

# **The Welsh Government's Annual Report on compliance with the Welsh Language Standards 2018-19**

## Introduction

This is the Welsh Ministers' third annual report on compliance with the Welsh Language Standards since the standards came into force on 30 March 2016. The standards are now embedded within the organisation, and have become a working reality for the Welsh Government.

During the preparatory period for implementing the standards, for clarity and propriety reasons a revised structure was put in place within the Government, separating Welsh language policy functions from the work of ensuring compliance with the standards. This arrangement continues. The Welsh language policy division is based within the Education and Public Services Group, while the standards compliance team is located within the Office of the First Minister. A small team of staff works centrally in this team on compliance, but they are supported by a network of co-ordinators from across the organisation.

Dealing with the Welsh Language Commissioner's enforcement policy has continued to account for a significant part of the compliance team's work during the last year.

## **1. Compliance with the Service Delivery Standards**

### 1.1 General

Our aim is to ensure that the people of Wales can engage with their Government in their language choice on all occasions.

As mentioned in the introduction, we continue to operate a network of Welsh Language Co-ordinators, with representatives from across the organisation, to provide assurance that the standards are being adhered to when providing services through the various Groups within the Government. The network continues to be a significant part of the jigsaw of complying with the standards, and allow for key messages on compliance to be shared within the Groups, are a first point of contact for colleagues on advice about compliance, and provide assurance about compliance within the organisation

In November 2018 the Welsh Government was invited to share a case study modelling best practice in delivering a service in line with the standards for the Welsh Language Commissioner's 'A Measure of Success' - Successful Practices Seminar. The case study chosen was the practice of providing a bilingual reception service at the Welsh Government's main offices via a third party contract. Recruiting and retaining Welsh speaking reception staff has been challenging on occasions. A

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contract to supply reception services is now in place with an external supplier with a marked improvement in the quality of the service. Providing a Welsh language service is one of the core requirements of the contract, along with responsibility for the recruitment and development of staff. We welcome the Welsh Language Commissioner's work in sharing good practice across organisations subject to statutory Welsh language duties, and feel we have benefited this year from learning more about practices elsewhere.

## 1.2 Complaints

38 complaints relating to the Service Delivery Standards were received during the reporting period. 12 of the complaints were received directly from members of the public, which were then investigated and responded to under the first stage of the Welsh Government's Complaints Policy. Of the 26 complaints received from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office, 10 of those investigations were discontinued.

## **2. Compliance with the Policy Making Standards**

### 2.1 General

*Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers* is the Welsh Government's strategy for the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language. *Cymraeg 2050* and the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act state that the Welsh language is a strategic priority for Welsh Government. The Welsh Government's vision is to see the Welsh language thrive, with an increase in the number of people who both speak and use the language in their daily lives.

The Policy Making Standards require us to do the following three things:

1. consider the effects or impacts of our policy decisions on the Welsh language (both positive and negative);
2. consider how to increase positive effects, mitigate or reduce adverse effects and take all opportunities to promote the use of Welsh'
3. seek views on the effects on the Welsh language when engaging or consulting and to seek the view of Welsh speakers and users of the language.

A new integrated impact assessment framework is used by the organisation since 2018 to consider the effects of policy decisions on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English. The purpose of the framework is to offer comprehensive advice to staff on giving appropriate consideration to the Welsh language when making policy decisions. The Welsh language impact assessment is one of the mandatory statutory assessments officials must complete when developing, revising or amending policies. A 5 stage process is used within the framework, namely planning; assessment; reporting; consultation; and publication.

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The aim is to develop policies of the highest possible quality that, in turn, make a difference to the citizens of Wales. The framework aligns closely with the aims of the Cymraeg 2050, to ensure that these aims are mainstreamed within policy decisions taken by the Ministers. To assist staff with using the new framework, a new guidance document was shared along with a revised data handbook on the Welsh language in Wales, and a guide to how to go about completing the impact assessment.

Standard consultation templates have been amended to ensure that we also seek the views of respondents regarding the impacts of our policy decisions on the Welsh language. Similarly, standard procurement templates ensure that the Standards are an important consideration when contracting services from third parties. Guidance for staff has been developed on complying with the requirements during consultations exercises, contracting services, distributing grant funding and commissioning research.

## 2.2 Complaints

Three complaints relating to the Policy Making Standards were received during the reporting period. Two of these investigations were discontinued.

## **3. Compliance with the Operational Standards**

### 3.1 General

During 2018-19 we saw further developments in the use of the Welsh language internally. There has been a continuous increase in the services made available to staff through the medium of Welsh within the organisation.

We have looked to learn lessons from Anglesey County Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Council, South Wales Police and the National Assembly for Wales Commission; all of which have recently undertaken initiatives to further develop their policies on the internal use of Welsh. Natural Resources Wales' Welsh Language Policy Advisor also came to discuss the internal promotion of the language within NRW.. Further work has been undertaken in light of these developments on the Government's policy on the internal use of Welsh.

There was an encouraging increase in the number of officials self-assessing their Welsh language skills as Level 5 during the reