officers were qualified and possessed Welsh language skills. Language skills continued to be important for jobs in the department even if the post was advertised more than once. It was noted that more applicants applied for posts when the language designation was reduced. The competence and language skills of applicants were weighed up to ensure that the best officer was recruited. Reliance would be placed on the successful applicant to foster his/her language skills once he/she received the post and naturally some individuals would be more committed to the language than others. This department gave encouragement and support to everyone who needed additional help with the Welsh language immediately when they commence the post.

− It was asked if the planning department had any control over business names as well as house names. It was felt that recently the names of companies were only in English and it would be useful for residents and visitors if the names of the companies were in Welsh or bilingual.
    o In response to the query, the Assistant Head of the Environment Department noted that the department's control of business names was limited as every sign did not require planning permission. Only in situations whereby a development or sign needs planning permission will the department be able to control the names of businesses promoted to be in Welsh or bilingual and this by imposing a planning condition to this end.

- o In response to the query, the Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser noted that these observations would be forwarded to the Economy and Community Department as well as the Business Support Team for them to be aware of the members' concerns.

- It was considered should the department be likely to recruit non-Welsh speaking officers in the future, bearing in mind that there was more pressure and demand for their services as a result of the new legislation.
  - o In response to the query, the Assistant Head of the Environment Department noted that the recruitment challenges was not a new problem for the department. As there had been difficulties for some years, the department was now seeking to attract applicants in several different ways. It was noted that the planning department had been chosen as a pilot department for the planning workforce project, which was an improvement priority in the Council Plan. Job descriptions are reviewed and evaluated to ensure that they are more competitive with nearby authorities. An application had been made by the department to get a new trainee to join the team and to also receive three years of qualification training. Despite the recruitment difficulties, the department was aware that the majority of their work dealt with individuals and communities and therefore language skills were essential. This will not change and every encouragement and support will be given to all to develop Welsh language skills.

- It was asked how the Welsh language was prioritised within the planning service when there were many changes on the horizon and not enough officers currently to reach the requirements on time.
  - o In response to the query, the Head of the Environment Department reported that there was already a little slippage in the time-schedules to respond to planning applications. It was admitted that there was pressure on the planning enforcement service, and challenges with the time taken to determine planning applications, there were also additional implications in terms of staffing with the introduction and implementation of the Article 4 direction to get better control of holiday homes. It will be necessary to ensure that additional officers are available to cope with the workload. As was discussed earlier, every effort was being made to find competent applicants with sufficient Welsh language skills and every support was available to any eligible applicant requiring help to foster his/her language skills. The department would not disregard an application because the applicant did not reach the language designation of the role, as the commitment of individuals to try and improve their language skills was different from case to case.

- Pride was expressed that over 91% of staff in the department met the language designations of their posts and it was asked if it was possible to know how many staff understand and speak Welsh, but do not reach the language designation.
  - o In response to the question, the Language Adviser noted that departments received a report on language designations at least twice a year and further information would be provided when discussing the last item of this meeting.

- Attention was drawn to the fact that the Eryri National Park Authority was the planning authority for the Park and therefore had responsibility for dealing with planning applications, enforcement matters and for preparing planning policy within the Park's area.

− Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED
− To accept the report and note the observations received.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: HIGHWAYS AND MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

The report was submitted by the Assistant Head of the Highways and Municipal Department, and in brief attention was given to the following main points:

− It was reported that 94.5% of the department's staff meet the language designations of their job. Unfortunately, only 39% of the department had completed the survey. While this was the lowest response rate of all the Council's departments, it was difficult to say how many people reached their language designation.

− It was expanded that consideration had been given to access to the survey and many front-line staff in the department had failed to complete the survey as they had no access to a computer. It was discussed with the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer to try and simplify the on-line survey as well as sending a hard copy of the survey with a letter of explanation from the head of department, but unfortunately the majority of officers had not completed this, as an increase of 14% can be seen in the number of responses last year.

− There was a discussion with officers to receive feedback regarding why staff did not want to complete the survey and several reasons of explanation were given.
  ▪ Some believed that it was a pointless process.
  ▪ Some were worried about their employment future if they did not reach the language designation.

− An intention to work jointly with the Environment Department was expressed to try and get more feedback to this survey, and it was confirmed that the waste collection workers had transferred to that department.

− It was explained that the recruitment of professional and front-line officers had been an obstacle during the last period. This has been a specific problem with litter collection service workers and street cleansing in the Meirionnydd area. Although the language designation for these roles was basic, the department had to weigh-up and measure the importance of employing workers with Welsh language skills, with providing a quality service.

− It was reported that the department had managed to appoint an officer who had developed his confidence and language skills. The applicant submitted his application in Welsh, and since then had been appointed on condition that he attends a language course at Nant Gwrtheyrn. The officer was very keen to attend and was now communicating both verbally and in writing in Welsh to a very good standard and was confident.

Members of the committee were given an opportunity to ask questions:

– Concern was expressed that some of the department's technical terms were not translated from English into Welsh. Translation processes were very effective in Wales and it was asked if it was possible to re-visit this matter.

  o In response to the query, the Assistant Head of the Highways and Municipal Department noted that many steps to externalise the work occurred bilingually but very often conditions were included in English only as the meaning can easily vary when translated. This means that the majority of documents include the Welsh language but certain sections used English only.

– A number of matters associated with language designations were discussed. Some of these included controlling slipping into English in the office for the benefit of officers who are learning Welsh, and to consider that line managers take more of a role to complete language skills assessment forms.

  o In response to the enquiries, the Language Adviser confirmed that all the matters relating to language designations would be discussed in Item 9, at the end of this meeting. Should any questions arise following the presentation, it would be appropriate for the members to ask them during that discussion.

– There was pride in the stories about officers who had managed to improve their Welsh language skills since joining the Environment department as well as the Highways and Municipal department. It was asked if there were projects in the pipeline to promote the success of such individuals, to set an example for other officers who are trying to improve their language skills.

  o In response to the enquiry, the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer noted that such successes were shared with staff on the internal language site. In addition to this, the annual Gwobr Dafydd Orwig was awarded to encourage officers to continue to foster their Welsh language skills.

RESOLVED

– To accept the report and note the observations received.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The report was presented by the Head of the Finance Department, and in brief he drew attention to the following main points:

– It was reported that the vast majority of staff in the department had completed the recent language skills self-assessment. The results indicated that 216 of the workforce reached the language designation of their post, with 2 members of staff failing to reach this. It was noted that 96% of staff had completed their self-assessment and 4% had not completed this, they had not done so as they were new to their role. It was confirmed that this 4% was equivalent to 11 members of staff.

– It was elaborated that every effort had been made to ensure that the 2 members of staff, who had not reached the language designation for their post, would be encouraged and supported to attend training courses to gain confidence. It was confirmed that the officers in these cases had attended courses but continued to lack a little confidence in their language skills and had marked themselves harshly when completing the assessment.

– Details were given that the department had not been successful to promote the Welsh language in all aspects of the work. The department contacts specialist technical companies regularly as well as information technology providers. Many of these companies usually come from the USA and despite every effort to start a discussion in Welsh, the department had to be realistic when sending Welsh language documents to consider whether they can be effective or obstructive. However, it was ensured that the fact that contact with a few of these companies occurred in English, did not prevent the department from providing a Welsh language service of the highest degree to staff and Gwynedd residents.

– It was emphasised that the majority of documents were bilingual or in Welsh. Essential work had been undertaken to ensure that all the technical terms in the department had been translated and therefore the people of Gwynedd have the option to complete any form such as tax forms or applications for benefits as well as reading reports, in Welsh if they wished.

– An update was given that the IT service had by now updated Windows software on all the Council's computers to use the Welsh language as the default language rather than English. This had been encouraged in the past, however, recently this change had been mandatory on all Council devices.

– It was explained that the department had developed a Digital Learning provision since April this year. This had taken place following the process of winding-up the Cynnal company and internalising the support they used to provide. As part of this support the department is responsible for providing a laptop to all the county's teachers and is in the process of providing laptops to all year 7 to 11 pupils in Gwynedd schools. It was confirmed that these would also use the Welsh language as the computer language.

– It was explained that there had been some change to external users as Barclays Bank had closed key branches the department used, in Caernarfon, Porthmadog and Dolgellau. This meant that people lost an opportunity to chat in Welsh at the bank and were likely to have to deal with the bank on-line or over the telephone more often. Despite this, an alternative service had been established with the post office and therefore there was a dependency on the ability of post office staff to speak Welsh.

– Reference was made to several other examples where the department was trying to ensure use of the Welsh language. It was noted that a buddy scheme had been established where a Welsh learner is matched with an officer from another service and gets support to foster their language skills. Reference was also made to the department's intranet that had recently been updated to include a dictionary of useful words for the department's services to use and to make it easier for staff. It was confirmed that the department continued to work closely with the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer to ensure that everything was done to enable officers to work and communicate confidently and naturally in Welsh.

Members of the committee were given an opportunity to ask questions:

– The department was commended for its decision to change the computer language from English to Welsh and it was asked whether the department had received any concerns or negative responses as a result of this change?

- o In response to the query, the Head of the Finance Department noted that IT service staff had feared a negative response to this change. However, there had been no negative response. Naturally, staff had taken time to get used to the change but generally everyone could remember where the icons and buttons are and the Welsh terminology had kept up with this.

- – It was asked if it was intended to extend the buddy scheme to be used across the council?
  - o In response to the query, the Head of the Finance Department noted that he would be happy to do this within the department. However, only one officer was currently eligible for the scheme and therefore there was no scope to expand this within the department at present.
  - o In response to the enquiry, the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer noted that this scheme was available to every department within the council. It had been created voluntarily by individuals having attended refresher Welsh language courses and they wanted to ensure there was regular use of the language to be able to foster their skills.

- – Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

- - To accept the report and note the observations received.

9. PROJECT UPDATE: LANGUAGE DESIGNATION PRIORITY

The report was presented by the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer, and she briefly drew attention to the following main points:

- - The background of the language designations project was reported upon, confirming that it derived from the discussions of the Language Committee in 2015, before the new language standards came into effect in 2016. As a result of this project, the Council has a better understanding of the different language skills the workforce has and can offer more suitable support to foster the language skills of staff.

- - It was confirmed that the project had also been developed to place language designations for the Council's various posts. As a result of this, officers would have more awareness of the required skill level to be able to deliver the work effectively.

- - It was explained that the project had been pivotal to establish an internal language system that retains information about staff language skills and to establish a process to share information about courses, share feedback and successes with the different departments. Also, as part of the project, an internal language site was developed. Different sections of this language site were shown to members.

- - Attention was given to the questions that arose during the previous discussions and the following information was noted:
  - o It was explained that the process of gathering information via a self-assessment survey was varied. It was reported that some people were happy to complete this on-line and others wanted to receive a hard copy. It was explained that the manager provided information for the project in situations when workers did not have easy access to a computer, or they are front-line workers. The intention was for the information to be gathered in the simplest way possible for everyone to have an opportunity to complete this. It was also explained that project

officers understood that some people were suspicious of completing questionnaires and language skills were a sensitive issue for many.

- o It was thought that the number of people who speak Welsh was higher in some departments than what had been noted in the findings. It was noted that some people could speak Welsh but did not reach the language designation and therefore had not been included in some figures. It was confirmed that this was the main aim of the survey to ensure an understanding of the different skill levels that exist in different teams in order to ensure that the relevant support was available for officers.

- A copy of the survey was shown as an example to the members.

- It was noted that the formal project would come to an end in the next few months. It was confirmed that the process of gathering information about staff language skills was on-going, however, the main focus of the officers had moved to ensure that staff received support to develop their language skills.

- The formal project would come to an end in the next few months. Staff support and gathering information was continuing but the focus had moved to staff support.

Members of the committee were given an opportunity to ask questions:

– It was asked if the language self-assessment was completed within the Education department as it was a process that was being developed across the Council.

- o In response to the enquiry, the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer noted that the self-assessment was available for department staff, and some department officers had completed the survey. Recently the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan had been established and more work would be undertaken to get information about the language skills of officers in the Education department as a result of this. This strategy and the recent Welsh Government plan enabled department officers to receive more support and Welsh lessons should the need arise.

– Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

- To accept the report and to note the observations received.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.15pm.

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CHAIR

MEETING	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE	30 January 2023
TITLE	Report of the Education Department's implementation of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd
PURPOSE	Present information about the Education Department's contribution to the implementation of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd
AUTHOR	Garem Jackson, Head of Education

1. **BACKGROUND**

This report has been prepared to present information to the Language Committee on the Education Department's contribution to the implementation of the Council's Language Policy and the Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd.

The Council's Language Policy is embedded through all of the work done by the Department and schools, and we will highlight in this report the planning work that has been undertaken during the past year in response to new national requirements, and we will refer to the opportunities available to encourage progress in the use made of the Welsh language in formal and informal contexts in our schools, how our provision for latecomers is evolving to reflect the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales, and it acknowledges some of the challenges we are facing in specific fields.

One of the national changes that the Department has been preparing for over the past year is Welsh Government's new arrangements for school categorisation according to Welsh medium provision from September 2022. The change means that the number of categories has been reduced to three in the primary sector and three in the secondary sector. One intention with the new categorisation system is to encourage schools to increase their Welsh medium provision, and one of the core principles of the system is that no school should offer less Welsh medium provision in the future than was done in the past.

During the year, the Education Department planned and responded to the new system for the primary and secondary sector and completed that process with schools and Welsh Government during the summer term - to be implemented from September 2022 onwards. In October, the Department also held a training session for the elected members on this new categorisation system. Follow-up work will be done over the next year to ensure that the system develops and is embedded in order to achieve Gwynedd's ambition in this field.

Alongside the categorisation system, the Department has been preparing for the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which came into force on 1 September 2022. The WESP is a part of the long-term vision in Wales for *Cymraeg 2050*. In order to support the planning process, the plans have been arranged around seven outcomes which reflect a learner's learning journey and correspond with the policy fields of *Cymraeg 2050* and *Our National Mission*.

A full consultation on Gwynedd's new draft WESP was held in the autumn term of 2021, and following this, with the consultation ending before Christmas. After considering the observations of the consultation, the WESP was submitted before the Cabinet for approval in March 2022 and before the Language Committee at the beginning of the summer. It was approved in its final form by the Minister for the Welsh Language and Education on 24 June 2022.

As the WESP now becomes operational, Welsh Government and the minister will continue to monitor our progress and the steps we have taken annually. However, our aim in Gwynedd is for the WESP to be a live, ambitious document that reflects the unique situation of Gwynedd and steers our action in favour of Welsh medium education in the county.

2.   **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN IN GWYNEDD**

1.	**Can you highlight any projects within your department that contribute to one of the Council's language strategy priorities, namely the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd?**

	1. **LANGUAGE OF THE FAMILY**
	   a) **Increase in the number of Welsh-medium play opportunities for pre-school age children**
	     The Education Department is collaborating with the Children and Families Department in the Early Years field. In line with the content of the WESP, it is ensured that all Early Years settings set a firm foundation for Welsh, ensuring that every child has a Welsh Language, Literacy and Communication skills assessment on admission and at the end of the part-time nursery education and at the end of the Foundation Phase. An appropriate provision to enable every pupil to develop bilingual proficiency must be ensured. Please see below our current situation in terms of the number of nursery children/three-year-olds educated through the medium of Welsh.
	
	     Gwynedd Cylchoedd Meithrin Data 2021-22:

Area	Cylch Meithrin Numbers	Number / % of nursery three-year-old children transferring to Welsh-medium education	
Arfon	27	496	100%
Dwyfor	15	172	100%
Meirionnydd	19	186	100%

In our 10 year WESP, we note our commitment to collaborate with one primary school in Bangor in order to increase their use of Welsh and their Welsh-medium provision, in accordance with the Council's Language Policy, which will lead to an increase in the % of nursery children in Arfon who transfer to Welsh-medium education.

2. **THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING:**

a) Schools that give prestige and value the Welsh language and encouraging more use of the Welsh language as a medium or learning and socialising by continuing to implement the Language Charter and the Secondary Sector Language Strategy.

The aim of the Language Policy is to ensure that all the pupils within the county, in all of our schools, have the appropriate linguistic skills in both Welsh and English. All of the county's education establishments are expected to reflect and reinforce the Language Policy in their administration, social life and pastoral arrangements, as well as in their curricular provision. The Language Policy places an emphasis on immersing 0-7-year-old learners in the Welsh language, ensuring that they only receive a Welsh assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase. In 2022-23, 98.82% of learners will be assessed in Welsh as a First Language at the end of the Foundation Phase. In KS2, the aim is to continue to develop the pupils' grasp of Welsh, giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages.

b) More pupils continuing to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from primary to secondary school and post compulsory education.

In secondary schools, every pupil who has attained the necessary level, namely level 3+ at the end of KS2, is expected to pursue Welsh and English as subjects until the end of Year 11. Secondary schools build upon the foundations set in the primary by ensuring that each pupil continues to develop skills in Welsh and in English. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, no data is available for 2019-20, 2020-21,or 2021-22, therefore, the 2018-19 data is the most up-to-date data we have regarding learners continuing to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another, as shown by the table below:

2018-19	Year 9 learners being assessed in the medium of Welsh (First Language)	84.5%

2018-19	Foundation Phase learners gaining Outcome 5+ in Welsh (teacher assessments)	78.8%
2018-19	KS2 learners gaining Level 4+ in Welsh First Language (teacher assessments)	86.9%
2018-19	KS3 learners gaining Level 5+ in Welsh First Language (teacher assessments)	91.9%
2018-19	KS3 learners gaining Level 5+ in Welsh Second Language (teacher assessments)	77.1%

Similarly, the table below shows data from 2018-19 in relation to more learners studying for Welsh (as a subject) qualifications, and subjects studied through the medium of Welsh:

2018/19	Learners who register for GCSE Welsh (First Language) and who registered for at least two other qualifications in Welsh.	78.1%
2018/19	Learners who register for GCSE Welsh (First Language) who registered for at least five other qualifications at level 1 or level 2 in Welsh.	64.2%
2018/19	Learners at the end of Key Stage 4 achieved grades A*-C in GCSE Welsh First Language.	70.7%

The Department is currently working with the secondary schools to secure definitive, reliable and current data in order to report on the Welsh language in more detail again, in response to the change in the KS2 and KS3 assessment process.

b) **Language Centres**

The Gwynedd Immersion Education System for 2023 and beyond has now been established and it will officially commence on 1 January 2023. The new staffing structure of the System is operational and a team of enthusiastic teachers and assistants are collaborating under the leadership of a Headteacher and Deputy. A Government capital investment to the value of £1.1 million has secured modern and fit-for-purpose buildings for the 21st Century in Ysgol Eifionydd in Porthmadog, and Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor with the construction work taking place in Tywyn and this centre is accommodated temporarily at Ysgol Bro Idris secondary school. Our new-look immersion service offers a provision for children from years 2 to 4 at the primary centres, whilst our primary-secondary transition centres offer courses for the older learners between years 5 and 9. Opening our doors to year 2 learners, who

are not necessarily latecomers to the county but have received early childhood education and spent time in the Foundation Phase here in Gwynedd is a significant step and places emphasis on those early immersion principles, which are key to ensure that we are on track to reach the Outcome 2 target of WESP. To this end, the staff at our centres have created and presented specific training for teachers and assistants in the Foundation Phase in order to share early immersion principles and acknowledge the linguistic complexity of a number of our existing Foundation Phase classes across the County.

To accompany the new structure of our System, we will begin to trial a new scheme at the Centres, entitled Aberwla. This is a scheme that has been created by Anni Llŷn, a local author, who has based her work on an imaginary village that is full of interesting locations and different characters. By meeting the characters and visiting the locations, the children will develop their vocabulary and language patterns in a structured way in order to ensure follow-up and continuation on the language continuum. To reinforce the patterns and vocabulary and to gain and motivate the learners' interest, we have managed, in collaboration with Animated Technologies, to create a virtual ABERWLA resource on a VR platform. This project has now been identified as innovative practice by Welsh Government and they have provided a further investment of £200,000 for us to complete all locations over the next 2 years, with the intention of sharing the resource nationally.

After completing the Primary Secondary Language Units' modernisation projects by the end of the 2022-2023 financial year, we will proceed to invest over £1.1m to reconcile capacity and improve the learning environment of the County's primary Language Centres.

Although the project's funding has been approved in principle by Welsh Government, there will be a need to submit a full business case before them in order to secure capital funding from the Welsh-medium Education Capital Grant in order to invest £1.1 million in our Language Centres for year 2-4 learners. The Centres at Maesincla, Llangybi and Dolgellau will receive this investment.

By means of this bid, the Education Department is eager to incorporate the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales, and offer cross-curricular experiences for all learners at the centres. It is also intended to ensure a strategic location for each of the immersion sites that will be a means to extend experiences and increase the opportunities for learners who are latecomers to use their Welsh outside the classroom by being located within convenient reach of facilities such as the Gwynedd Libraries, Byw'n Iach Centres, shops, clubs and social enterprises, this will be an opportunity to extend the learners' experiences as they benefit from experiences that bring the Welsh language to life. To this end, by means of the capital investment from the first phase and second phase, each of the Immersion Education System sites will be suitable to deliver the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales and offer cross-curricular experiences for all learners. Since it was established in the 1980s, the immersion provision in Gwynedd has been pioneering in the field, and the new-look System will consequently modernise the provision, the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales, as well as all capital investment and the best facilities, will continue to pioneer now and in the future.

3.   THE LANGUAGE OF WORK AND SERVICES

a) Welsh Language Services

We are proud to report that all Education Department services are available through the medium of Welsh.

b) Language Specifications

95.5% of Education Department staff (excluding schools) meet the language designation of their post. The service Management Team is committed to support staff who want to learn or refresh their language skills to attend the variety of opportunities available to do this.   The Language Designations principles and procedures are also included in Outcome 7 of WESP.

In an attempt to obtain consistency in terms of linguistic requirement expectations (Language Designations), for posts across all Council departments (including schools), the Department has been working closely with Human Resources Officers, Democracy and Language Officers, and Learning and Development Officers on the work of determining our expectations in terms of linguistic requirements for the appointment of our schools' workforce. The Language Policy and School Safe Recruitment and Selection Policy make the linguistic requirement expectations of the Education Department clear to Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies. It is expected for Welsh to be noted as an essential skill for every teaching post, with the exact level of linguistic skills needed to achieve the requirements of the post - speaking and listening, reading and comprehension, and writing - being clearly shown in the Person Specification when advertising. We have amended the Job Descriptions, Person Specifications, Language Policy and School Safe Recruitment and Selection Policy in our schools to ensure that they include a reference to the Language Designations. Consequently, when appointing to the education workforce, it is expected for the Language Designations to be included in every advertisement, in line with the Education Department's expectations.

c) Welsh Language Self-assessment

82.8% of Education Department staff (excluding schools) have completed a Welsh language self-assessment. Currently, 17.2% of central staff in the Education Department have not completed the self-assessment and the task of ensuring that current staff and new staff complete the self-assessment is continuous work. The Department will also need a purposeful campaign to engage with schools in order to get school staff to fill-in the self-assessment. Currently, 40.73% of school staff have completed the language self-assessment.

d) Annual Census of the Education Workforce

Based on the latest Education Workforce Language Census, we are also targeting and supporting some schools across the county to ensure that they are able to respond to the linguistic needs of their staff by promoting access to opportunities to learn Welsh or increase their confidence in Welsh, as well as respond in full to the language policy of Gwynedd schools in terms of teaching medium and administrative language of the school.

In our Business Plan that accompanies our 10-year WESP, we note our collaboration to work with specific schools in order to increase their use and provision of Welsh, in line with the Council's Language Policy, which will lead to an increase in the % of nursery children who will transfer to Welsh education, and an increase in the % of secondary pupils who will study subjects through the medium of Welsh and sit exams in Welsh at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5.

e) **Language Policy and Safe Recruitment and Selection Policy**
The schools' Language Policy and Safe Recruitment and Selection Policy ensures that Headteachers, school staff and Governors are aware of the expectations to use and promote Welsh in all parts of the operation of schools in the county, and ensure that the rights of the pupils and the school's extended family to use Welsh when associating with the school is always respected.

In implementing these policies, the school and governing body will ensure:

- that all pupils in the county possess appropriate linguistic skills in Welsh and English, and that this expectation is consistent across each school.

- that there is an appropriate provision to enable every pupil to develop bilingual proficiency. In this context, schools are expected to continue to foster the skills of those pupils who are Welsh first language, and introduce Welsh to those who are Welsh learners.

- that all of the county's education establishments are expected to reflect and reinforce the Language Policy in their administration, social life and pastoral arrangements, as well as in their curricular provision.

- that Welsh is noted as an essential skill for every teaching post, with the exact level of linguistic skills needed to achieve the requirements of the post - speaking and listening, reading and comprehension, and writing - being clearly shown in the Person Specification when advertising.

4. **THE LANGUAGE OF THE COMMUNITY**
   a) **Welsh Language Charter / Secondary Language Strategy:**
   - Support schools to implement the main priorities of the Welsh Language Charter/Secondary Language Charter.
   - The Outcome of the Welsh Language Skills Questionnaire cascaded with schools and action plans jointly drawn up with schools in response to the findings.
   - A defect in the recording system on Hwb has proved to be a huge challenge when collecting and accessing the data - at the end of the Summer Term 2022 and in the Autumn Term 2022.

b) Welsh Language Cluster Plans:
- Re-defining the roles and work programmes of language coordinators in each catchment area in Gwynedd has ensured an effective way of planning activities which respond specifically to the outcomes of the Gwynedd WESP.
- All schools in every catchment area in Gwynedd have drawn up their cluster plans for Welsh in response and in order to aim towards achieving outcome 3, 5 and 7 of the WESP. After receiving the Welsh Language grant, schools have proceeded to put every plan into action and a series of specific training has been held to respond to the needs of the workforce.
- Language Charter Coordinator and Secondary Language Strategy verifies the Welsh Language Grant cluster plans to ensure that they correspond with the WESP outcomes, strengthening the collaboration between the primary and secondary, and responding to local needs that will give more opportunities to Gwynedd pupils to make social use of Welsh.
- Good practices are disseminated between the clusters at County Language Coordinator meetings.
- Some challenges have been experienced this year when checking the Welsh Language Grant Cluster Plans.

c) Modernising Education

As a part of the process of developing proposal(s) for the reorganisation of school(s), it is required for the authority, in accordance with the Schools Organisation Code (011/2018), to carry out an assessment of the impact that the proposal(s) will have on the Welsh language, the community and on equality. In order to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the impact of any proposal, as part of the consultation process, the authority is carrying out the following impact assessments:
- Assessment of the probable impact on the Quality and Standards of Education
- Assessment of the probable Impact on travel arrangements
- Assessment of the probable impact on the Community
- Language impact assessment
- Assessment against the Well-being Act, and
- Equality Assessment

1. RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY
   a) Support growth in the technology sector by promoting new developments and develop the skills of young people in the field.
   b) More public and educational organisations using Welsh-medium software and technology.

What we are trying to achieve through the digital strategy is highly ambitious and is an indication of the way we prioritise our children's education here in Gwynedd. Put simply, the strategy, had placed a suitable device to enable digital learning in the hands of every child. Enough *ipads* have been distributed to provide one to every four learners in the Foundation Phase, and enough *Chromebooks* have been distributed so that all learners in years 3 to 6 have one device each. Windows 10 devices have been

distributed to every pupil in years 7, 10 and 11, and every teacher in Gwynedd has received a quality device through the strategy, in the hope that this will fire their imagination and further motivate innovation and the effectiveness of the digital learning aspects across the sectors. Gwynedd will be one of the first authorities in Wales to do this, and it is something we can take pride in.

Every device will be set-up in Welsh in the first place, where it is possible to do so. Nearly 10,000 devices will use Windows and Office 365 through the medium of Welsh.

In addition, the strategy sets a long-term ambition to get more Welsh speakers into high value jobs in the digital field.

In the context of research, we are developing a VR virtual resource to support latecomers into the county to acquire the Welsh language. Research shows a significant increase in the number of children and young people who use games during their leisure time. However, in the past, concerns have arisen about the suitability of these games for young children and the negative influence on their well-being, considering the number of hours they spend on them. Having said that, recent research shows that there are cognitive advantages to the educational development of children by making appropriate use of games as an educational resource. To this end, we are currently developing the Aberwla VR virtual resource to normalise the Welsh language on the VR platform. This is an innovative project that received a warm reception and positive feedback from users of all ages, including the Minister for the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, on the Maes at the Tregaron National Eisteddfod of Wales.

2.	*If the department awards work externally on contract, can you refer to any good practice, either when imposing conditions or when monitoring in order to ensure compliance with the linguistic conditions?*
	The Department includes language requirements on all of our 3rd party contracts and each contract is regularly monitored on behalf of the provider, between the Service Manager and the Manager. A number of Service Level Agreements are provided by various Council departments for our schools, such as building maintenance from the Housing and Property Department, land maintenance from the Environment Department, and business and administrative support for primary schools via a Service Level Agreement with the Schools Business Centre.

The ALN&I Service has a service level agreement with the Health Board's Speech and Language Therapy Service. This agreement is for the provision of Speech and Language Therapists that support learners within Mainstream Schools in Gwynedd and Anglesey. It is monitored on different levels (managerial and operational) in order to report to the ALN&I Management Board. Within this agreement, the service is

		required to offer a bilingual provision for schools, but this can be very challenging in terms of recruiting bilingual Therapists and responding to the need promptly. We are working with the service to overcome the barriers surrounding this.
3.		*Are there any obstructions that prevent you as a department to offer a full service in Welsh?*
		Recruitment Recruitment of secondary teachers in specific subjects is a national challenge but this challenge is intensified within the Welsh-medium education and in some specific areas of the county and it is a matter that causes concern to the Department and schools in general. The ALN&I service is experiencing difficulties with the recruitment of a workforce that is proficient in Welsh in specialist fields such as educational psychologists and counsellors, and we know that the current cohort that qualifies on the course to become educational psychologists are unlikely to lead to more educational psychologists for Gwynedd. Currently, the Department's educational psychologists are providing a service with fewer resources. In order to respond pro-actively to this situation, we are raising these matters in ALN discussions regularly at meetings with the Welsh Government. **Meetings** Collaboration through the medium of Welsh with partners can be challenging in some fields. This includes national, regional and local meetings. The translation provision on Zoom is easy and effortless for those who require it, however, the Health Board, for example, have not been able to use this provision until very recently. **Apps** Schoolcomms The Education Department has been calling for many years now for the Schoolcomms app to be available in Welsh, so that we can facilitate the ability of parents to use the app to pay for school dinners. We are now pleased to note that the app is available bilingually, and although primary learners will not be required to pay for school dinners from September 2023 onwards, the app is used to pay for other activities held by schools, such as trips, etc., therefore the fact that the app is now available bilingually is very good news.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- ask any questions or make observations on the content of the report.

MEETING	Language Committee
DATE	30 January 2023
TITLE	Welsh Language Promotion Plan - Corporate Support
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To inform Members of the efforts of the Corporate Support Department to promote the use of the Welsh language.
AUTHOR	Ian Jones, Head of Corporate Support Department
ACTION	To accept the report and offer observations

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   This report is presented to provide information to the Language Committee on the Corporate Support Department's contribution to promoting the Welsh language within and outside the Council.

1.2   Implementing the Council's Language Policy forms a core part of the day-to-day work of the Department's services with the Welsh language being the only language of communication for all the Department's internal activities and also in a large proportion of our work with other departments, the public as well as external organisations and agencies.

1.3   The Department leads on the corporate priority within the Council Plan involving "Promoting the Use of the Welsh language within the Council" with the Language Learning and Development Officer within the Learning and Organisational Development Service driving our efforts to that end. As members of the Language Committee, you will be aware of the progress of that work and the positive impact it is having on the use of the language within the Departments.

1.4   Within the Corporate Support Department, it is confirmed that the linguistic requirements of every post have been reviewed as part of this Plan and that 95.1% of staff have completed a self-assessment of their ability to meet those requirements. Of the staff who have completed a self-assessment, 98.3% of them reach or exceed the linguistic requirements to fulfil the duties within their posts.

1.5   The Department's involvement with the Plan itself has ended by now as it is accepted that the Department has designated the listening and speaking, reading and understanding and written requirements for every post and that an assessment of the needs of any member of staff against those requirements forms a continuous part of personal performance and appraisal. Nevertheless, many of the Department's staff are eager to improve their written Welsh skills and take advantage of the opportunities to do so within the Council's provision.

1.6   The Language Unit (which includes Hunaniaith) is located within the Democracy and Language Service in the Department and officers within the Unit are pivotal in driving the objectives of the Welsh Language Promotion Plan. The Corporate Support Department leads on nine of the corporate priorities in the current Council Plan and three of those priorities specifically involve the objectives within the Welsh Language Plan i.e.

- Promote the use of the Welsh language within the Council's services
- The Welsh Language in Public Services

- Native Welsh Place Names

2.   RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	Question
Promoting and advancing How do we go beyond the bilingual provision to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in the community, to contribute to the national target of creating a Million speakers, and to the Well-being goal of ensuring that the people of Gwynedd are "Able to live in a natural Welsh community"?	• ***Can you highlight any projects within your department that contribute to one of the Council's language strategy priorities, namely the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd?*** **i)** It is continual work to **Promote the use of the Welsh language within the Council's Services,** and we are aware that there is a need to continue to maintain our staff's language skills. The Language Designations project is nearing completion, but the work of gathering language self-assessments from staff will continue. This work is now part of day-to-day work and is now self-sustaining to a large extent as systems and arrangements have been put into place to ensure that staff across the Council complete the self-assessment. The Language Designations Forum was established to ensure that every department carries on with the work and that there is an opportunity to note any challenges. As a result of the project, the internal Language Site has also been established, so that information about language training and useful resources (such as the Welsh Tip of the Month) are available for staff at any time. The work of arranging and providing training for staff will continue. A number of external courses are available for Council staff to develop their language skills and gain confidence to use Welsh in the workplace. Staff members who do not reach the language designations of their posts will be given priority, as well as front-line staff. Further attention will also be provided to develop our internal language training. ***ii)*** The **Welsh Language and Public Services** project seeks to address the inconsistency in the provision of bilingual services by public bodies in Gwynedd which means that it is not always possible for residents to use the Welsh language naturally when communicating with public bodies. Public organisations in Gwynedd and Anglesey estimate that fewer people choose Welsh-medium services compared to the number of Welsh-speakers in both counties. By working with partners who are a part of the Public Services Board's Welsh Language Sub-group, we have commissioned a study of 12 traditional receptions in order to consider how we can encourage more people to engage with us in Welsh, and to be comfortable to do so. A train the trainer package has been created for managers along with a training resources pack, which will focus on

equipping staff to encourage more use of the Welsh language in receptions.

We are also collaborating with a Bangor University student on a project that will examine the public's language choice when dealing with Cyngor Gwynedd services only - either over the phone, face-to-face or on-line.

iii) As you know, the work involving **Native Welsh Place Names** has been established as a new improvement priority in the latest review of the Council Plan in order to;

- reconcile the way the Council operates when recognising Welsh names
- ensure that the Welsh versions of place names are given priority with external partners
- seek to take proactive steps to protect and prevent more changes to native names

Over the past year, attention has been given to Council buildings, house names, street names, place names and to use the name, Cyngor Gwynedd.

It was also managed to launch a Place Names Interactive Map in order to encourage the public to be part of the project. A workshop was held with a primary school to promote the map project and to give children an opportunity to populate the map. It is intended to further promote the map amongst more primary and secondary schools. Appropriate resources and training on house and place names were also prepared for staff. A beneficial discussion was also held with external bodies such as OS Map, Welsh Government and the Snowdonia National Park.

iv) In recent years, despite the recognition given to the special linguistic situation of Gwynedd and the background of establishing **Hunaniaith (Gwynedd's Language Initiative)** as a strategic unit within Cyngor Gwynedd, the main income source - a Grant Scheme to Promote and Facilitate the Use of Welsh, Welsh Government - has mainly focused on funding activity that promotes and supports social use of Welsh in accordance with Theme 2 of the national language strategy, Cymraeg 2050, 'Increasing the Use of Welsh'. The emphasis of that grant scheme is on operating at grass roots level to promote and facilitate an increase in the social use made of the Welsh language.

This community focus is reinforced by Hunaniaith's current work programme and the operational priorities noted under the current grant conditions, namely:

- influence the language of the family
- strengthen the link between the school and the community
- offer activities to a wide range of residents
- develop an understanding of the linguistic practices of the residents of Gwynedd

As a result of Council investment, it was managed to appoint a full-time Chief Officer for the language initiative in order to lead further developments, by focusing on attracting new grants and generating an income, improving community contact, attracting more community members to the Strategic Group, and working towards being an

	independent entity. It was managed to attract different members and establish a new Steering/Strategic Group and the aim is to launch the new-look initiative, as a sustainable, independent entity, at the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in Llŷn and Eifionydd in 2023. v) In order to ensure one central point on the Council website for information associated with the Welsh language, a new web-page was created - The Welsh Language. The web-page includes various information about the use of the Welsh language in Gwynedd. A new interactive map was developed, which shows where Welsh medium activities are available, as well as a digital information pack for incomers about Gwynedd's culture and language.
<u>Externalisation of work and awarding third party contracts</u> How do we ensure that the quality of the bilingual service is maintained when externalising work and awarding contracts?	**1.** ***If the department awards work externally on contract, can you refer to any good practice, either when imposing conditions or when** monitoring in order to ensure compliance with the linguistic conditions?* • There are very few contracts that the Department sets in relation to the services for which it is responsible but the specialist guidance on procurement matters is offered corporately by our Procurement Service which advises the Category Management Units located within the Environment, Adults, Health and Well-being and Highways and Municipal Departments. Those Units are directly responsible for inviting, setting and monitoring contracts with the relevant services across the Council. • The Committee will already have received details regarding how the Welsh language is given a prominent place within the contracts set by the Council, from the reports submitted by the departments where the category management units are located, but I do wish to draw attention to a pilot scheme that we are currently undertaking in relation to introducing **"social value"** as an additional criterion when considering setting contracts in the future. • We continue to trial this new methodology to assess tenders based on social value, alongside the historical criteria of price and quality, with three contracts that currently need to be renewed. The procurement process to set the Adults Service' Direct Payments contract has already been completed and the additional benefits that derived from using the new methodology included commitments from the winning company to provide jobs for local people, work experiences, training, support for local charities and to develop the Welsh skills of its workforce. • Further work needs to be undertaken with the category teams to identify further opportunities to trial the methodology. This has already commenced and the Department will arrange a series of presentations this year to promote the potential opportunities to maximise all social benefits, which include promoting the use of the Welsh language.

<u>Operating bilingually</u> How do we manage to act on the requirements of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards?	***3. Are there any obstacles that prevent you as a department from offering a full service in Welsh?*** • It was reported last year that the Support Service is responsible for coordinating arrangements **to carry out criminal record checks,** and that there was a barrier as the new on-line system by the Criminal Records Office to undertake this work was only available in English. It was also reported that assurance had been given that the system would soon be available bilingually, and that this followed substantial pressure by the Council and the Commissioner's office. Unfortunately, we are still waiting to receive this service and, therefore, it remains a barrier for the people of Gwynedd to use the Welsh language. • The lack of quality bilingual training provision continues to be an obstacle for our Apprenticeships, especially for higher apprenticeships. This local Scheme within the Council is an extremely successful one, offering work experience opportunities through the medium of Welsh. 41 apprentices are currently part of the Council's scheme, and each of those have signed the "Welsh language Ambition Statement", as well as the providers. As part of the Plan, officers from the Department's Learning and Development Service try to persuade and encourage apprenticeship providers to offer as much of their provision as possible through the medium of Welsh. Work is currently underway to try to assess the current situation in terms of the language medium of the educational provision offered, with the aim of working together with the providers to identify opportunities to improve the provision, to identify additional resources to offered in Welsh as well as further opportunities to promote the Welsh language. • The Equality Advisor and the Language Advisor continue to collaborate closely to develop the **integrated impact assessment** (equality, language and economic disadvantage) procedure within the Council. A digital assessment is currently being developed by the IT service, and although there has been a delay in launching this, it is hoped that it will soon be ready for use, and facilitate the monitoring work. The other barrier in this field at present is that assessments are not undertaken early enough in the planning process, and that officers' awareness of this will need to be raised over the next year in order to improve action. • There is currently a number of barriers in the field of registration, with residents failing to register in Welsh only, and unable to register a birth outside Wales (should there be a situation where a child is born in a hospital outside the boundary for example) in Welsh/bilingually. The Customer Contact and Registration Service, with support from the Language and Scrutiny Unit, hopes to address this matter and put pressure on relevant agencies during the year.

<u>Developing new opportunities</u>	***4. Do you have ideas about new ways we can promote the Welsh language in the county's communities - either in your own services or by collaborating with others?*** • One of the biggest challenges which has become apparent over the past three years is in relation to the ability to recruit and appoint to key posts across the Council. The Human Resources Service and the Learning and Organisational Development Service lead on the corporate improvement priority involving **"Workforce Planning"** and despite the successes to report already in the context of this work, the challenge of ensuring service continuity, in the preferred language of our taxpayers, is a real one. The ability to work virtually (often from home) has the potential to give local individuals much more choice of employment which, previously, may have emphasised the ability to live close to their place of work. On the contrary, there is also an opportunity to attract individuals to work for the Council who may not have considered this prior to the pandemic. To this end, we will aim to build on the strong foundations we already have through the apprenticeship scheme, the Managers and Specialists of Tomorrow scheme as well as the internal Developing Potential programme while strengthening our links and the collaboration between us and employment services within the Council and more widely in order to establish the Council firmly as an employer of choice. • Examples have been provided in the report of what we have developed and influenced in the context of the services through the medium of Welsh, often with the co-operation of other organisations. The recent investment to seek to extend the work of **Hunaniaith** within our communities and try to attract more community contribution to that work will be crucial, while the efforts of the Sub-group within the **Public Services Board** to persuade more Welsh-speakers to use the Welsh language with the public organisations will be extremely important.

MEETING	**Language Committee**
DATE	**30 January 2023**
TITLE	**Report of the Housing and Property Department on the Implementation of the Language Policy and Activities to Promote the Welsh Language**
PURPOSE	**To present information about the Department's contribution to promoting and advancing the Welsh language**
AUTHOR	**Carys Fôn Williams, Head of Housing and Property**

1.   Background and context

1.1.   This report has been prepared in order to present information to the Language Committee on the Housing and Property Department's contribution to the Language Policy.

1.2.   The Housing and Property Department comprises a mix of frontline services (such as Homelessness, Refugees, Housing Supply), corporate (such as Estates, Property Safety, Offices and Cleaning) and commercial (Pest Control) services.

1.3.   This means that the Department deals with a number of customers and stakeholders, which include the staff of Cyngor Gwynedd, Gwynedd businesses and residents.

1.4.   As a result, we believe it is extremely important to be able to offer our services bilingually, and to respect the customer's language choice.

1.5.   The sensitive nature of some of the cases faced by the department shows the importance of operating through the medium of Welsh for our service users.

1.6.   For example, when our staff deal with individuals facing homelessness, who are already in a situation of extreme stress, dealing with these individuals in a sensitive manner is vital. An obvious and important part of that is speaking to the individual in the language of their choice.

1.7.   The staff of the Housing Grants Unit deal with disabled adults and children by offering them support to be able to live in their own home by installing equipment such as ramps, or making modifications to houses such as extensions or wet rooms. It is also extremely important to be able to offer a service in Welsh when dealing with these situations.

1.8.   The Department also deals with service users who come to Gwynedd from outside Wales and Britain, and who speak languages other than Welsh and English. The Refugee Resettlement Unit

has been a key part of the Council's response to the situation in Ukraine, accepting, supporting and accommodating refugees in Gwynedd over the past year.

1.9.   The Unit works closely with agencies such as interpreters to support refugees who come to Gwynedd to seek asylum. In general, these individuals are keen to make a meaningful contribution to the society that accepts them, with many learning Welsh when settling, and fitting into their new communities well.

2.   The Welsh Language Skills of our workforce

2.1.   We place great importance on ensuring that we comply with the Council's Language Policy, and on our ability to offer a Welsh language service to our service users, whether internal or external.

2.2.   According to the latest Language Designations Quarterly Report, **94%** of our staff achieve or surpass the Language Designations of their posts.

2.3.   Of those 94%, **60%** of them have skills that exceed the language requirements associated with their posts.

2.4.   Up to 06/01/2023, **96%** of the staff have received some form of assessment (self-assessment or line manager assessment) with only seven remaining unassessed.

2.5.   Of those, **79%** have completed a self-assessment (i.e. our requirement in order to get the best picture of our staff's language skills). This is an increase of 12% over the past year, following a campaign to encourage more staff to complete it.

2.6.   Those who have received a line manager assessment only are mostly frontline staff, such as office cleaners, and we recognise that it may take some time for a self-assessment to be completed due to the nature of their work.

3.   Responding to the matters that members wish to discuss

3.1   The matters are responded to on the following pages

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	Promoting and advancing

Question 1: Can you highlight any projects within your department that contribute to one of the Council's language strategy priorities, namely the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd?

General

The Department attaches great importance to operating through the medium of Welsh, not only because of our feeling of pride and respect towards the language and what it means to the Council, but also because we deal with individuals who are often in vulnerable situations and who come to us when they have nowhere else to turn, and we fully realise how important it is to use the language of their choice when supporting individuals in such a situation.

The Welsh Language Promotion Plan states that mobility and migration are one of the main challenges for the Welsh language in Gwynedd. We believe that our Common Housing Allocation Policy, which gives priority for social housing to individuals with a connection to Gwynedd, contributes to the goal of ensuring that local people can live and stay in their communities. The latest data shows that 96% of social housing allocations in Gwynedd have gone to a person with a local connection between September 2021 and 2022.

Homelessness

When responding to situations where individuals and families are made homeless, the Service does its best to keep that family together when relocating. Apart from the obvious benefits to the well-being of the family by keeping them together, it safeguards the language as the language of the family, and reduces the risk that individuals will lose the language by being separated.

The Homelessness Service does not just work in response to situations of homelessness - a key part of its work focuses on preventing homelessness before it occurs. In some cases such as these, it entails communicating between members of a family in order to keep that family under the same roof, which can lead to the safeguarding of a Welsh-speaking household that would otherwise have been lost.

Grants to adapt housing for disabled people

Many people in Gwynedd live in houses that are not suited to their needs. That may mean that a resident is unable to climb the stairs to the first floor, or finds it difficult to wash because the building's existing bathroom is not fit for purpose. The Housing Grants and Projects Unit guides the individuals through the process in conjunction with Occupational Therapists, and ensures that a work programme is in place that corresponds to the individual's needs. Through these modifications, it is possible for the people of Gwynedd to stay in their homes and as a consequence keep Welsh speakers in their communities.

It is pleasing to note that the Unit is operated fully bilingually, with all officers able to offer a service in Welsh. A very high percentage of communication is done through the medium of Welsh (unless there is a need/request for communication in English only) and the Occupational Therapists we work with are Welsh speakers too, and the referral forms are in Welsh.

However, at the moment, our work programmes and technical documents are in English as that is the customary language of building specifications and documents in the construction/architectural field. Nevertheless, we also have the ability to provide these through the medium of Welsh as required.

Projects within the [Housing Action Plan](#)

The Department's Housing Action Plan, a Plan of 33 projects over a period of six years, outlines our objectives in addressing the housing needs of the people of Gwynedd. The Plan will be beneficial in several key areas, one of which is the Welsh language and Welsh-speaking communities. Projects such as those named below will give Gwynedd residents opportunities to access a suitable and affordable home:

Scheme	Description	Further information
Develop our own housing in order to increase the opportunities for Gwynedd residents to compete in the housing market.	Develop our own houses which will increase the housing stock in those communities where demand exists for buying or renting at an intermediate rent.	We intend to set a condition so that any owner must be a local person.
Purchase private housing	Use a ready-made stock of houses that would be suitable for housing local people, while considering buying houses and letting them to local people at an intermediate rent.	We will give priority to local people when letting these houses.
Refuse applications to remove a local person condition on former 'Council houses'.	Consider being more challenging with applications to remove the 'local person condition' from former Council houses and to adhere to the original purpose of such clauses. We would not lift the condition unless there were extremely unusual circumstances.	It is intended to adopt an internal policy that protects this condition for the future.
First Time Buyers' Grants to renovate empty houses	Extend the previous scheme, which has helped more than 90 first time buyers to renovate empty houses and therefore bring empty houses back into use for local people.	
Council Tax Exemption on empty houses for first time buyers	Extend the exemption period for paying Council tax on empty houses (main or sole house), giving first time buyers an additional year to complete essential restoration work before the house may be occupied.	
Purchase building land for the future	Use some development sites that are already in our ownership to make a start on our plans in some areas where the need from local residents is clear. However, if we are to continue after that, we will need to be prepared to respond quickly to purchasing building land when the opportunity arises in the right places.	

It was noted in our Equality Impact Assessment for this Scheme that it would have a positive impact on the Welsh language:
"It is estimated that 60% of buyers are priced out of the local market. Increasing the number of affordable housing units, as well as the proposed support packages in the form of loans and tax relief, can mean that more local people choose/are able to stay in Gwynedd."

Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan and Dwyfor Pilot

During the first months of 2022, the Department responded on behalf of the Council to the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan consultation, and now the Welsh Government has published the final Plan. Apart from what is stated in the Plan, it is not yet clear how the Council or the Department will contribute to the Plan moving forward but it is assumed that a number of the interventions will be trialled in the Dwyfor Pilot area.

In November 2021, the Welsh Government announced its intention to carry out a pilot scheme to address the housing problem in the Dwyfor area. We have been working with the Government for months on various projects that either strengthen those already in our Housing Action Plan (such as the Homebuy Scheme and our empty homes schemes) or which are new schemes to be trialled in the Pilot area.

Systems and Technology

The Department makes extensive use of various systems, which include systems to capture and analyse information about the Council's properties such as maintenance, Legionnaires' Disease and energy use and expenditure; and in the housing field to keep housing registers and information about the County's homelessness situation, and systems that the Housing Enforcement Unit and the Housing Grants and Projects Unit use to facilitate their work.

We have also developed our own systems for the Maintenance Unit in conjunction with the internal Information Technology Service, and are currently procuring new systems for homelessness and housing options. An important and fundamental part of the process was to ensure that it was possible to use the systems in Welsh, and it is pleasing to say that we succeeded in this. We believe this to be important as it allows us to conduct our internal operations in Welsh without having to translate, interpret or share information in English.

Although many of the other systems are provided in English (due to the language of the suppliers), we have the ability to create or modify elements within some of these systems, and create and produce our own reports, which are done either in Welsh only or bilingually.

Communication

Recently, the first issue of our department newsletter was published, where matters of interest are shared with staff, as well as giving staff from the Department's various services the opportunity to get to know each other. It also provides a space to draw staff's attention to important corporate announcements such as the recent change in the Council's language policy.

Housing needs questionnaire

During the second and third quarter of 2022, a housing needs survey was carried out in conjunction with the Ardal Ni survey, where the people of Gwynedd were asked about their housing situation today and to the future, as well as their opinion on what they think is needed in the housing field in Gwynedd. The survey ended in the last quarter of 2022 and the 1500 responses received are currently being analysed.

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	**Externalisation of work and awarding third party contracts**
Question 2: If the department awards work externally on contract, can you refer to any good practice, either when imposing conditions or when monitoring in order to ensure compliance with the linguistic conditions?	

The Department is involved with a number of contracts and contractors as a result of work carried out on the Council's property as well as in the housing field.

Property Services

On the whole, work is outsourced on contract by the Property Development, Maintenance and Grants and Housing Projects Unit Services. For example, the Property Development Service will issue tenders for construction work of all kinds, and the Maintenance Service will look for specialist companies in order to issue contracts for work such as the Council's fire alarms. In doing this, we use the extensive experience of our officers together with the expertise of the Corporate Category Team to ensure that we complete the work to the appropriate standard.

We feel that good practice becomes evident when contracts are issued where efforts are made to ensure that the standard of the Welsh medium service is secured and maintained. A copy of the Language Policy is included in the tendering documents, and every applicant is asked to read it to ensure that they understand what is required of them (such as if they need to use signage, they must be bilingual), but also that they understand the importance of the Welsh language to Cyngor Gwynedd.

In addition to that, in high-value tenders, companies are asked to provide a Community Benefits Response encompassing the Well-being Act 2015. This means asking potential contractors to consider how they could contribute to society locally, through steps such as local job creation or offering work experience opportunities. The side effect of that, of course, is to create opportunities for the people of Gwynedd to stay in their area, thereby increasing the opportunities to use Welsh as a working and living language in the County.

External property construction/development consultants

Advertisements for tenders are usually published in English, especially when there is an obligation to advertise nationally and there is a legal requirement to advertise in English. This means that documentation, standard contracts, etc. are mostly published in English and sometimes bilingually. Nevertheless, external consultants are expected to comply with the Council's Language Policy. If it is necessary to provide designs, or short reports on a project for the purpose of public consultation, we will ensure that they are available bilingually. Furthermore, we expect that any consultants who may take part in a consultation with stakeholders or the public can provide Welsh speakers, or provide translation facilities.

Housing Services: Housing Grants and Projects

The Housing Grants and Projects Unit often deals with contractors when commissioning work on behalf of some of the County's most vulnerable individuals.
Local contractors undertake the construction work, with the vast majority of them being Welsh speakers. This is extremely important to us, as the ability to communicate with applicants (especially the elderly) in Welsh can offer comfort and reassurance when they are in difficult and vulnerable situations.

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	**Operating bilingually**
Question 3: Are there any obstacles that prevent you as a department from offering a full service in Welsh?	

In general, our ability to offer a full service in Welsh is robust and we do not feel that there are obstacles in this regard. The internal administration of the Department is entirely through the medium of Welsh, and we take pride in our ability to offer support to our service users, many of whom are some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society, through the medium of Welsh. We encourage members of staff who are a slightly less confident in their Welsh skills or who wish/need to improve their language skills to look for opportunities to learn/develop their skills. In fact, over the past 12 months, six members of the Department's staff have followed various courses to learn or develop Welsh. We believe that there is room to celebrate that members of the department's staff proactively look for opportunities to improve and/or maintain the standard of their language and take ownership of that for the benefit of our service users.

Regional and national meetings

As stated in our last report, although as a Department we manage to offer all our services in Welsh or bilingually, the picture is quite different when we look outside the Council. Regional and national meetings are generally held in English only, and although translation and Welsh material is available in some of them, that can be laborious and generate a sense that the one requesting translation is causing a nuisance. This can become an obstacle when it comes to offering a Welsh language service to our Service users.

A matter that the members wish to discuss:	**Developing new opportunities**

Question 4: Do you have ideas about new ways we can promote the Welsh language in the county's communities - either in your own services or by collaborating with others?

The housing and property field

- In Service Level Agreements to provide supported accommodation, we will impose a condition that the service/support providers must be able to speak Welsh. An example of this is the Service Level Agreement for Tŷ Adferiad, Porthmadog, 137 High Street, Bangor and 35 College Road, Bangor.
- Once again, we state our feeling that more specific training should be developed in the Welsh language in the housing field - most training takes place in English, and although that does not hinder or prevent our ability to operate, it would be good to be able to receive the training in Welsh, or at least bilingually.

General

- We feel that the Language Designations Forum is a very good vehicle for sharing good practices across the Council, together with having experts and champions "around the table" to discuss obstacles and opportunities. It also gives us as a Department the incentive to take a step back every now and then to see if anything needs to be addressed or to celebrate any successes too. Similarly, we see that the Quarterly Report is extremely beneficial as a means of providing an overview of our department.
- Having been working from home or in a hybrid arrangement over the past two and a half years, it has become apparent that staff miss seeing each other in the office and having the opportunity to chat informally with each other. We believe that is even more relevant in the case of staff who are learning or developing their Welsh. Would looking at how these groups could be brought together in an informal way be beneficial perhaps, not only for our staff, but also ultimately for the people of Gwynedd?

DATE	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
MEETING	**30 January 2023**
TITLE	**CENSUS RESULTS 2021 – THE WELSH LANGUAGE**
PURPOSE	**Sharing information from the Census about the numbers and proportion of Welsh speakers in Gwynedd**
AUTHOR	**Emyr Edwards, Research and Information Manager**

1. **Introduction**

1.1. The latest Census was held on 21 March 2021 and the first detailed results about Welsh speakers were published on 6 December 2022. This is the only comprehensive data source on the numbers of Welsh speakers in Wales.

1.2. The Census asked the following per individual:

Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh? - *Tick all that apply*

☐ Understand spoken Welsh

☐ Speak Welsh

☐ Read Welsh

☐ Write Welsh

☐ **OR** none of the above

1.3. This report shares the main results for Gwynedd focusing mainly on the numbers / proportions who responded that they could speak Welsh, although reference is made in part 5 of the report to some of the other aspects as well.

2. **Welsh speakers in Gwynedd**

2.1. On Census day 2021 **73,560** people (aged 3+) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd, which corresponds to **64.4%.** In 2011 the corresponding percentage was **65.4%,** therefore the proportion has **decreased 1%.** (The number of Welsh speakers aged 3+ in 2011 was **77,000**).

2.2. Throughout Wales **17.8%** could speak Welsh which is a **decrease of 1.2%** since 2011.

2.3. The chart below shows the increase / decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers in each local authority area in Wales and shows that 18 of the 22 areas have experienced a decrease since 2011:

1
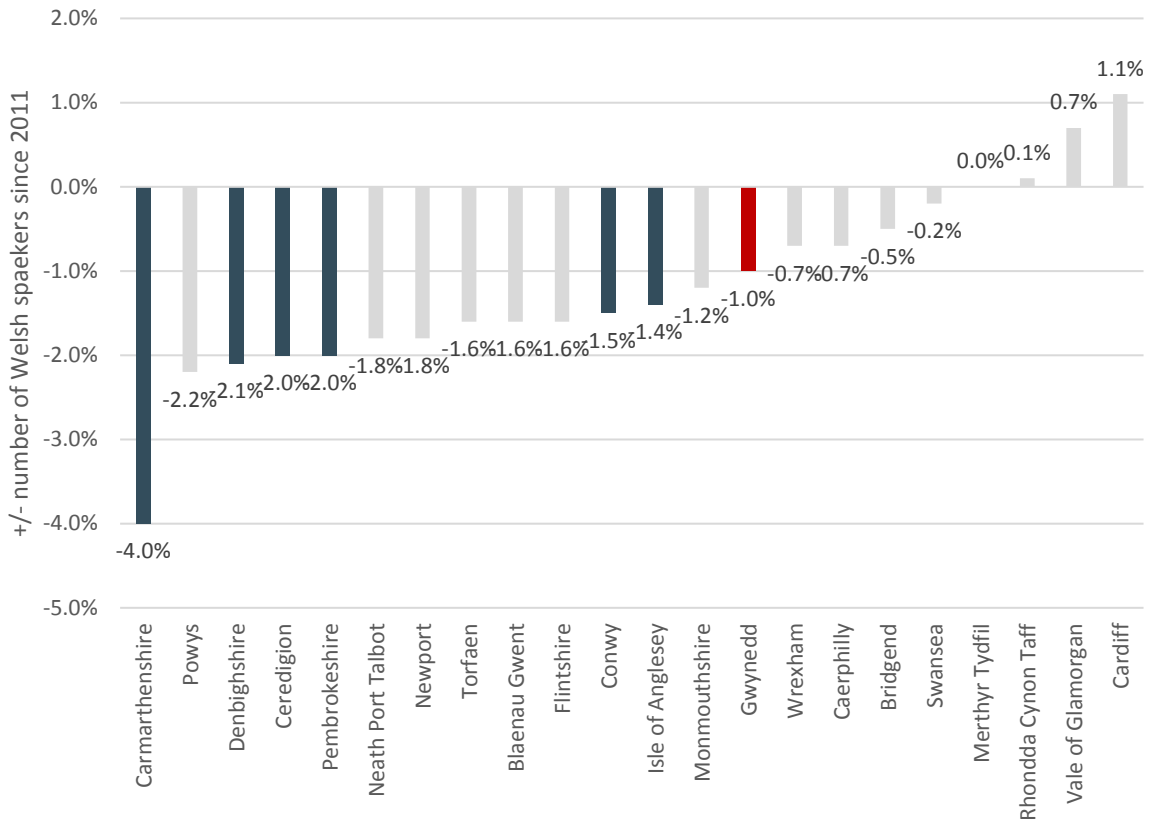
2.4.   In the above chart the figure for the change in Gwynedd has been shown in red, the figures for other "areas where more Welsh is spoken" [1] shown in blue, and other authorities in grey.

2.5.   From this it can be seen that the decrease in Gwynedd (-1.0%) is smaller than the decrease in all of the other "areas where more Welsh is spoken", varying from -1.4% (Isle of Anglesey) to - 4.0% (Carmarthenshire).

2.6.   Gwynedd has seen a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers at each Census since 1981, as shown below.

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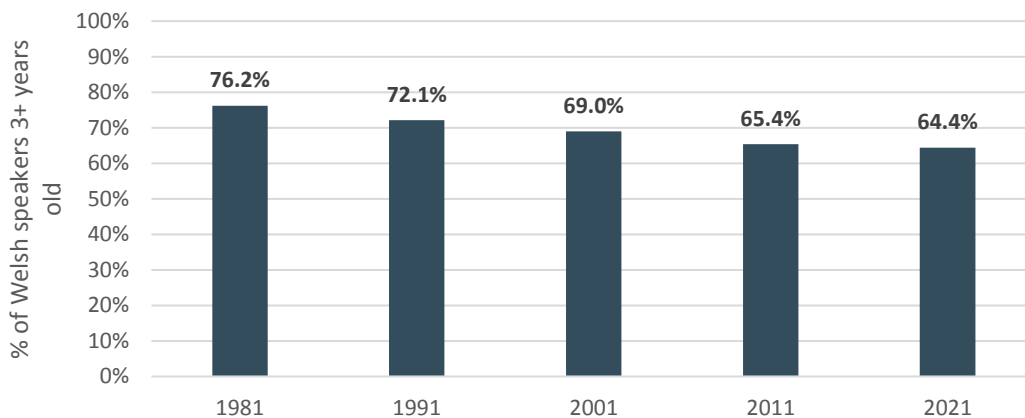
[1] For this purpose, "areas where more Welsh is spoken" are defined as those counties with a higher percentage of Welsh speakers than the all-Wales average (19.0%) in the 2011 Census.

2

2.7. By looking at the different age groups in Gwynedd we can see that the proportion of Welsh speakers is at its highest in the 3-15 age group, and at its lowest in the 65-79 age group.
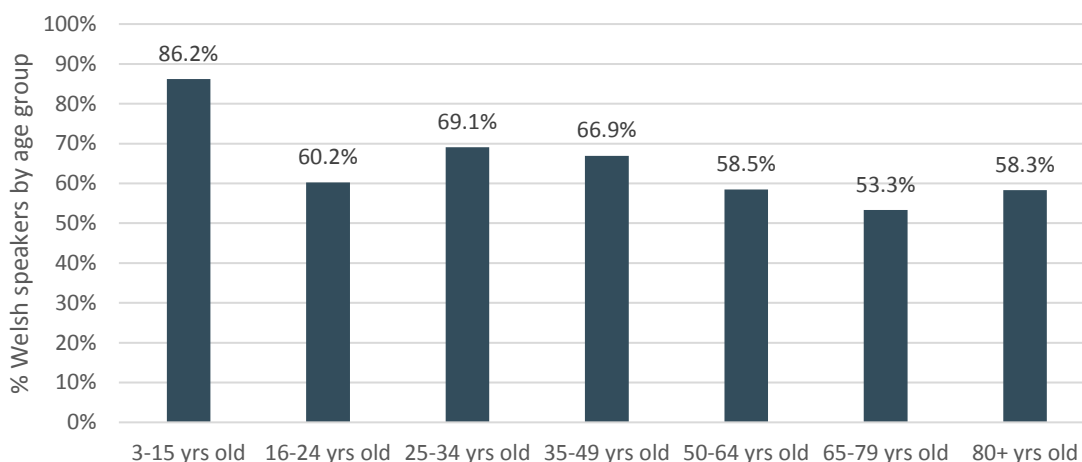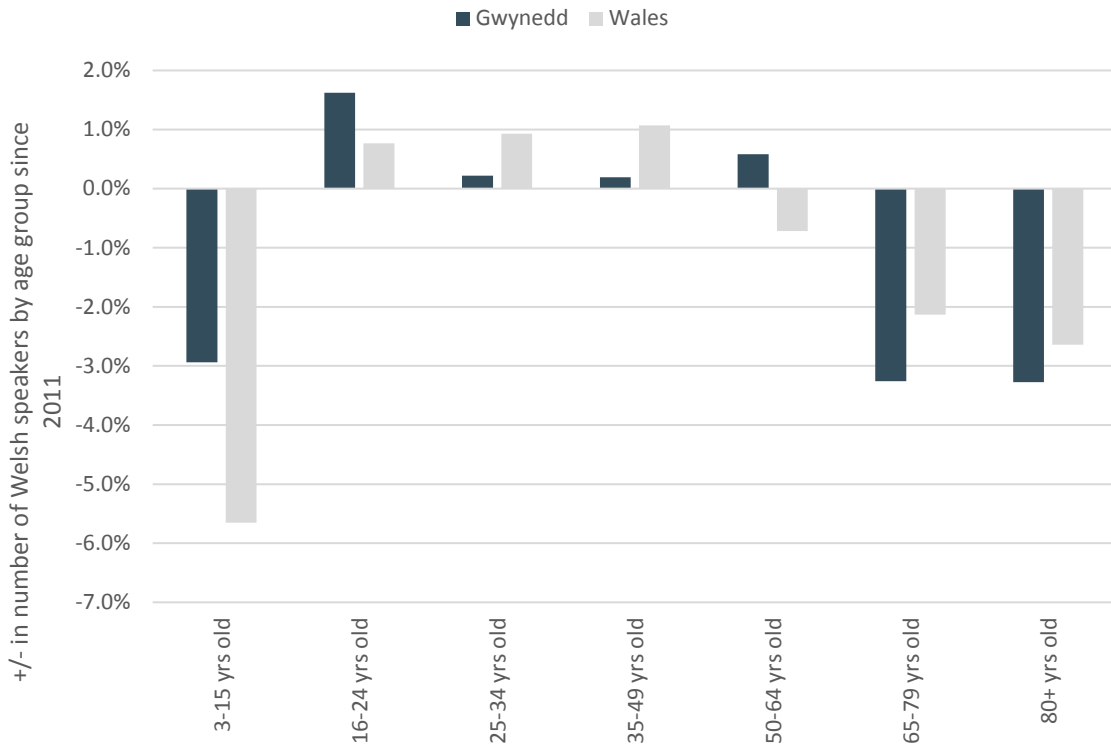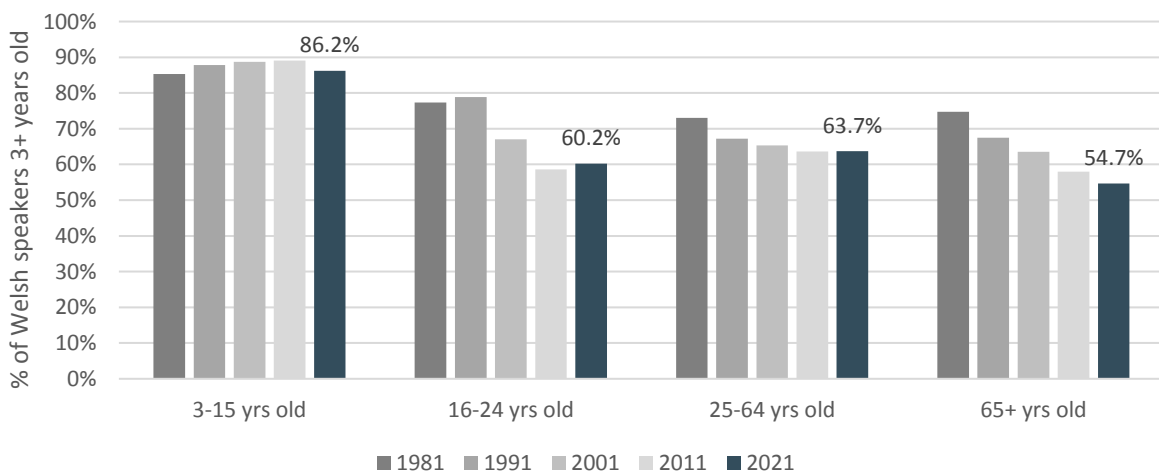

3. Change over time and by age group

3.1. The table below shows the percentages by age group. The largest decrease has occurred in the two oldest age groups, namely age 65-79 and age 80 and over. A decrease has also been seen in the 3-15 age group. In the other age groups the proportion has increased over the decade, with the proportion in the 16-24 age group 1.6% higher than in 2011.

Age Group	2021	2011	+/- %
Age 3 – 15	86.2%	89.1%	-2.9%
Age 16 – 24	60.2%	58.6%	+1.6%
Age 25 – 34	69.1%	68.9%	+0.2%
Age 35 – 49	66.9%	66.7%	+0.2%
Age 50 – 64	58.5%	57.9%	+0.6%
Age 65 – 79	53.3%	56.6%	-3.3%
Age 80+	58.3%	61.6%	-3.3%
All ages 3+	**64.4%**	**65.4%**	**-1.0%**

3.2. Looking at how the change by age group compares with Wales as a whole, we can see (chart below) that the changes in Gwynedd mirror to some degree the pattern throughout Wales (except the 50-64 age group, where there was an increase in Gwynedd but a decrease throughout Wales).

3.3. In the two oldest age groups, however, the decrease in Gwynedd was greater than across Wales as a whole. On the other hand, it can be seen that the percentage of Welsh speakers in the 3-15 age group decreased less in Gwynedd than across the whole of Wales.

3

Chart legend: ■ Gwynedd ■ Wales

Y-axis: +/- in number of Welsh speakers by age group since 2011

Categories: 3-15 yrs old, 16-24 yrs old, 25-34 yrs old, 35-49 yrs old, 50-64 yrs old, 65-79 yrs old, 80+ yrs old

3.4. It is possible to look at Census data for broad age groups from 1981 onwards (chart below). The proportion of Welsh speakers has generally decreased across the age ranges but has remained relatively stable in the 3-15 age group.

Y-axis: % of Welsh speakers 3+ years old

Data labels: 86.2%, 60.2%, 63.7%, 54.7%

Categories: 3-15 yrs old, 16-24 yrs old, 25-64 yrs old, 65+ yrs old

Chart legend: ■ 1981 ■ 1991 ■ 2001 ■ 2011 ■ 2021

4

4.   The data for smaller areas within Gwynedd

On the basis of the 13 areas

4.1.   The map in **Appendix 1** shows the proportion of Welsh speakers by the 13 areas in Gwynedd. (**Appendix 2** lists the main towns / settlements in each area for convenience).

4.2.   The table below details the percentages and shows that in 7 of the 13 areas the proportion of Welsh speakers was over 70% in 2021 (and the same areas had over 70% in 2011).

4.3.   It can be seen that the Caernarfon area had the highest proportion of Welsh speakers in 2021 (81.5%), and the lowest proportion was in Bro Dysynni (40.1%).

4.4.   When comparing the data with the data from 2011, the pattern is quite varied with an increase in three areas (Pen Llŷn, Bro Dysynni and Bangor area) and a decrease in the other 10 areas. The largest decreases were in the Dolgellau (-4.4%) and Caernarfon (-3.8%) areas.

Area	2021	2011	+/- %
Caernarfon Area	81.5%	85.3%	-3.8%
Bro Lleu / Nantlle	76.3%	78.7%	-2.4%
Bro Peris	74.6%	77.4%	-2.8%
Bro Ffestiniog	74.4%	77.2%	-2.8%
Pwllheli Area	74.3%	77.2%	-2.9%
Bala / Penllyn	73.1%	75.8%	-2.7%
Bro Ogwen	70.4%	72.6%	-2.2%
Pen Llŷn	69.0%	67.6%	+1.4%
Porthmadog / Penrhyndeudraeth Area	66.8%	69.0%	-2.2%
Dolgellau Area	57.7%	62.1%	-4.4%
Bro Ardudwy	47.3%	47.8%	-0.5%
Bangor Area	44.1%	42.0%	+2.1%
Bro Dysynni	40.1%	38.6%	+1.5%
Gwynedd	**64.4%**	**65.4%**	**-1.0%**

4.5.   **Appendix 3** looks back over a longer timescale, detailing the change in the proportion in each area since 1981.

5

On the basis of the 71 neighbourhoods (Lower Layer Super Output Areas or 'LSOAs')

4.6.   In 2011 the proportion of Welsh speakers was above 70% in 39 of the 71 neighbourhoods. This had decreased to **34** neighbourhoods in 2021. **Appendix 4** shows the % of Welsh speakers by neighbourhood on a map.

4.7.   These are the 5 neighbourhoods with the highest and lowest proportions of Welsh speakers:

5 neighbourhoods (LSOAs) with the <u>highest</u> % of Welsh speakers in 2021	%
Seiont 1	86.3%
Llanrug	86.0%
Bethel and Cwm y Glo 1	85.9%
Peblig	84.6%
Penygroes	83.0%

5 neighbourhoods (LSOAs) with the <u>lowest</u> % of Welsh speakers in 2021	%
Deiniol	19.6%
Menai (Bangor)	22.4%
Hirael and Garth 1	33.0%
Hirael and Garth 2	35.2%
Tywyn 1	36.1%

4.8.   These are the 5 neighbourhoods with the greatest increase, and the greatest decrease, in the proportions of Welsh speakers between 2011 and 2021:

5 neighbourhoods (LSOAs) with the greatest % <u>increase</u> between 2011 and 2021	%
Llanbedrog and Abersoch	+5.4%
Dyffryn Ardudwy and Llanbedr	+5.2%
Llangelynnin	+4.3%
Pentir 1	+4.2%
Y Felinheli	+4.0%

5 neighbourhoods (LSOAs) with the greatest % <u>decrease</u> between 2011 and 2021	%
Hendre (Bangor)	-7.0%
Barmouth	-6.9%
Corris/Mawddwy	-6.8%
Diffwys and Maenofferen	-6.2%
Bala	-6.0%

4.9.   **Appendix 5** shows the percentages, and the change since 2011, for each of the 71 neighbourhoods in Gwynedd.

5.   Other Welsh skills

5.1.   Data is also available on those who said they **only understood spoken Welsh** (and did not speak it). For Gwynedd the percentage is 7.1% compared to 5.2% in Wales.

5.2.   Here are the 5 neighbourhoods with the highest proportions:

6

5 neighbourhoods (LSOAs) with the highest % of people who understand spoken Welsh only	%
Marchog 1	22.2%
Marchog 2	19.1%
Dewi	14.8%
Hendre (Bangor)	14.0%
Pentir 2	13.1%

5.3.   These 5 neighbourhoods are in the Bangor area and looking further down the list, 3 of those five neighbourhoods are also in the Bangor area.

5.4.   There is also data on the number who **can speak Welsh but cannot read or write in Welsh**. This percentage for Gwynedd is 5.4% compared to 2.3% in Wales.

5.5.   Here are the 5 neighbourhoods with the highest proportions:

5 neighbourhoods (LSOAs) with the highest % of people who can speak Welsh but can't read or write in Welsh	%
Peblig	10.4%
Marchog 1	9.0%
Marchog 2	8.1%
Pentir 1	8.1%
Cadnant	8.0%

6.   Further information that will be available

6.1.   More Census data will be released over the coming months including data for electoral wards, and community council areas. It will also be possible to further investigate the link between the Welsh language and other characteristics of the population, such as economic situation, health, education etc.

6.2.   There are also some gaps in the information released at area / neighbourhood level (e.g. about the age of Welsh speakers at local level) and we have enquired further about the release schedule for this.

7.   What is sought from the Language Committee

7.1.   Presented as key background information on the situation of the language in Gwynedd, which could stimulate further discussion on possible interventions / projects or wider research work in this area.

7

Appendix 1

% of Welsh speakers by Gwynedd areas
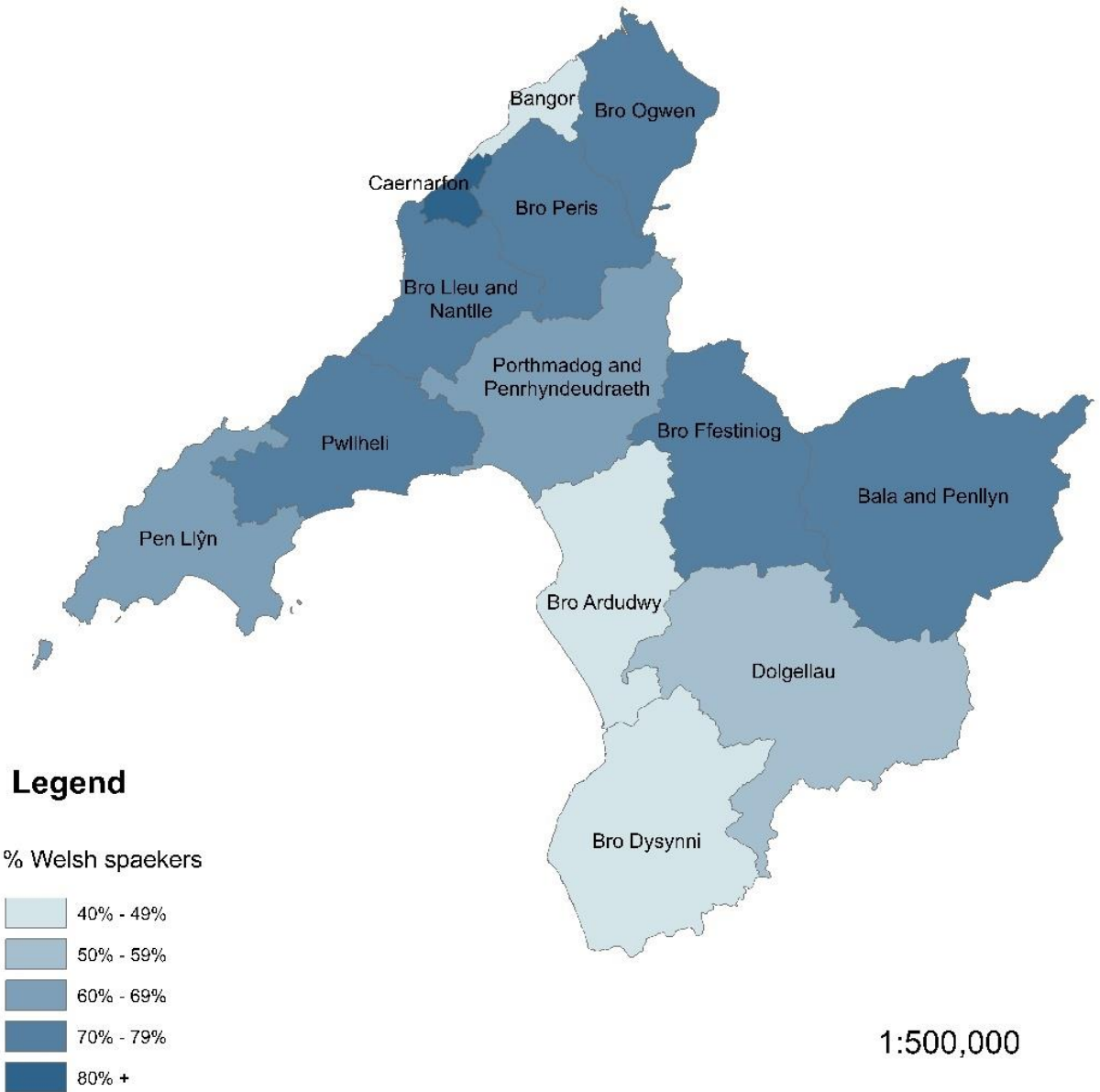
Legend

% Welsh spaekers

- 40% - 49%
- 50% - 59%
- 60% - 69%
- 70% - 79%
- 80% +

1:500,000

Adran Cefnogaeth Gorfforaethol, Cyngor Gwynedd
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Appendix 2 – List of settlements within the 13 areas of Gwynedd

Caernarfon Area – Bontnewydd, Caernarfon, Llanfaglan

Bro Lleu / Nantlle – Aberdesach, Bethesda Bach, Carmel, Clynnog Fawr, Dinas, Dinas Dinlle, Groeslon, Llandwrog, Llanllyfni, Nantlle, Nasareth, Nebo, Pant Glas, Penygroes, Pontllyfni, Rhosgadfan, Rhostryfan, Saron, Talysarn

Bro Peris – Bethel, Betws Garmon, Brynrefail, Caeathro, Ceunant, Cwm y Glo, Deiniolen, Dinorwig, Fachwen, Llanberis, Llanddeiniolen, Llanrug, Nant Peris, Penisarwaun, Pontrug, Rhiwlas, Rhyd Ddu, Seion, Waunfawr

Bro Ffestiniog – Bethania, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gellilydan, Llan Ffestiniog, Maentwrog, Manod, Tanygrisiau, Trawsfynydd

Pwllheli Area – Abererch, Afon Wen, Boduan, Chwilog, Efailnewydd, Llanaelhaearn, Llanarmon, Llangybi, Llannor, Llanystumdwy, Llithfaen, Pencaenewydd, Penrallt, Penrhos, Pentreuchaf, Pistyll, Pwllheli, Rhoslan, Rhydyclafdy, Trefor, Y Ffôr

Bala/Penllyn Area – Frongoch, Glan yr Afon, Llandderfel, Llanfor, Llangower, Llanuwchllyn, Llanycil, Llidiardau, Parc, Rhosygwaliau, Rhyd Uchaf, Sarnau, Y Bala

Bro Ogwen – Abergwyngregyn, Bethesda, Llandygai, Llanllechid, Mynydd Llandygai, Talybont, Tregarth

Pen Llŷn Area – Aberdaron, Abersoch, Botwnnog, Bryncroes, Bwlchtocyn, Dinas, Edern, Llanbedrog, Llanfaelrhys, Llangian, Llangwnadl, Llaniestyn, Morfa Nefyn, Mynytho, Nefyn, Rhiw, Rhoshirwaun, Sarn Bach, Sarn Mellteyrn, Tudweiliog, Uwchmynydd

Porthmadog/Penrhyndeudraeth Area – Beddgelert, Borth y Gest, Bryncir, Criccieth, Croesor, Dolbenmaen, Garndolbenmaen, Garreg, Golan, Llanfrothen, Minffordd, Morfa Bychan, Nantmor, Penmorfa, Penrhyndeudraeth, Pentrefelin, Porthmadog, Prenteg, Tremadog

Dolgellau Area – Aberangell, Arthog, Bont Ddu, Brithdir, Corris, Dinas Mawddwy, Dolgellau, Ganllwyd, Llanelltyd, Llanfachraeth, Llanymawddwy, Mallwyd, Penmaenpwl, Rhydymain

Bro Ardudwy – Barmouth, Dyffryn Ardudwy, Harlech, Llanaber, Llanbedr, Llandanwg, Llanddwywe, Llandecwyn, Llanfair, Tal-y-Bont, Talsarnau

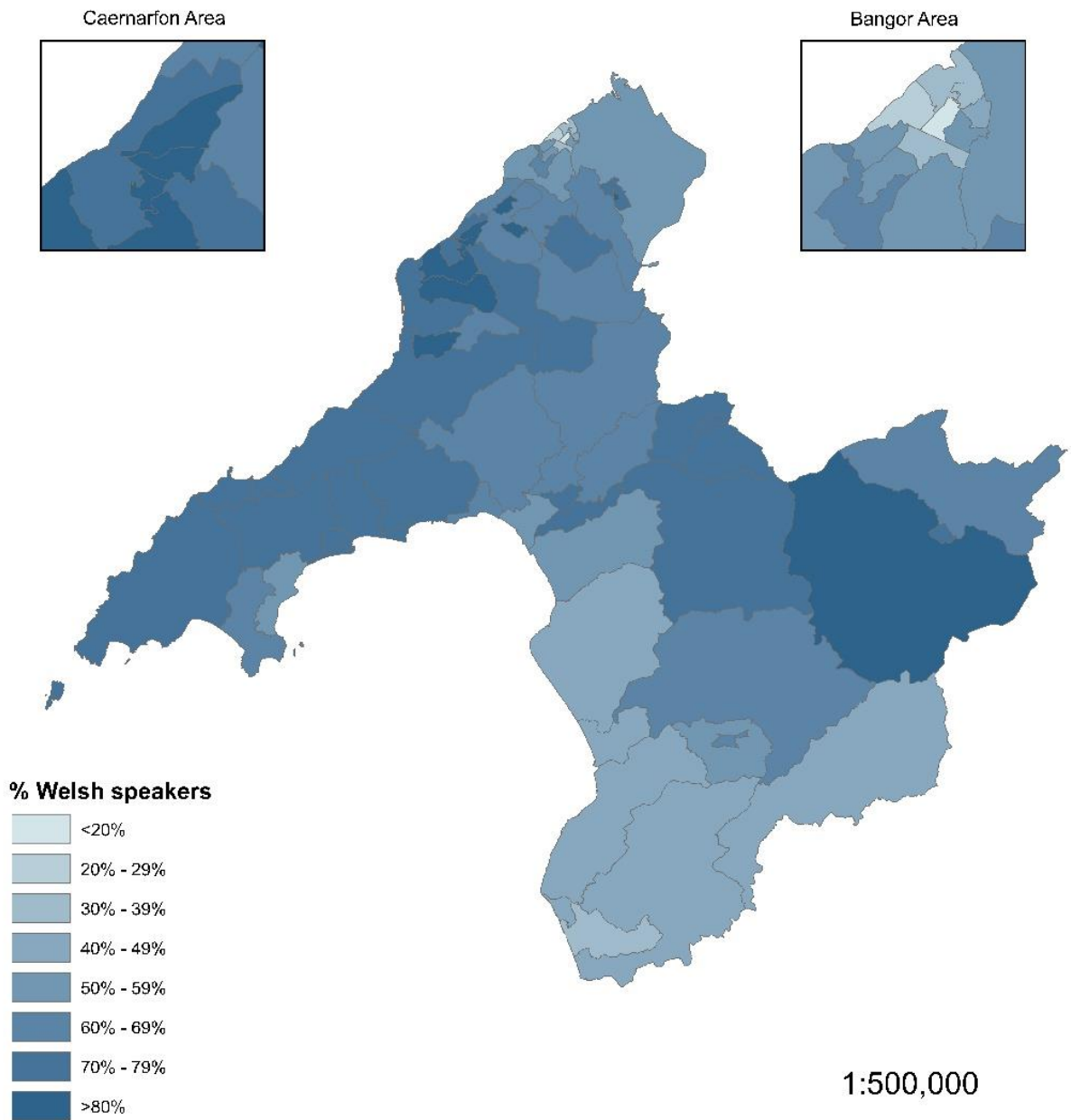**Bangor Area –** Bangor, Glasinfryn, Penrhosgarnedd, Pentir, Treborth, Y Felinheli

Bro Dysynni – Aberdyfi, Abergynolwyn, Aberllefenni, Bryncrug, Dolgoch, Fairbourne, Llanegryn, Llanfihangel-y-Pennant, Llwyngwril, Pennal, Rhoslefain, Tal-y-Llyn, Tywyn

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Appendix 3 – Pattern within areas of Gwynedd since 1981

Area	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Caernarfon Area	86.0%	87.9%	86.4%	85.3%	81.5%
Bro Lleu and Nantlle	84.0%	80.0%	78.8%	78.7%	76.3%
Bro Peris	82.9%	79.3%	78.9%	77.4%	74.6%
Bro Ffestiniog	86.6%	82.4%	80.0%	77.2%	74.4%
Pwllheli Area	85.1%	79.9%	78.5%	77.2%	74.3%
Bala and Penllyn	85.3%	80.6%	77.7%	75.8%	73.1%
Bro Ogwen	76.5%	74.1%	72.4%	72.6%	70.4%
Pen Llŷn Area	79.2%	72.0%	69.6%	67.6%	69.0%
Porthmadog and Penrhyndeudraeth Area	80.0%	74.5%	72.3%	69.0%	66.8%
Dolgellau Area	74.4%	64.7%	67.1%	62.1%	57.7%
Bro Ardudwy	58.9%	52.5%	50.1%	47.8%	47.3%
Bangor Area	58.0%	58.9%	51.6%	42.0%	44.1%
Bro Dysynni	52.3%	47.1%	43.4%	38.6%	40.1%
Gwynedd	**76.2%**	**72.1%**	**69.0%**	**65.4%**	**64.4%**

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% Welsh speakers by neighbourhood, Census 2021

Caernarfon Area

Bangor Area

% Welsh speakers

<20%

20% - 29%

30% - 39%

40% - 49%

50% - 59%

60% - 69%

70% - 79%

>80%

1:500,000

Adran Cefnogaeth Gorfforaethol, Cyngor Gwynedd
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Appendix 5 - % of Welsh speakers and the change since 2011

Neighbourhood (LSOA)	2021	2011	+/- %
Seiont 1	86.3%	90.0%	-3.7%
Llanrug	86.0%	87.8%	-1.8%
Bethel and Cwm-y-Glo 1	85.9%	87.3%	-1.4%
Peblig (Caernarfon)	84.6%	87.4%	-2.8%
Penygroes (Gwynedd)	83.0%	86.8%	-3.8%
Bontnewydd	82.6%	82.6%	0.0%
Ogwen 1	81.2%	83.0%	-1.8%
Llanwnda	81.1%	81.6%	-0.5%
Cadnant (Gwynedd)	81.0%	86.2%	-5.2%
Llandderfel and Llanuwchllyn 2	80.6%	79.2%	1.4%
Menai (Caernarfon)	78.4%	83.9%	-5.5%
Abererch	77.5%	79.8%	-2.3%
Groeslon	77.0%	81.3%	-4.3%
Porthmadog East	76.6%	80.1%	-3.5%
Bowydd and Rhiw	76.3%	78.2%	-1.9%
Pwllheli North	76.2%	79.1%	-2.9%
Seiont 2	76.1%	80.6%	-4.5%
Aberdaron/Botwnnog and Tudweiliog	75.8%	74.7%	1.1%
Pwllheli South	74.7%	78.3%	-3.6%
Penrhyndeudraeth 2	74.6%	76.5%	-1.9%
Llanystumdwy	74.5%	77.0%	-2.5%
Teigl	74.5%	78.5%	-4.0%
Ogwen 2	74.1%	79.3%	-5.2%
Waunfawr	73.6%	75.8%	-2.2%
Deiniolen	73.3%	74.4%	-1.1%
Gerlan	73.2%	73.7%	-0.5%
Nefyn	73.2%	76.1%	-2.9%
Diffwys and Maenofferen	73.1%	79.3%	-6.2%
Trawsfynydd	72.7%	73.1%	-0.4%
Bala	72.5%	78.5%	-6.0%
Efail-newydd/Buan	72.5%	74.3%	-1.8%
Morfa Nefyn	72.3%	72.0%	0.3%
Llanllyfni and Clynnog	71.4%	74.4%	-3.0%
Llanaelhaearn	70.0%	73.8%	-3.8%
Penrhyndeudraeth 1	69.8%	72.3%	-2.5%
Talysarn	69.8%	70.7%	-0.9%
Llanberis	69.5%	74.7%	-5.2%
Bethel and Cwm-y-Glo 2	69.1%	73.1%	-4.0%
Y Felinheli	68.3%	64.3%	4.0%
Tregarth and Mynydd Llandygai	67.7%	69.0%	-1.3%
Penisarwaun	67.5%	70.6%	-3.1%
Porthmadog - Tremadog	65.7%	66.8%	-1.1%
Dolbenmaen	65.6%	67.6%	-2.0%
Llandderfel and Llanuwchllyn 1	64.9%	67.1%	-2.2%
Pentir 1	62.3%	58.1%	4.2%
Llanengan	62.0%	63.4%	-1.4%

Neighbourhood (LSOA) continued	2021	2011	+/- %
Dolgellau South	61.3%	67.1%	-5.8%
Criccieth	60.5%	64.2%	-3.7%
Brithdir and Llanfachraeth/Ganllwyd/Llanelltyd	60.0%	63.2%	-3.2%
Dolgellau North	59.9%	61.8%	-1.9%
Arllechwedd	57.8%	61.9%	-4.1%
Pentir 2	57.3%	59.3%	-2.0%
Porthmadog West	55.8%	57.0%	-1.2%
Llanbedrog and Abersoch	54.7%	49.3%	5.4%
Harlech	54.6%	54.1%	0.5%
Glyder	53.0%	51.7%	1.3%
Dewi	51.8%	52.6%	-0.8%
Marchog 1	51.5%	51.9%	-0.4%
Corris/Mawddwy	49.0%	55.8%	-6.8%
Marchog 2	48.3%	48.1%	0.2%
Dyffryn Ardudwy & Llanbedr	46.7%	41.5%	5.2%
Aberdyfi/Bryn-crug/Llanfihangel	43.3%	42.6%	0.7%
Barmouth	41.9%	48.8%	-6.9%
Llangelynin	40.2%	35.9%	4.3%
Tywyn 2	40.2%	39.3%	0.9%
Hendre (Gwynedd)	38.3%	45.3%	-7.0%
Tywyn 1	36.1%	35.8%	0.3%
Hirael and Garth 2	35.2%	35.2%	0.0%
Hirael and Garth 1	33.0%	34.8%	-1.8%
Menai (Bangor)	22.4%	18.6%	3.8%
Deiniol	19.6%	22.8%	-3.2%

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**Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Welsh Language Commissioner**

welshlanguagecommissioner.wales

Welsh as a way of working

Assurance Report 2021-22

Contents:

Foreword:

Welsh as a way of working

This report offers an opportunity to reflect on the way organisations think about the Welsh language when formulating policies, when planning and delivering services in Welsh and gives consideration to the extent to which they respond appropriately to the language duties imposed upon them. I am pleased to note that the report includes positive examples of their achievements and offers solid examples of good practice for those organisations who still have room to improve. However, and it's probably of no surprise given the recent challenging period, I am concerned that the progress seen prior to the pandemic period is no longer apparent.

Throughout the pandemic the Commissioner has demonstrated regulatory tolerance where real challenges arose due to the time of crisis everyone was working through. However, this approach is no longer sustainable. The Commissioner's main responsibility in relation to the standards system is to maintain the expectation placed on organisations to deliver in accordance with the Welsh Government's standards – standards approved by the Senedd. Failure to regulate effectively would be letting service users down.

The changes seen to organisational working practices, such as home working and an increasingly interactive digital workplace, have now been adopted on a long-term basis with more public sector organisations promoting a hybrid model of working. In response to this change, the arrangements put in place to comply with Welsh language duties must also evolve so that organisations can continue to operate as effectively – or better – than they did when their workforce was office based.

Last year's assurance report highlighted excellent examples of organisations who continued to use the Welsh language despite revolutionary changes. However, there are organisations yet to adapt to those changes, leading to a risk that Welsh language users will be negatively impacted.

In the 2018–19 assurance report, *Rights in Use,* the Commissioner challenged organisations to improve their performance when recruiting a bilingual workforce. It's disappointing to report that this hasn't happened. The findings highlight significant failings when publishing job advertisements and within the recruitment and selection processes. A dramatic change is needed, and positive steps should be taken to attract staff with Welsh language skills.

There's no denying that the health sector has been under considerable pressure over the recent period, however the Welsh Language Commissioner must now regulate effectively to drive change in line with Welsh language standards. The sector still

needs to consider how it aims to comply with the standards. The report findings show that the sector performs considerably poorer than other sectors subject to similar duties. It's essential, if the situation is to improve, that compliance with standards is given serious consideration within the sector's rebuilding strategies.

This report also looks at the performance of organisations subject to Welsh language schemes. Performance varies within this group of organisations, which is frustrating for Welsh language users, and the Commissioner cannot enforce change.

We are living in an age of instability because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the uncertainty with regards to the position of the language, as we await the results of the Census. In this report, my main message is to remind leaders of organisations, and those in authority, that Welsh language standards are positive promotional standards. Standards are there to ensure that language choice is respected and to enable Welsh speakers everywhere to live their lives in Welsh. Now is the time to commit to rebuilding services through operational planning that respects the rights of Welsh language users. Public sector organisations in Wales have a leading role to play therefore to ensure the Welsh language thrives, and the way they comply with language duties is of key importance.

Gwenith Price

Deputy Welsh Language Commissioner

Key findings

This section summarises the Commissioner's findings from the evidence gathered during the financial year 2021–2022.

The report is based on direct verification carried out by the Commissioner's officers, meetings and engagement with organisations subject to Welsh language duties, the Commissioner's investigation and enforcement work and the findings of a Welsh speakers' survey from November 2021.

Due to pandemic restrictions, some services were not able to be verified or inspected as had been the case in previous years, such as reception services or inspecting those services where it was necessary to travel or visit organisations, such as signs displayed by bodies or using self-service machines.

Furthermore, there was no opportunity for the Commissioner to conduct focus groups or engage with members of the public, so attention has been paid to the results of the Welsh language speakers survey (November 2021) as well as including a number of examples of the Commissioner's investigative and enforcement work – work based on complaints from members of the public.

The report gives public organisations the opportunity to learn from the findings and take action to strengthen the provision and increase future use of the Welsh language – it is their responsibility to ensure compliance with their duties, and guidance is given on those areas that most need attention in this report so that leaders of organisations can understand where they must direct their attention to avoid facing enforcement action.

There is a significant lack of compliance with standards associated with staff recruitment

- The findings of the surveys by the Commissioner's officers is that Welsh is treated less favourably than English when advertising jobs in 50% of the cases surveyed.

- There has been an increase in the number of job adverts published in Welsh (from 24% in 2019 to 66% in 2022). However, the picture across sectors is mixed. The surveys show that bodies subject to Welsh language standards regulations no. 7 (namely the National Health Service Boards and Trusts) publish only 23% of their job adverts in Welsh.

- Although there is an increase in jobs advertised by bodies in Welsh, it does not always follow that the supporting documentation for the posts is also available in Welsh or that use of Welsh is further promoted and facilitated during the advertising process.

- Only 7% of job adverts surveyed contained an application form where applicants were able to indicate a wish to use Welsh.

- Organisations' compliance with the standards that require them to assess the need for Welsh language skills before advertising vacancies is concerning with over half of adverts surveyed failing to mention what skill level is needed for the job, or the skills designation is not clear to a person who is applying for the job.

A survey of Welsh speakers highlighted that the public continue to believe things are improving. Data also suggests that more people would use Welsh if organisations did more to facilitate staff and customers' choices to use Welsh and were able to guarantee Welsh language services.

- 15% of people who responded to the Welsh speaker's survey indicated they preferred using Welsh with public bodies. A further 26% of Welsh speakers however reported that they vary their preferred language depending on the situation.

- Our verification surveys continue to show that Welsh language services or the internal operation of bodies in Welsh are not always consistent, which is likely to lead to a lack of public confidence in the services and a tendency to turn to English-language services that they consider more reliable.

The Commissioner's verification surveys highlight that weaknesses remain in relation to some key services

- The Commissioner's monitoring work shows that the level of compliance of organisations with the requirements to deal with telephone calls in Welsh is generally low. On average, organisations subject to Welsh language standards deal with calls in Welsh during half of cases (53%). This gives consumers no assurance that a Welsh language telephone service will be available.

- The findings of the Commissioner's surveys found that when Welsh correspondence was answered by organisations, it was answered in Welsh 81% of the time. However, this does not reflect the actual experience considering that only in 73% of cases did the correspondence receive a response at all.

- Of all the Welsh language correspondence sent to the bodies, only 60% received a response in Welsh (considering the level of queries that received no reply at all).

Organisations' understanding of the policy-making standards' requirements is improving, but implementing and carrying out

adequate assessments in policy decision-making remain inconsistent.

- Organisations' own assessments state that procedures and guidelines are in place to meet the requirements of the policy-making standards in most cases. However, the Commissioner's investigation and enforcement work and the number of complaints the Commissioner receives in this area indicate that policy decisions continue to take place without an adequate assessment of the impact of the decision on the Welsh language. Organisations therefore need to ensure that the procedures and guidelines that are in place do lead to meaningful and adequate assessments.

The performance of bodies subject to language schemes varies significantly and a lack of consistency means that there is no guarantee to consumers that quality Welsh language services are always available.

Survey of Welsh speakers

Opportunities for people to use Welsh in their daily lives

32% of respondents in 2021 stated their view that their opportunities to use Welsh in their **everyday lives** have increased, with a further 45% indicating that their opportunities to use Welsh have remained the same. However, 19% of respondents say their opportunities to use Welsh have reduced:

My opportunities to use Welsh in my every day life have:

1%
19%
32%
48%

Increased   Stayed the same   Reduced   Don't know
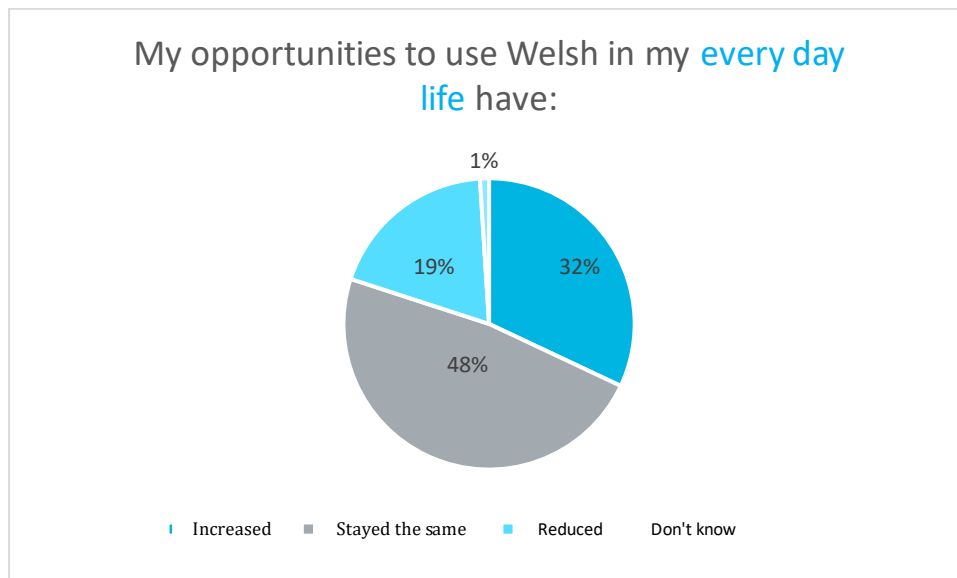
We have asked this question in the survey of Welsh speakers since 2017, and it should be noted that the 2021 response included the highest percentage stating that there is an increase in opportunities to use Welsh in their daily lives since the standards came into force.

The response in 2021 also compares favourably with 2020, where 23% of respondents reported that opportunities to use Welsh in their daily lives had reduced and only 20% had seen an increase. It is difficult to know with certainty why previous years' trends changed in 2020 responses, but it may be possible to assume that the pandemic had an impact on the situations in which respondents used Welsh, such as in social situations or when using services.

Opportunities to use Welsh in every day life
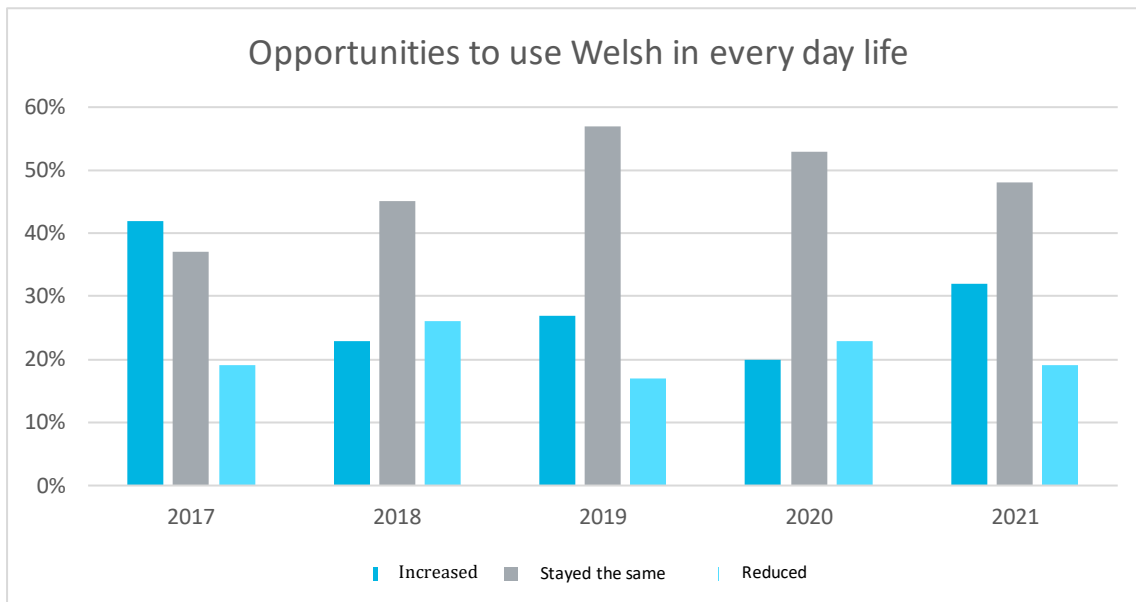
The use of Welsh in the workplace

One element that strongly influences people's ability to use Welsh in their daily lives, and which the Commissioner believes is key to seeing growth in the use of Welsh, is the ability of people to use Welsh at work. For the first time this year the Commissioner asked as part of the survey, whether respondents thought their opportunities to use Welsh in the workplace had changed.

38% responded that their opportunities had increased, with a further 42% indicating that their opportunities had remained the same.

My opportunities to use Welsh in my work have:
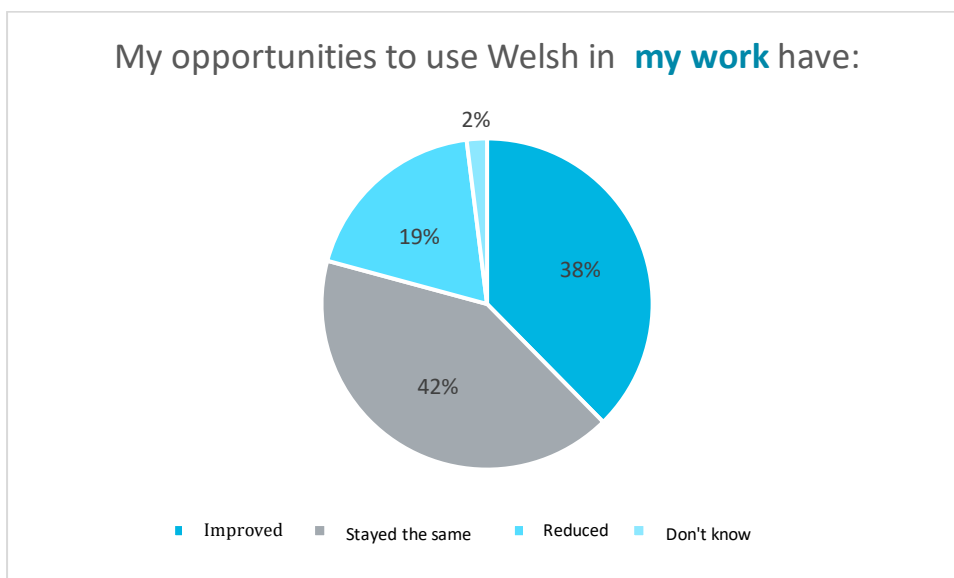
Use of Welsh with public bodies

When considering the Commissioner's regulatory work, it is important to seek the public's opinion on their ability to use the Welsh language with public bodies. It is therefore positive to note that there has been no deterioration in the answers regarding respondents' views on their ability to use the Welsh language with public bodies.

With 35% of respondents stating that they believe opportunities to use Welsh are increasing, it is also encouraging to note that the response to this question (use with public bodies) saw the lowest number of respondents reporting that opportunities to use Welsh were decreasing (13%).

My opportunities to use Welsh with **public bodies** has:

1%

13%

35%

51%

■ Increased   ■ Stayed the same   ■ Reduced   ■ Don't know
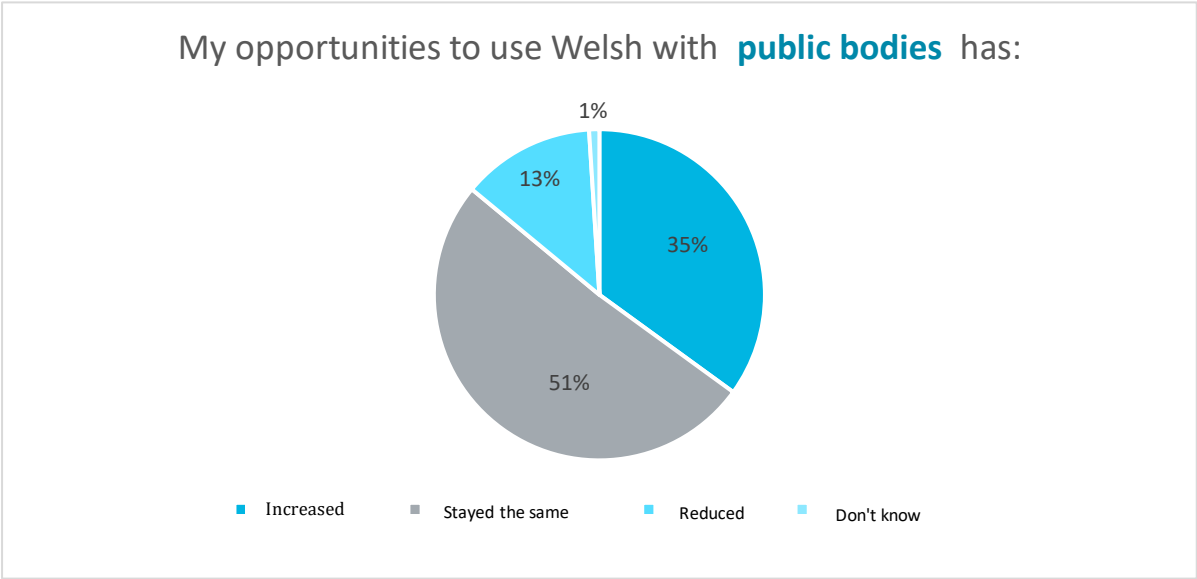
Language choice

Respondents were asked what language they preferred to use with public bodies. 15% indicated a preference for the use of Welsh, and 26% indicated a preference depending on the situation.

41% of Welsh speakers surveyed therefore stated that they prefer to either always use Welsh or receive bilingual services.

There is a clear challenge for organisations here to increase levels of use with attention to the 59% of Welsh speakers who do not choose to use the language.

Which language did the respondents prefer to use with public bodies?

15%

59%

26%

■ Welsh   ■ English   ■ Varies depending on the service
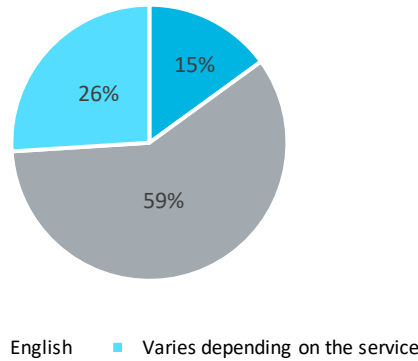
It is important to note that there has been a downward trend in the last two years in terms of the number of respondents indicating that they prefer to use Welsh with public bodies:

Percentage of respondants who favour using Welsh with public bodies

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021

(Line chart showing values: 35%, 30%, 25%, 20%, 15%, 10%, 5%, 0%)
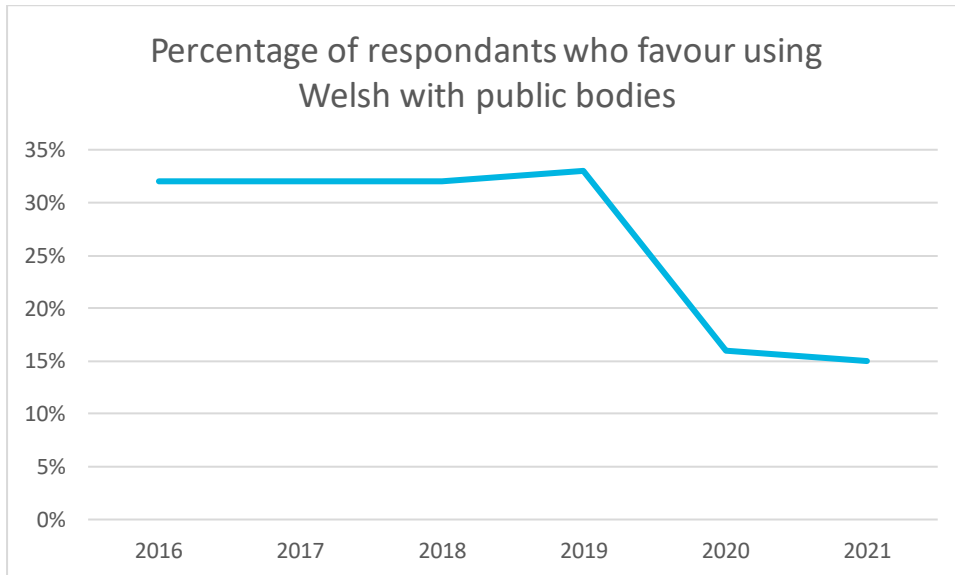
This negative trend has been the subject of discussion by the Commissioner's Advisory Panel, particularly as the significant decline between 2019 and 2020 is noted. It has been discussed that the reduction may be due to the changes in people's involvement with public bodies due to the COVID-19 pandemic or may reflect a change in the method in which the survey has been conducted during the pandemic.

Currently, there is not enough data or information to be able to analyse why there is a decline in the percentage of respondents who favour the use of Welsh with public bodies, nor to arrive at a view as to whether it is a long-term trend or a 'one off' originating from the pandemic, the approach of a remote survey, or the decline in compliance levels by a range of organisations in a number of important areas.

However, this is a worrying statistic and public bodies must carefully consider whether or not their Welsh language services have been maintained over the course

of the pandemic, whether the way they are delivered has changed or declined, what rebuilding steps may be needed and what steps are going to be taken to promote and facilitate opportunities to use the Welsh language with public bodies, and to ensure that it is as easy and convenient to use Welsh as it is to use English.

Our verification results and secret shopper surveys as outlined above, continue to show that Welsh language services or the internal functioning of bodies in Welsh are not always consistent, which is likely to lead to a lack of public confidence in the services. For consumer behaviour to change, where Welsh speakers always want to use Welsh, there must be assurance that a quality service is available.

Respondents state within the survey what the main factors are that make them vary language choice, with 34% of respondents varying language use due to the subject matter.

10% choose not to use Welsh due to the lack of availability of the Welsh language service and 8% due to waiting times for Welsh language services. It is therefore within the capacity of the public bodies to promote an increase in the use of Welsh by making sure that Welsh language services are available and promoted. It must also be ensured that a Welsh service is not inferior or that there is any presumption that it may be inferior. Bodies must make it clear through their behaviour that Welsh receives no less favourable treatment than English when it comes to the operation of services so that the public has confidence in using them.

19% of respondents who do not currently use Welsh believe they are not personally fluent enough or have an adequate grasp of the language, and 9% state that they lack confidence in their ability to speak Welsh and therefore choose not to use Welsh.

However, 12% of those who choose not to use Welsh indicate that they do not choose to use Welsh, because in their view, there is not adequate availability of Welsh language services or there is not always a Welsh language service available. 5% indicate that the body needs to initiate the conversations in Welsh in order for respondents to go on to use Welsh. This view highlights the elements that public bodies can change through investment in the marketing and promotion of Welsh language services and by improving their overall performance with Welsh language standards by incorporating the proactive offer.

Further research was undertaken along with work to consider better service planning by the Commissioner in its 2018 – 2019 assurance report. With the impact of changing some working arrangements and operating and maintaining service arrangements, public bodies should re-consider some of the factors outlined in section 5 of that report:

https://www.welshlanguagecommissioner.wales/media/am0gyzmu/assurance-report-rights-in-use-2018-19.pdf

The Commissioner also offers further practical guidance on promoting the use of Welsh in this context within the advice document:

Promoting the use of Welsh language services (welshlanguagecommissioner.wales)

Quality

82% of respondents agree that they can deal with public bodies in Welsh if they wish to do so. 79% of respondents believe that organisations' Welsh language services are improving and 74% of respondents agree that public organisations ask them in what language they would like to deal with them.

67% of respondents agree that Welsh language services are of the same quality and standard as the equivalent English language services provided by public bodies, with 66% agreeing that they are more likely to use Welsh language services if bodies make it clear that the service is available.

Complain to organisations directly

Only 51% of respondents believe that public bodies make it clear to them how to complain about Welsh services. This is an increase over time in terms of respondents knowing how to make a complaint directly to bodies, however it is a low figure.

Know how to complain about Welsh services
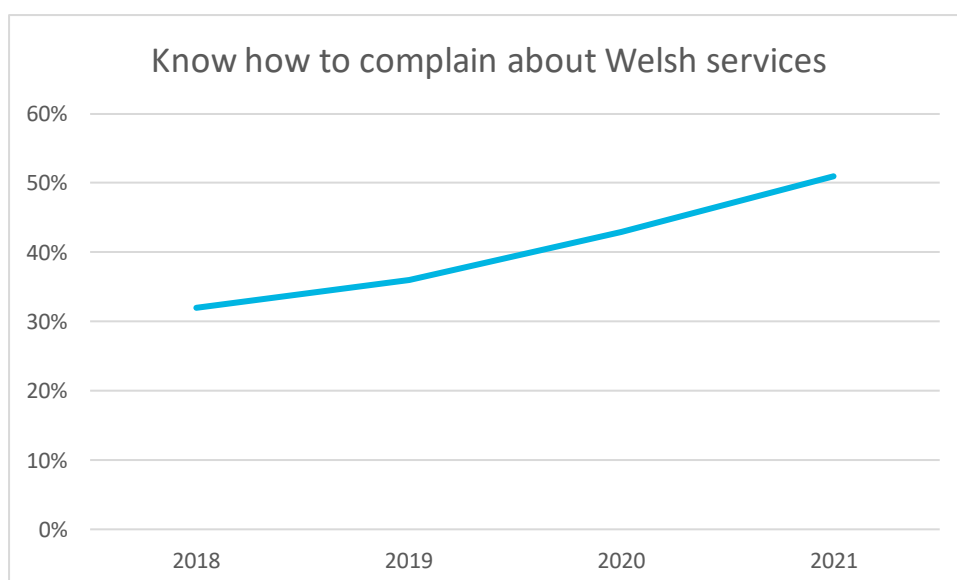
As has become clear when verifying the compliance of organisations, not all organisations subject to Welsh language standards publish a complaints and information procedure for the public, and therefore there is scope for a good percentage of public bodies to take swift action to comply with their duties in this area.

Compliance with Welsh language standards

On an annual basis, the Commissioner collects data and monitors the performance of organisations to carry out their regulatory work. The Commissioner's main objectives in regulating the performance and compliance of organisations are to focus on compliance, close knowledge gaps and improve how the Commissioner discovers defects, promotes self-regulation and acts on deficiencies.

If the Commissioner concludes that the evidence that has been gathered does not show a high assurance of compliance, the Commissioner will act to ensure compliance.

Verification Surveys

The Commissioners' officers carry out direct surveys with some of the major services by behaving like 'secret shoppers'.

Main results – verifying services 2021-2022

CORRESPONDENCE	
Welsh correspondence – response received (any language)	73%
English correspondence – response received (any language)	62%
Welsh correspondence – received a response in Welsh (where a response was received at all)	81%
Promote the availability of the Welsh language through a statement on the correspondence[1]	36%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	17%
TELEPHONE CALLS	
Deal with the call and provide a complete answer in Welsh	56%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	39%
Automated system provides complete service in Welsh	73%
FORMS	
Form available in Welsh	68%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	33%
DOCUMENTS	
Form available in Welsh	81%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	29%
WEBSITES	

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[1]Compliance with standard 7 "You must state—(a) in correspondence, and (b) in publications and notices that invite persons to respond to you or to correspond with you, that you welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh, that you will respond to correspondence in Welsh, and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay."

Pages available in Welsh	84%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	41%
SOCIAL MEDIA	
Post available in Welsh	83%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	27%
PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING	
Advertising material and videos available on social media or websites in Welsh	73%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	35%
CORPORATE IDENTITY	
Use of body corporate identity – such as logo, name etc	81%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	23%
JOB ADVERTS	
Advert available in Welsh	66%
Treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?	50%

Main Findings:

Telephone services

The Commissioner's monitoring work shows that the level of compliance of organisations with the requirements to deal with telephone calls in Welsh is inconsistent and inadequate.

On average, organisations subject to Welsh language standards **deal with calls in Welsh during half of cases (56%).** This gives consumers no assurance that a Welsh language telephone service will be available.

The table below shows the performance of bodies subject to regulations no. 1–7. (A list of the surveyed bodies within each set of regulations can be found in Appendix 2).

| Telephone services	Average	No. 1	No. 2	No.4	No. 5	No. 6	No. 7
Was the enquiry fully dealt with in Welsh?	**56%**	60%	84%	90%	42%	29%	30%
Was the Welsh language treated less favourably than the English language?	**39%**	35%	25%	0%	67%	17%	73%
Compliance with standard 8 :"When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre	**74%**	79%	89%	100%	76%	50%	60%

numbers, you must greet the person in Welsh."							
Compliance with standard 22: "Any automated telephone system that you have must provide the complete automated service in Welsh."	**73%**	82%	62%	100%	57%	96%	41%

As the table shows, the performance of bodies subject to regulations no. 6 (which are further education colleges and Universities), and regulations no. 7 (which are health boards and health service trusts) is below average; **bodies subject to regulations 6 and 7 managed to deal with 30% of the calls in Welsh.**

The table shows that Welsh was treated less favourably than English during almost 40% of the phone calls initiated by the Commissioner's staff.

The performance of the bodies improves when arrangements can be established in advance– with 73% of automated telephone systems complying with the requirements of standard 22.

Overall, the trend in terms of the level of compliance of the bodies, whose duties require them to deal with telephone calls in Welsh in their entirety, is quite consistent around 50% – the graph below shows the trend (dotted line):
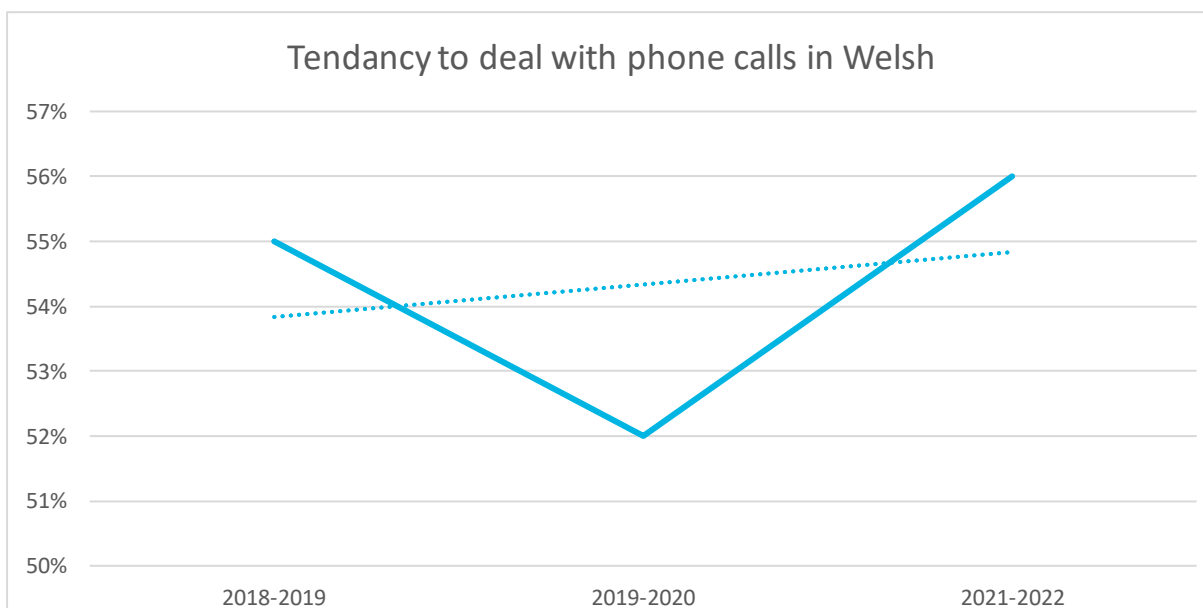
It is a matter of concern that there has been no progress with the compliance of telephone services in Welsh over the last period. The Commissioner believes that bodies need to act to see change – particularly in the further education and health sectors. Consideration must be given to fundamentally changing arrangements to be able to comply, ensuring that Welsh-speaking staff are available to respond to queries over the phone. The Commissioner will open investigations and enforce compliance if necessary, where suspicions of failures with telephone services are encountered.

It may be premature to consider whether the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the level of performance in telephone services. However, anecdotal feedback from organisations states that the move to hybrid and home working is making it harder for them to organise the workforce to ensure calls can always be responded to in Welsh.

Investigation and enforcement: telephone services

The Commissioner carried out an investigation after receiving a complaint from a member of the public about being unable to access a service in Welsh when calling a pensions fund operated by a County Council. He had phoned a number that was displayed in a letter that he received from them. The investigation was therefore concerned with the standard relating to direct telephone numbers which require bodies to deal with calls in Welsh in their entirety. The Commissioner determined that there was a failure to comply with the Welsh language standard on the grounds that the Council had not dealt with the call in Welsh with the complainant, as the only Welsh language element of the call was the greeting. This was an important investigation as it relates to direct telephone numbers, which are becoming more relevant as organisations work flexibly. Bodies need to consider how changes to workforce settings as a result of the pandemic are having a long-term impact on their ability to comply with duties; and to consider therefore whether a review is needed of the arrangements that may have been in place since pre-pandemic planning.

Welsh language standards impose supplementary duties on bodies to support their planning and report on their performance in relation to the service delivery standards. Organisations therefore have an opportunity to re-consider the arrangements they have announced to ensure they still enable compliance from workforce changes and to plan for hybrid working.

Digital services

The Commissioner's surveys found that across all organisations surveyed, 84% of web pages surveyed are available in Welsh. (This statistic represents an increase of 3% percentage points from 81%, which was the result at the end of 2020). In general, therefore, use of Welsh on bodies' websites provides high certainty and users are generally able to access the websites of organisations in Welsh with ease.

However, the performance is not consistent across all sectors, **with only 45% of further education colleges and universities web pages (regulations no. 6) fully available in Welsh**. The surveys show that web pages of further education colleges and universities are available in Welsh, but that regular use of machine translation or infrastructure problems means that there is less favourable treatment of Welsh than English. This means that the pages do not fully comply with the requirements of the standards.

The table below shows the performance of bodies subject to regulations no.6 in terms of the range of standards that apply to the organisation's websites. The table shows that less than 20% of organisations' web pages comply with high assurance.

A very high number of web pages treat Welsh less favourably than English, which leads to very low compliance with standard 55. These results have led to specific interventions by the Commissioner including carrying out investigations which will be reported on during the next financial year.

	Further Education Colleges	Universities
Was the Welsh language treated less favourably than the English language? Were there shortcomings in promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh?	74%	80%
Compliance with standard 55 (Regulations no. 6): "You must ensure that— (a) the text of each page of your website is available in Welsh, (b) every Welsh language page on your website is fully functional, and (c) the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language on your website."	22%	23%
Compliance with standard 58 (Regulations no. 6): "If you have a Welsh language web page that corresponds to an English language web page, you must state clearly on the English language web page that the page is also available in Welsh, and you must provide a direct link to the Welsh page on the	67%	60%

corresponding English page."		
Compliance with standard 55 (Regulations no. 6): "You must provide the interface and menus on every page of your website in Welsh."	65%	72%
Based on the verification alone, an assessment of the high level of assurance of compliance	20%	19%

The Commissioner will tend to open investigations when there are suspicions of non-compliance by colleges and universities with a view to enforcing improvement where necessary.

It was found that 62% of health boards and health trusts' web pages (regulations no. 7) were available in Welsh.

Investigation and enforcement: health board website

The Commissioner carried out an investigation after receiving a complaint from a member of the public that a health board had launched a new corporate website and that most of the pages were only available in English.

Following an investigation, the Commissioner determined that the health board had failed to comply with Welsh language standards requirements because it had not ensured that:

o   the text of each page of its website was available in Welsh;
o   that every Welsh language page on the website was fully functional

The Commissioner's inspection work has also encountered problems and shortcomings when third parties conduct services online on behalf of bodies. Many bodies rely on external software or infrastructure developers to maintain services online, and in many cases, this results in less favourable treatment of Welsh than English, or full services not being available in Welsh.

Investigation and enforcement: digital services

An investigation was carried out by the Commissioner following receipt of a complaint about an online pre-order system for vehicle parking in the car park of a national park. It was determined that there had been a lack of compliance with Welsh language standards as the pages for online pre-

booking were in English only, and the Commissioner acted by asking the park to prepare an action plan to ensure compliance. It was a requirement y to include a Welsh pre-order form, interface and menus to the pre-booking pages and make all pages of the website relating to the parking pre-booking process available in Welsh.

The park initiated discussions with such service providers and although the companies said that what was set out as part of the action plan on the Commissioner's action was not possible, a private company changed its initial position and confirmed that a bilingual service could be provided to pre-book the car park in Welsh. Without the statutory investigation and enforcement action imposed by the Commissioner, it is unlikely that a private company would have changed its approach.

Social media

Welsh language bodies' use on social accounts is improving, with 86% of content surveyed on organisations' Facebook and Twitter accounts complying with the requirements of the standards.

Survey year	Percentage of social media content surveyed available in Welsh
2021–2022	86%
2020–2021	No data[2]
2019–2020	74%
2018–2019	63%

The use of organisations' publicity and advertising on websites and social media is also increasing, so for the first time this year, the Commissioner surveyed the visibility of Welsh language use by organisations with their advertising material and videos on social media or websites.

The surveys found that 73% of this publicity was available in Welsh, and with 65% of the material, there was no less favourable treatment of Welsh or English.

However, again, the picture is mixed across sectors, with organisations subject to number 7 regulations performing lower than the others, with only 55% of online publicity material available in Welsh and less favourable treatment of Welsh than English was seen in 70% of the cases surveyed.

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[2] No data for 2021–2022 due to a cyber attack on the Welsh Language Commissioner's technology systems.

PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING (e.g. videos and advertising materials on social media and websites)	Average	No. 1	No. 2	No.4	No. 5	No. 6	No. 7
Was the example available in Welsh?	**73%**	96%	57%	100%	79%	53%	55%
Was the Welsh language treated less favourably than the English language? Were there shortcomings in promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh?	**35%**	13%	44%	0%	28%	44%	70%
Compliance with standard 37 (Regulations 1/6): "Any publicity or advertising material that you produce must be produced in Welsh, and if you produce the material in Welsh and in English, you must not treat the Welsh language version less favourably than you treat the English language version."	**64%**	90%	55%	100%	74%	47%	30%

Digital innovation

As the Commissioner reported last year, looking at the impact of the pandemic on compliance arrangements, it was noted that a number of bodies had innovated and looked for opportunities to work virtually in a different way.

This case study of virtual conference development by Ofcom is an example of this innovation and each organisation has the opportunity to consider how it wants to adapt arrangements in the hybrid world of work: 20211224-dg-c-incident-case-study-ofcom.pdf (welshlanguagecommissioner.wales)

Correspondence

The findings of the Commissioner's surveys found that when Welsh correspondence was answered by organisations, it was answered in Welsh 81% of the time. (This is a reduction from 2019-2020 where 92% of responses were in Welsh when a response was received).

However, this does not reflect the actual experience considering that only in 73% of cases did the correspondence receive a response at all.

Of all the Welsh language correspondence sent to the bodies, only 60% received a response in Welsh (considering the level of queries that received no reply at all).

This figure is consistent with the number of responses to English-only correspondence received by organisations (62%), and therefore general customer service problems can be found in both languages as organisations respond to correspondence.

In 17% of cases, the Commissioner found that Welsh language correspondence from organisations treated Welsh less favourably than English. This level was much higher by organisations subject to the number 7 regulations (health boards and health services trusts), with half of the correspondence treating Welsh less favourably than English.

To promote and facilitate the use of Welsh, the Welsh language standards include a requirement in the standards for organisations to:

"state—(a) in correspondence, and (b) in publications and notices that invite persons to respond to you or to correspond with you, that you welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh, that you will respond to correspondence in Welsh, and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay."

The surveys found that only 38% of Welsh-language correspondence received as part of the verification work included such a statement, and only 34% of response correspondence in English contained this statement.

Complaints procedures

In recent years, the Commissioner has called on organisations to develop their self-regulatory arrangements – that is, improve their ability to inspect and maintain ongoing improvement processes at their level of compliance with the standards without the need for intervention from the Commissioner's office.

Being responsive to consumers by preparing and implementing a direct complaints procedure that is open and welcomes feedback is one important factor to maintaining an effective self-regulation procedure.

The relevant duty by means of the standards is as follows:

You must—(a)ensure that you have a complaints procedure that deals with the following issues—(i)how you intend to deal with complaints regarding your compliance with the service delivery standards that you are under a duty to comply with, and (ii)how you will provide training to your staff about dealing with those complaints, (b)publish a document documenting that procedure on your website, and (c)make a copy of that document available in each of your offices that is open to the public.

The Commissioner's monitoring shows that, for the most part, organisations do not fully fulfil this requirement. A number of organisations meet some of the requirements, such as publishing a complaints procedure, but are not fully compliant – mostly because the procedure does not discuss how the body will provide training to its staff on dealing with complaints about Welsh service delivery standards (these are identified as 'partly' complying in the table below:)

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS TO PUBLISH A COMPLAINTS PROCEEDURE
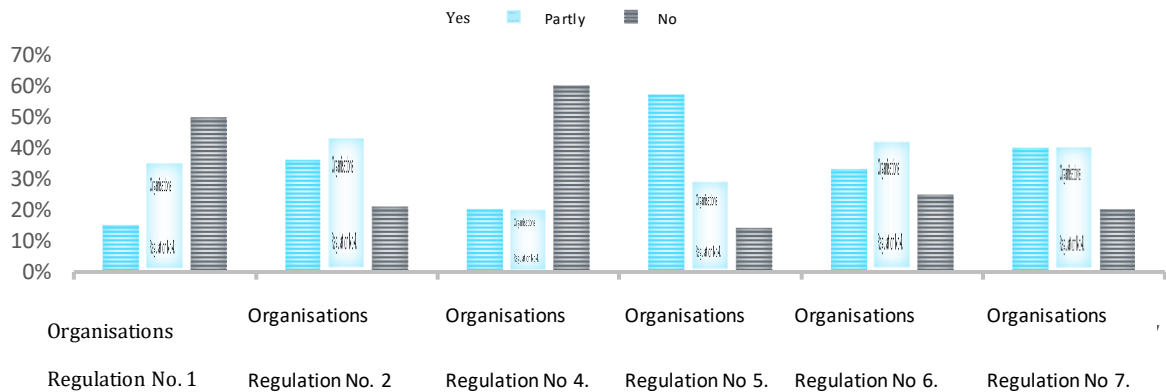
The above table shows that a high percentage of the bodies named in each set of Welsh language standards regulations have not published a complaints procedure in accordance with the requirements of the standards.

The Commissioner considers that this low level of compliance is not acceptable. The duty has been in operation for a number of years and there has been no significant progress. The Commissioner has collected data on organisations' compliance with this requirement in recent years and shared the findings with bodies and some organisations have responded by developing better procedures. It's hard for organisations to justify not taking the required steps – which are so elementary and about informing the public how to complain directly to the body. The Commissioner believes that not welcoming feedback on Welsh language services is a lost opportunity. Organisations must be open and accountable to their users and without good procedures in a place, an organisation does not learn and develop. This is particularly true in the context of the fact that it is unclear how organisations train staff on how to respond to complaints.

The Commissioner's Enforcement Policy encourages individuals to initially complain to organisations if they are not satisfied with Welsh language services, but to be able to do so requires assurances from individuals and from the Commissioner that a bespoke complaints procedure is in place by the organisation to deal and respond to complaints appropriately. The monitoring work as presented above shows that there is currently no assurance that all organisations have procedures in place that can adequately respond to complaints and therefore require no intervention by the Commissioner through investigation and enforcement work in order to resolve complaints and change behaviour.

The Commissioner will correspond with the leader of each non-compliant organisation referring them to this report and giving them a short period of time to comply.

The effect of service shortcomings on Welsh language users

The Commissioners regulatory work is there to protect the rights that are created by the Welsh language standards. When measuring the performance of organisations, it is also important to remember the impact on the lives of people that can happen when things go wrong. The examples below reflect on situations where Welsh language speakers were in a vulnerable position were negatively affected when public sector organisations did not treat their language choice with respect and dignity.

A complaint was received by a member of the public that related to an allegation that a local council did not provide social care to their mother in Welsh. The complainant was a full-time carer for their mother who is living with dementia.

The complainant said that the Council had refused their application for a Welsh speaking social worker. They alleged that two members of staff had advised them that there were no Welsh speaking social workers available despite repeated requests for the service. Once the Council did begin to provide care in Welsh in time, the complainant advised that the Welsh speaking staff worked part time and that the service was therefore slow.

It is not possible to ignore the experience of the complainant in this case. The fact is that the complainant felt that they and their mother had such difficulties in receiving Welsh language care from the Council, and that the service was less effective when it was received. The complainant felt that they had been ignored when trying to convey their mother's language choice at a time when they were already in a difficult and worrying situation. One should also consider the impact of not receiving Welsh language services on the vulnerable person living with dementia and all the research that supports that receiving care in the language of choice has a significant impact on their outcomes and quality of life.

A member of the public visited a cancer treatment centre within a general hospital. At the end of the preparation session for receiving their treatment in hospital, they were given a multiple part bilingual consent form in order to agree to treatment.

They decided to lodge a complaint with the Commissioner alleging that the member of staff told them before signing the form that they should do so on the English side of the form (rather than the Welsh side). They felt that the member of staff was giving clear encouragement to use the English version against their wishes. Rather than encourage or indicate that it was possible to use the Welsh side of the form, the member of staff encouraged them to complete the English side of the form, saying "Sign on the English side, since we all understand English".

This happened in a period that was difficult for the complainant, when they were vulnerable and facing treatment, and being treated with respect with regards language choice would have made a difference at a time when they were under significant strain and pressure and considering factors and making important decisions regards their health. When completing the form they were dealing with a personal and emotional matter, and therefore to ensure dignity and respect of the

complainant, the Health Board should have facilitated and respected their desire to complete the agreement process fully through the medium of Welsh.

Promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh

There are a number of standards imposed on bodies to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh or to highlight to Welsh users that Welsh language services are available. These include a set of standards which require bodies to include a statement that an equivalent Welsh language service is available. For example, stating on forms and documents that an equivalent Welsh version is available, or to proactively offer job applicants that they can request an interview in Welsh or that there is an opportunity to submit a job application in Welsh.

Generally, as set out in specific areas above, bodies' compliance with the promotion and facilitation standards is low.

To increase the level of use of Welsh and to highlight the availability of Welsh language services, bodies must address these standards and improve their compliance with these standards.

The table below provides some examples of the standards involved and the level of compliance across the various bodies.

What is clear is that bodies have developed good arrangements in terms of complying with the standard of promotion on websites, but that practice has not transferred to other services. It shows that it is possible to comply to a very high level with such a standard, but bodies do not do this consistently across all services.

	No. 1	No. 2	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6	No. 7
You must state—(a) in correspondence, and (b) in publications and notices that invite persons to respond to you or to correspond with you, that you welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh, that you will respond to correspondence in Welsh, and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.	69%	45%	50%	78%	35%	15%
If you produce a Welsh language version and a separate English language version of a form, you must ensure that the English language version clearly states that the form is also available in Welsh.	22%	45%	28%	63%	25%	28%
If you have a Welsh language web page that corresponds to an English language web page, you must state clearly on the English language web page that the page is also available in Welsh, and you must provide a direct link to the Welsh page on the corresponding English page.	95%	95%	96%	90%	91%	96%

You must ensure that your application forms for posts provide a space for individuals to indicate that they wish an interview or other method of assessment in Welsh and if an individual so wishes, you must conduct any interview or other method of assessment in Welsh (without the assistance of a simultaneous or consecutive translation service).	14%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%

Comparing results

There is no data available for the year 2020 to 2021. However, the current situation is comparable with the results from the previous year.

The table below shows that overall performance in a number of service areas are quite stable – as discussed above this is true mainly in telephone services.

There are some service areas where compliance level is higher as discussed above – websites and on social media. There is a higher level of job adverts in Welsh, and this is fully discussed in this report.

There is a more negative trend with response to Welsh correspondence in Welsh and in terms of forms available in Welsh.

	Total		
	2021-2022	**2019-2020**	**Chane**
Telephone services	**53%**	55%	🟥
Dealing with the call in Welsh			
Correspondence	**81%**	92%	🟥
Receive a Welsh response to Welsh language correspondence (if a reply was received)			
Social Media	**86%**	74%	🟩
Post on Twitter or Facebook available in Welsh			
Websites	**84%**	81%	🟩
Pages available in Welsh			
Job Adverts	**66%**	47%	🟩
Advert available in Welsh			
Forms	**69%**	78%	🟥
Form available in Welsh			

Corporate Identity	83%	88%	
Use of corporate identity such as logos online or on documents etc.			

Focus on compliance with the policy making standards

In September 2020 the Commissioner published an advice document offering guidance on the implementation of the policy-making standards imposed on bodies subject to Welsh language standards:

[Policy Making Standards: Creating opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language (welshlanguagecommissioner.wales)](#)

The advice document responded to weaknesses identified with the arrangements of a number of bodies in implementing these standards.

Following the publication of the document, the Commissioner held events to improve organisations' understanding of the requirements of these standards. There was an emphasis on the effective implementation of the policy making standards and the importance of establishing robust internal arrangements that enable all those responsible within bodies for making policy decisions to comply with the requirements of these key standards in order to move this agenda forward.

Self-assessment of compliance level

Over the past year, organisations have been reporting on their self-assessment of their compliance with the policy-making standards.

Organisations generally report in their self-assessments that they meet the requirements of the standards group - *'standards about considering the effects of policy decisions made by a body on the Welsh language'.* These standards require organisations to ensure that they consider opportunities for persons to use Welsh and to not treat Welsh less favourably than English when formulating policy. The standards also require that bodies consider opportunities to make their policy decisions less adverse in terms of the Welsh language and more positive in the context of opportunities to use the Welsh language.

75% of the bodies that reported (71 bodies) on their compliance with these standards stated that they complied with 'high' certainty and only 1.5% were of the opinion that they did not comply sufficiently.

The same level of 'high' compliance was reported in terms of the standards that set consultation document requirements.

However, despite the high figure of certainty reported in the self-assessment, the Commissioner's experience does not support that position. The Commissioner's intervention in the wake of complaints or requests for evidence, usually finds that arrangements are not always followed and there remains uncertainty about when the standards apply – that is, when a decision undertaken by an organisation is subject to the standards as it is a 'policy decision'.

It is also true to note that an increase in the level of compliance of bodies with the policy-making standards comes as a result of the Commissioner's interventions

following investigations and improving organisations' arrangements and guidance with the policy-making standards has been subject to enforcement by the Commissioner.

It is important that all organisations subject to Welsh language standards understand their responsibilities and ensure that they develop decision-making processes that ensure compliance with the policy-making standards as there are implications for non-compliance with the requirements.

The Welsh Language Tribunal

Guidance has been given by the Welsh Language Tribunal (Tribunal) in the context of interpreting what is meant by a recent 'policy decision' in the case of *Swansea Council v Welsh Language Commissioner (TyG/WLT/21/01).*

The decision is significant because it provides clarity on the interpretation of the term *"policy decision"* as that term is used in the Welsh Language Measure and the Welsh Language Standards Regulations.

Background to the case

Following a complaint from a member of the public, the Commissioner conducted an investigation into how Swansea Council made its decision that the Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Felindre building was not required as a public resource following its closure as a school, and that the impact of the resulting decision, namely, to transfer a community asset to the private sector, on the Welsh language, was not assessed.

This investigation resulted in a determination that the Council had failed to comply with standards 88, 89 and 90 of the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (no. 1) as it failed to consider the impact of this new policy decision on the Welsh language.

The Council appealed the Commissioner's determination to the Welsh Language Tribunal arguing that a new policy decision had not been made but rather, that an operational decision had been made in accordance with the Community Asset Transfer Scheme.

Decision and interpretation of the Tribunal

The Tribunal dismissed the Council's appeal, and the Commissioner's determination confirmed that the Council had failed to comply with standards 88, 89 and 90. The main grounds of the decision were:

- That the term "policy decision" means more than a written policy document, and may include decisions made regarding the exercise of an organisation's functions;

- That the definition in the Welsh Language Measure and the Welsh Language Standards Regulations is therefore to be interpreted more widely than the common use of the word "policy" often used in common discussion to mean a written document;

- This means that it is not only a decision about <u>how</u> to make a decision but that it may include <u>the decision itself</u> engaged in the conduct of the business of a

body. It could also refer to the conduct of its business e.g., closing a school, siting a community building, moving or restructuring a service, disposing of a community asset.

- o The level at which decisions are made, strategic or operational, is relevant. This decision involved a decision by high-level officers and members of the Council. It was not a normal decision that Council officers could make alone, and therefore it was not an operational decision.

- o The Welsh language standards regulations "define a "*policy decision" as any decision made by a body about the exercise of its functions or about the conduct of its business or other undertaking…..*" The decision to transfer the school from being a public asset owned by the Council to being owned by the private sector, was a decision about the conduct of the Council's business and therefore there was a requirement to comply with standards 88, 89 and 90.

The tribunal's full determination can be found on the Welsh Tribunal website:

TYG/WLT/21/01: Swansea City and County Council | Welsh Language Tribunal (gov.wales)

Award of grants and financial support

The compliance of bodies with the policy-making standard which imposes a requirement to formulate and publish a policy on the award of grants or the provision of financial support, with a requirement for that policy to consider matters of effects on the Welsh language when making decisions on grants; is low.

For example, only 50% of bodies subject to this standard within the set of bodies named in Regulations no. 6 (namely further education colleges and universities) comply with the requirement to formulate and publish a policy on the award of grants and financial support in accordance with the requirement of the relevant standard.

In addition, only 25% of the bodies subject to this standard within Regulations no. 2 (national bodies for Wales) comply with the requirement to formulate and publish a policy on the award of grants consider impacts on the Welsh language in accordance with the requirement of the relevant standard.

It is also worrying that 32% of bodies subject to this standard under Regulations no. 1 (namely local authorities, Welsh Ministers and national parks) continue not to comply with the standard's requirement to formulate and publish a policy on awarding grants despite being subject to the standard since 2017.

Research and enforcement of policy making standards:

The Commissioner receives complaints from members of the public about policy decisions made by bodies, where it is suspected that the real impact of the decision on opportunities to use Welsh or considerations about not treating Welsh less favourably than English has been adequately considered.

Many of the complaints and investigations considered by the Commissioner relate to local authority decisions in dealing with schools, and some precedent has now been set by the Commissioner in this area (see enforcement actions register on the Commissioner's website: Register Enforcement Action (welshlangaugecommissioner.wales)).

The cases in education reflect on difficulties some authorities recognise in considering the need to carry out impact assessments on the Welsh language under different regimes, which meet the requirements of different regulations. The Commissioner is clear, however, that the statutory duties of a body as manifested under Welsh language standards are clear and need to be met, even if there is a requirement under different regulations for Welsh language impact assessments for different reasons. The requirement to comply with policy-making standards is statutory, separate, and important to meet in the context of each policy decision.

Investigation and enforcement: Policy making standards

An investigation was carried out relating to a consultation on the reorganisation of English language education; although this was a Council consultation on the expansion of English language education provision, a complaint was lodged with the Commissioner that the potential impact on the Welsh language was not considered by the Council when consulting on its plans. The Council confirmed that the consultation was flawed as the Welsh language and the impact on the Welsh language were not considered within the original consultation. It was determined that there had been no compliance with a policy making standard and enforcement action was imposed to ensure compliance with these standards within three months. The Council fully accepted the Commissioner's comments and submitted new consultation documents on all policy decisions considering the Welsh language and the impact on the Welsh language as required. In addition, the inquiry offered the Council the opportunity to change its procedure on policy making standards within the county and a new procedure was adopted by the Council along with new documents in consultation on any matter of policy and matters relating to the Welsh language.

Strategic work with the policy making standards

The Commissioner believes that the impact of the policy-making standards is wide-ranging and is likely to have a significant impact on people's ability to use Welsh in the future; and therefore, it is key that the requirements of the standard are fully implemented and met.

When the impact of a policy decision on the Welsh language is not meaningfully assessed, the impact on users of the Welsh language can be striking and long term. The decisions made by public bodies can have a significant impact on individuals' ability to live their life in Welsh, not only within statutory areas such as at school or with services, but also socially.   The policy-making standards are there to support organisations to think carefully about this potential impact and to plan for increasing the use of Welsh in practice and to promote and facilitate a society where the Welsh language is not treated less favourably.

Organisations need to further consider the level of training given to staff on how to carry out assessments and consider potential impacts on the Welsh language from policy decisions. The Commissioner's feedback from bodies and investigative and enforcement work leads to a perception that more investment is needed to upskill people responsible for considering the potential impact of Welsh language decisions at all levels. The impact assessments that organisations complete are often superficial, and do not adequately take into account the potential range of impacts that can be on the Welsh language as a result of a decision. Significant investment in the skills of officers and leaders is needed to enable them to design strategic responses that enable progress in this area.

Supporting compliance with these standards therefore remains an important strategic objective for the Commissioner. To this end the Commissioner intends to hold workshops with individual organisations to raise levels of understanding of the requirements of the policy making standards together with holding workshops on specific policy areas.

Focus on compliance in job advertising and recruitment processes

Background

Assurance Report 2018 to 2019: "Claiming Opportunities" the Commissioner declared:

"User experience is dependent on organisations having enough Welsh-speaking staff, and those staff being in the right roles".

A number of recommendations were given to organisations to try to improve on their job recruitment and advertising arrangements in that assurance report, as well as advice on providing training, so that the efficiency of the workplace as a whole can be improved in complying with all Welsh language standards. It was recommended that organisations carry out work in the following areas in order to see progress following poor compliance outcomes in that year:

- **identifying the skills of the current workforce**
- **improving the Welsh language skills of the existing workforce**
- **conduct a meaningful assessment of the language needs of each vacancy**
- **attracting Welsh speakers to work for the organisation**
- **innovation to manage demand for staff**
- **effective training and allocation of staff**

The Current Situation

The Commissioner continues to believe that no fundamental change has occurred in planning and implementation in recruitment, assessment of Welsh language skills and development of workplace skills or in improvement organisations' compliance levels with the range of Welsh language standards as a whole.

Organisations' compliance with standards that are dependent on staff members' ability to respond in Welsh – such as when dealing with phone calls, is lower than it is with standards where translation or preparation can be relied upon in advance.

Without Welsh-speaking staff available to provide services responsively, compliance with these standards is not going to improve.

Organisations must therefore consider from the start of the recruitment process what skills are necessary for jobs and then follow meaningful assessment, develop adverts and recruitment packs that clearly promote the need for Welsh language skills and attract speakers to these roles by promoting the Welsh language throughout the recruitment process.

There is also a need to improve the commitment to developing the skills that the current workforce has, by identifying staff who have language skills but are not being used to their full potential or where individuals' confidence to use their Welsh with others needs to be developed.

Strategic focus

To this end, over the course of the Commissioner's next strategic plan, there will be a further focus on improving performance in skills assessment and improving the quality of recruitment processes to see progress in obtaining Welsh language skills within the workplace of bodies subject to Welsh language standards.

Welsh language standards place a duty on public bodies to assess the need for skills in Welsh for vacancies and new posts and to keep a copy of those assessments. The Commissioner will commission an independent evaluation of how organisations assess the need for skills in Welsh and how that contributes to their success in recruiting Welsh-speaking staff. It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide an opportunity to establish a baseline and overview of the current situation to inform further work in the future.

The Commissioner will also open investigations and force change in this area where deficiencies persist.

The Commissioner also sees the relationship between using Welsh internally within bodies with improving skills and confidence to use Welsh at work. It will therefore also focus on considering how organisations develop internal Welsh language use policies to encourage and promote the use of Welsh at work.

A successful practice has emerged in this area during the year and this can be built on over the next few years. The practice demonstrates easy and simple methods bodies can adopt to increase the use of Welsh within a workplace.

encourage-welsh-in-the-workplace.pdf (welshlanguagecommissioner.wales)

Advertising jobs in Welsh

The Commissioner checks job adverts published by organisations annually to ensure they comply with the requirements of Welsh language standards.
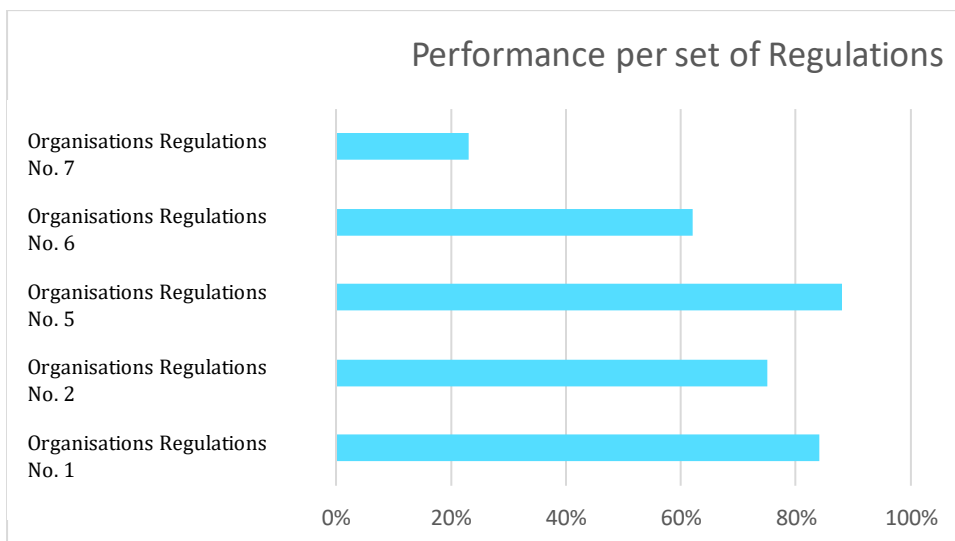
In 2021-22 it was noted that 66% of surveyed job adverts were published in Welsh, this shows an increase since the above assurance report was published in 2019. However, this is not sufficient progress considering the requirements that all relevant advertisements be published in Welsh.

JOB ADVERTS IN WELSH

2019: 24%
2020: 47%
2021: *(no data)*
2022: 66%
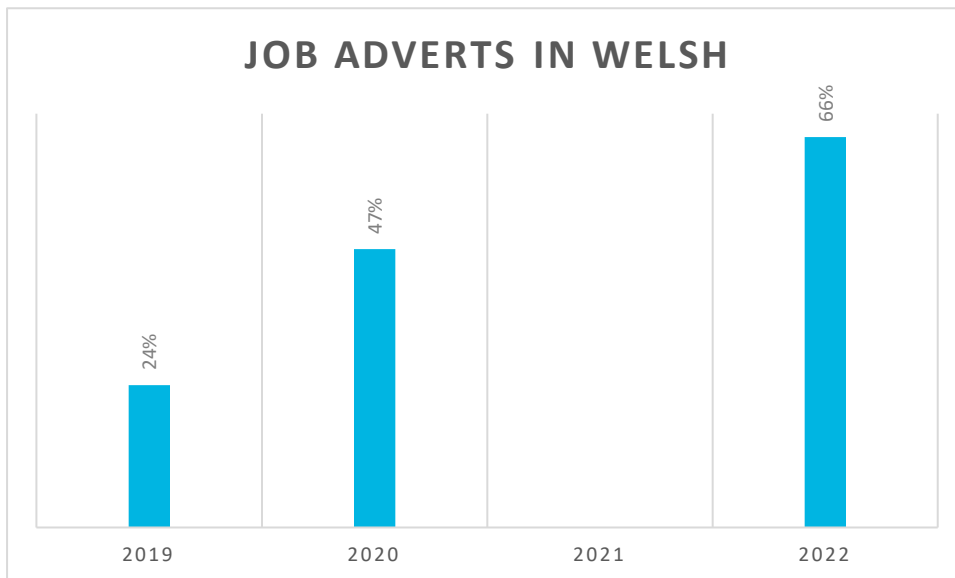
*no data for 2021

Sectoral situation

However, the picture is mixed across sectors, with assurance that organisations will publish adverts in Welsh varying:

Performance per set of Regulations

Organisations Regulations	Performance
Organisations Regulations No. 7	~23%
Organisations Regulations No. 6	~62%
Organisations Regulations No. 5	~88%
Organisations Regulations No. 2	~75%
Organisations Regulations No. 1	~84%

While it is difficult to make direct links between the performance seen here in job advertising and the compliance of bodies more generally with the service delivery and operating standards, it is clear that there is a correlation between the poor performing bodies across these categories of standards and the bodies that do not have adequate advertising and recruitment arrangements to meet the requirements of the standards.

The surveys show that bodies subject to Welsh language standards regulation number 7 (namely National Health Service Boards and Trusts) **publish only 24% of their job adverts in Welsh.**

Problems with systems and software have caused failures to comply for some bodies

subject to Welsh language standards regulations no. 6 – namely further education colleges and universities. The findings of the Commissioner's surveys within this sector led to interventions to see improvement and progress as a result of noting that use of online systems did not support compliance.

Enforcement in the area of skills and recruitment:

The Commissioner conducted an investigation under section 71 of the Measure following the identification after standard monitoring and surveys that there was non-compliance with Welsh language standards regarding recruitment requirements by two further education bodies through the use of software and an online recruitment package. The software only enabled job application with the bodies through the medium of English while submitting initial information and creating an account on the job application website. Job adverts also included English-only phrases to the Welsh adverts.

The organisations recognised that they were not complying with the specific operating duties requiring application forms in jobs to be available in Welsh as well as duties regarding job information to be available in Welsh. It was explained that this was a result of data and text being extracted directly through a system provided by a third party.

The Commissioner determined that there was a failure to comply with Welsh language standards in relation to the application form, and that Welsh was treated less favourably than English, as the initial page to apply for jobs was only available in English.

It was also determined that there was a failure to comply in terms of job advertising as not all elements were available in Welsh language and English-only vocabulary was included in job notices in Welsh.

The above investigations demonstrate the need for organisations to ensure that adequate Welsh language arrangements are in place for various systems they use, including services provided through a third party, or through a procurement process.

The principle established in the Welsh Language Measure that Welsh should not be treated less favourably than the English language applies equally to services provided directly by public bodies as to those provided by contract.

Those systems may have been in place for a long time by the organisation, and indeed before the advent of the standards. But the requirements remain in terms of the standards. It is essential that discussions regarding the Welsh language take place as soon as possible when installing new systems.

Useful information can be found in the Commissioner's advice document Contracting out Public Service Contracts: Welsh Language Considerations on how the requirements of the standards can be taken into account when procuring services. The document also discusses the need to review arrangements with Welsh

language providers for example where there is a long-term agreement to provide for the organisation.

The council is considering the approach that should be used to effectively include, implement and monitor those obligations throughout the tender process and through the life of the contract that follows from that process.

Requirements in recruitment

Although there has been an increase in jobs advertised by organisations in Welsh, it does not always follow that the supporting documents for the adverts are also available in Welsh (only 9/10 Welsh advertisements include correct supplementary documents in Welsh) or that the Welsh language is promoted and facilitated during the recruitment process.

The findings of the surveys by the Commissioner's officials are that Welsh is treated less favourably than English when advertising jobs in 50% of the cases surveyed.

Only 36% of job adverts surveyed contained a statement that it was possible to apply for a job in Welsh.

The surveys also show that there is insufficient compliance with the standard that sets the requirement:

"When you advertise a post, you must state that applications may be submitted in Welsh, and that an application submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than an application submitted in English."

This standard is an important one to promote people's understanding that applications can be submitted in Welsh and to reassure them that submitting applications in Welsh will not affect the recruitment process.

Promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh during the recruitment process is vital to establishing that the organisation welcomes the use of Welsh and is a workplace where there is a natural use of Welsh. In order to attract Welsh speakers, organisations must ensure that they make it clear that Welsh is used in the organisation's recruitment process.

Only 7% of job adverts surveyed contained an application form where applicants were able to indicate a desire to use Welsh.

It is also a requirement for bodies to facilitate the use of Welsh in interviews, by proactively asking applicants if they wish to use Welsh:

You must ensure that your application forms for posts provide a space for individuals to indicate that they wish an interview or other method of assessment in Welsh and if an individual so wishes, you must conduct any interview or other method of assessment in Welsh (without the assistance of a simultaneous or consecutive translation service).

In general, the verification work carried out by the Commissioner's officers with the requirements of the standards associated with recruitment finds that only **10% of advertising and recruitment processes provide high assurance of compliance.**

Assessing the need for Welsh language skills

Welsh language standards impose clear operational duties on organisations as they recruit new or vacant posts, that they must assess the need for skills in Welsh and then go on to categorise those jobs as being where skills in Welsh are essential, that skills in Welsh need to be learnt when someone is appointed to the post, that skills in Welsh are desirable or that skills in Welsh are not necessary.

Of the job adverts analysed this year, here's how the category of need for skills in Welsh was identified in advertising:
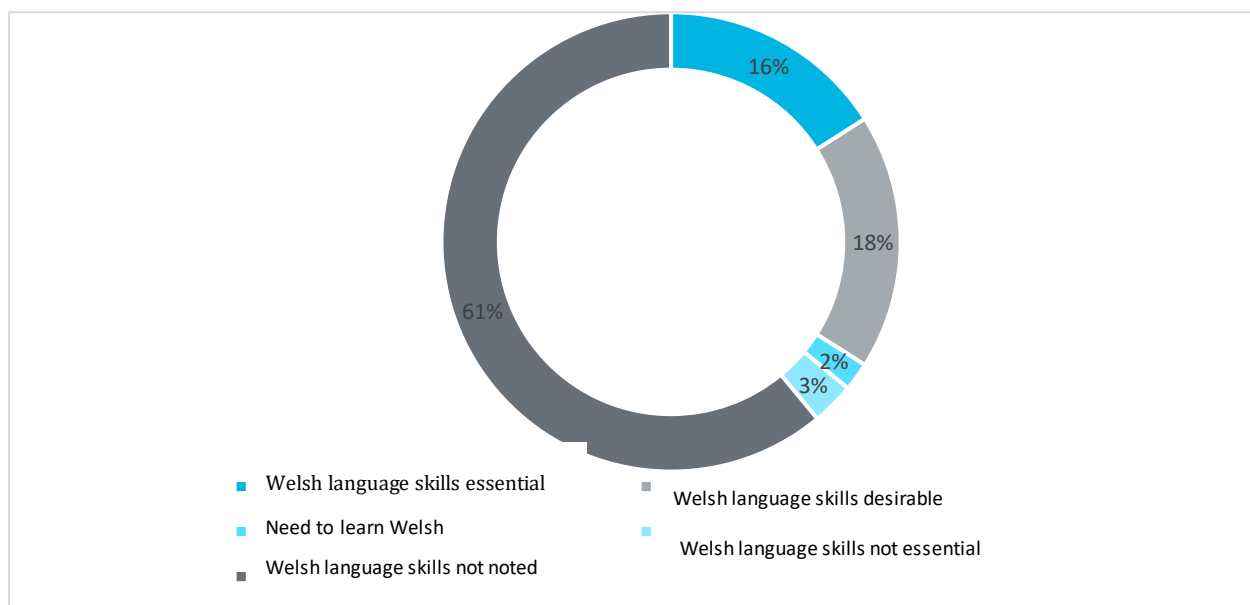
As can be seen from the table above, 61% of surveyed adverts failed to mention what skill level the job required, or skills were not properly identified.

The fact that half of the public organisations in Wales fail to comply with the requirements to clearly state the Welsh skills needed to conduct a job is a concern, as failing to take the opportunity to analyse language needs for a job leads to a risk of being unable to meet the requirements of the service delivery standards. A lack of assessment and planning for the future is likely to have a long-term impact on a body's ability to do to meet language duties and meet users' wishes.

This is an element of recruitment that urgently needs attention from organisations so that they can improve on their ability to design the workplace and distribute staff with Welsh language skills to the positions that can make an impact.

Having a workforce with adequate Welsh language skills that are strategically distributed across the organisation's functions is essential for success in meeting the requirements of Welsh language standards.

The Commissioner has developed a comprehensive advice document [Recruitment (welshlanguagecommissioner.wales)](welshlanguagecommissioner.wales) and organisations need to take note of its content as a matter of urgency.

Research and enforcement around assessing the need for Welsh language skills

An investigation was carried out by the Commissioner into the alleged failure of a body to carry out a meaningful assessment of the Welsh language requirements for a management team level post. Although the body carried out an assessment, the Commissioner concluded that that assessment had not been sufficient to ensure that full consideration had been given to all the key factors, such as the job's responsibilities, involvement with both the public and public bodies in Wales as well as linguistic capacity within the management team. In addition, the body was ruled to have failed to comply with Welsh language standards because it failed to categorise the post according to the categories listed in the wording of the standard. In light of the determination of failure, the Commissioner required the body to undertake a full review of its process for carrying out a job linguistic needs assessment and to amend its template for carrying out that assessment.

Compliance with language scheme duties

Background

Despite the fact that 124 public bodies are now subject to Welsh language standards, a large number continue to implement Welsh language schemes. The Commissioner is responsible for regulating compliance with both regimes.

A language scheme sets out how an organisation will give effect, as far as is appropriate in the circumstances, and reasonably practicable, to the principle established by the Welsh Language Act, namely - when conducting public business and administering justice in Wales, that Welsh and English should be treated on an equal basis.

As a result of the services they provide, a number of the organisations that implement language schemes have a significant impact on people in Wales' opportunities to use Welsh on a daily basis, and therefore the performance and compliance of these bodies with their language duties remains critically important, and central to the Commissioner's work.

Analysis of performance

Overall, the performance of bodies implementing language schemes is disappointing, and it is a matter of concern that a number of bodies are failing to provide core services such as answering Welsh correspondence in Welsh, answering the phone in Welsh or making page contents on websites available in Welsh at all. This is despite the fact that a large number of the organisations involved have been implementing language schemes for many years.

The poor performance of some organisations means that, on average, the level of compliance with language scheme commitments is low and offers no assurance to the Welsh public that quality and reliable services will be available from these organisations.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the picture is mixed, and that some of the bodies surveyed maintain high quality services and a good level of compliance.

The Commissioner's finding is that organisations that invest resources and ensure clear guidance, with responsibilities for compliance with duties given to individuals or a team within the organisation, perform much better than organisations where the responsibility is included within general job specifications. It is increasingly clear that if there is no responsibility at a high level within a body for ensuring compliance with Welsh language duties, it is unlikely that the body will perform well in maintaining quality Welsh language services or planning and organising a sustained improvement in provisions.

Key findings from service verification surveys of bodies implementing language schemes:

Dealing with a phone call in Welsh	47%
Response to Welsh- language correspondence	62%
Posts in Welsh on social media	30%
Pages available in Welsh	52%
Advertise jobs in Welsh.	5%
Documents available in Welsh	44%
Forms available in Welsh	58%
Use of corporate identity in Welsh	59%

Digital services:

As discussed in the Commissioner's assurance report last year (Stepping forward, 2020-21), the bodies' decisions regarding the response and adaptation of their services in light of the pandemic, and their ability to move services online, significantly affected the way in which the public was able to continue to use services in Welsh.

Nevertheless, and particularly over the most recent period, there has been an increase in the ability of organisations to deliver Welsh language services online – a key increase in terms of the long-term developments to digitise the core services of many organisations, and the emphasis on ensuring online accessibility to customers.

Increase in bilingual online services

A number of UK Government departments and agencies have successfully created new bilingual online services in the past year.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has made all their online services available and accessible to customers through the medium of Welsh. DWP's Welsh Language Unit continues to be involved with and to support the various teams responsible for all these services, to ensure that updates to all online services are made to the Welsh language service, at the same time as they are made in English.

There has been a permanent increase in the number of bilingual services from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). There are 10 links to pages for vehicle services and 12 direct links to driver transactions. Two other direct links for purchasing a vehicle registration number and vehicle tax exempt vehicle information page are also bilingual. There has been an increase in recent years in the use of the DVLA's Welsh language services, partly because it is now easier to access the Welsh language services.

HM Land Registry, as part of their transformation programme through the gov.uk website, has also made a number of their online services available bilingually. These services include 'Search for land and property information', 'UK House Price Index', 'Local Land Charges Programme' and 'Search for Local Land Charges.'

Prominence of the Welsh language

With a view to moving increasingly to digital and online provision, this year we surveyed how much Welsh is used by the organisations that implement language schemes on their social media. The prominence of the Welsh language was measured when bodies discussed issues in or related to Wales. The surveys found that only **30% of content surveyed on Twitter and Facebook was bilingual.**

In addition, when using their corporate identity, organisations used/published their corporate identity bilingually or in Welsh during 56% of the examples surveyed.

This often meant that the Welsh language was not promoted by the organisations online or on social media. It is likely that this leads to less involvement with organisations in Welsh as it is not actively promoted.

Advertising Jobs

The surveys carried out found that the level of compliance of organisations in advertising jobs in Welsh, was very low. **<u>Only in 5% of advertisements surveyed</u>** was the advert available in Welsh, and there was little promotion and facilitation of Welsh within the organisations' recruitment process.

As discussed in the section on job advertising and recruitment in this report, the level of compliance under the standards regime is concerning, but it must be noted that the use of Welsh that the language scheme organisations surveyed here is very low. The advice on the need for improving reach and duties in advertising is therefore equally relevant and requires a significant change in the prominence of the Welsh language in job advertising in Wales by the bodies concerned.

Researching the duties of language schemes

The complaints, under the Welsh Language Act, submitted to the Commissioner's attention during the period 2021-2022 are very varied. 15 complaints were received from members of the public against bodies implementing language schemes, of which 13 were valid complaints.

A complaint was received about the failure to receive telephone service in Welsh and a face-to-face service in Welsh.

The main concern that tends to lead to complaints seems to be the lack of Welsh language resources and forms, along with links on websites leading to English language materials, perhaps a reflection of the length that many of the bodies implementing language schemes are moving more to promoting online services and as a result, weaknesses will emerge.

There are also a number of complaints relating to delays in responding to correspondence sent in Welsh, which again reflects the fact that many of the bodies subject to a language scheme do not have adequate arrangements in place to secure services in Welsh.

DVSA investigation

The investigation was carried out in the wake of suspicion of alleged failures on the part of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to fully implement its Welsh language scheme. The investigation was linked to doubts about the implementation of three clauses within the DVSA's Welsh language scheme in providing Welsh medium driving tests. The investigation found that this failure was widespread and ongoing. The failure prevents people from using Welsh and has the effect of encouraging the use of English. This is because users whose tests have been delayed must make the choice between waiting long periods for a test in Welsh or choosing to do a driving test in English without delay. There is undisputed evidence of this in the report itself.

Following the investigation, 5 recommendations were presented to the organisation: i) the DVSA make changes to how they offer language choice when practical driving tests are ordered online to ensure that Welsh practical driving tests are offered proactively and on a par with English; ii) it reports on statistics in relation to test cancellations, and what happens to requests for Welsh tests that are not carried out in Welsh; iii) it prepares a strategy for recruiting examiners who can provide practical driving tests in Welsh; iv) it is preparing a strategy to ensure that existing Welsh-speaking examiners can move between centres to meet demand, and should prioritise driving tests in Welsh; v) it creates a procedure to report on the achievement of the language scheme and on Welsh medium tests specifically to an internal scrutiny committee.

The Commissioner also receives complaints and enquiries from members of the public about organisations not implementing a Welsh language scheme. A number of complaints/ enquiries have been received over the last 2 years about different elements of the process relating to COVID-19.

The need to consider the Welsh language at a United Kingdom level – and secure its status – was highlighted very clearly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic when

the decision was made to procure and organise a number of key responses to the pandemic centrally by Westminster's Department of Health and Social Care. The end result of the centralization of these efforts by a department unfamiliar with operating under the requirements of the standards was that not all of the services provided were planned with the Welsh language as a central consideration. Lessons must be learned from this and ensure that the Welsh language has sufficient constitutional and political standing at United Kingdom level to ensure the provision of necessary services to Welsh citizens, particularly in times of crisis.

Appendix 1

Evidence that forms the basis of the report

The report is based on solid and diverse evidence, including:

- monitoring – conducting user experience surveys (checking services such as correspondence, phone, forms, documents, corporate identity, websites, etc.);

- checking annual reports, supplementary documents and job advertisements

- liaison with organisations – impressions of officers who deal with organisations in providing support for compliance, setting standards, and conducting investigations.

- Evidence gathering meetings with organisations.

In terms of user experience surveys, it should be noted the results are based on checking services of each institution in regulations number 1 and 7, and a sample of bodies in regulations numbers 2, 4, 5 and 6 as well as a selection of organisations implementing language schemes. A list of the bodies subjected to surveys is in appendix 2.

The services were checked three times during the year in most cases and with a clear methodology based on the requirements of the standards in terms of what is marked as compliance or not.

User experience is the main aim of the verification work; however, the verification fully considered the requirements of the standards, and these are referred to in the report where relevant to identify the need for better planning etc.

Due to decisions made as a result of the pandemic, outsourced surveys have not taken place in the last two years, this meant that no data on performance with services such as signs displayed by bodies, receptions and self-service machines has been included as it was not possible to check.

Survery of Welsh speakers:

400 interviews were conducted with Welsh speakers in November 2021, due to the pandemic, the interviews were conducted online. About half of respondents reported fluency in Welsh. The sample was representative of Welsh speakers aged 16 and over in Wales (by looking at a proportion who can speak Welsh within the 22 Local Authorities in Wales).

Due to the pandemic and the loss of data following a cyber-attack on the Commissioner's systems the Commissioner was unable to engage with the public in other ways during this year.

Appendix 2:

List of organisations surveyed for verification survey findings

No. 1 Regulations	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Snowdonia National Park Authority Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Caerphilly County Borough Council Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Conwy County Borough Council Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Bridgend County Borough Council Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Torfaen County Borough Council Wrexham County Borough Council Vale of Glamorgan Council Cardiff Council Newport City Council Gwynedd Council Ceredigion County Council Denbighshire County Council Monmouthshire County Council Carmarthenshire County Council Pembrokeshire County Council Powys County Council Flintshire County Council Isle of Anglesey County Council Welsh Ministers
No. 2 Regulations	Colleges Wales Ltd The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. The Children's Commissioner for Wales The Commissioner for Older People in Wales National Lottery Community Fund The Arts Council of Wales Wales Council for Voluntary Action Estyn Welsh National Opera The Learning and Work Institute The Local Government Data Unit Wales The Electoral Commission BBC The Office of Communications
No. 4 Regulations	Education Workforce Council

	Social Care Wales
	Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales
	Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales
	Valuation Property Tribunal for Wales
No. 5 Regulations	Powys Police and Crime Commissioner
	Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
	North Wales Police
	Gwent Police
	British Transport Police
	Independent Office for Police Conduct
No. 6 Regulations	Cardiff and Vale College
	Gower College Swansea
	Bridgend College
	Higher Education Funding Council Wales
	Swansea University
	Bangor University
	University of Wales Trinity St David
	University of South Wales
	The Open University
	Coleg y Cymoedd
	NPTC Group
	Merthyr Tydfil College Limited
No. 7 Regulations	Powys University Health Board
	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
	Swansea Bay University Health Board
	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
	Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
	Cwm Taf University Health Board
	Hywel Dda University Health Board
	Velindre NHS Trust
	Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust
	Public Health Wales NHS Trust
Bodies implementing language schemes	Department for Work and Pensions
	Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
	Rural Payments Agency
	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority
	Health and Safety Executive
	Financial Conduct Authority
	National Heritage Memorial Fund
	HM Revenue & Customs
	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water
	Severn Dee Water
	Royal Mail Group plc
	HM Prison and Probation Service
	Hybu Cig Cymru

	Office of the Public Guardian Companies House

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Welsh Government

Our ref JMEWL/02328/22

Cuncillor Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn llywelahafowain@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

15 December 2022

Dear Councillor Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn,

Thank you for your letter of 17 November regarding the provision of simultaneous translation by default at Welsh Government meetings.

When arranging meetings, we encourage our staff to use their judgment when it comes to meeting arrangements. Attendees from organisations operating through the medium of Welsh are one of those considerations, along with the subject of the meeting and its location, so that they can decide whether or not to provide the service. We provide simultaneous translation at meetings beyond our statutory duties but that has limitations as we prioritise our translation resource. As I explained to Mr Gibbard in my letter in June, our resources would not allow us to do so by default for all meetings arranged by the Government.

The result of our latest partnership with Microsoft – to allow simultaneous translation in scheduled Teams meetings – has just been released. In fact, we have already tested the new function in a number of meetings with considerable success. Our collaboration with Microsoft to secure this development will see the availability of a simultaneous translation facility that will enable even more of us to use our language in virtual meetings. I think the lack of a simultaneous translation facility, during the pandemic, adversely affected the use of Welsh in virtual meetings, and this is why I'm delighted that we've been able to work in collaboration with Microsoft to make it available to everyone who uses Teams, at no additional cost.

As I set out in my letter to Mr Gibbard, this development is a case of Wales and the Welsh language leading a development that will increase the use of languages around the world, including minority languages.

I have already stated that I will use it at every possible opportunity so that I can make further use of Welsh in meetings.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Miles MS
Minister for the Welsh Language and Education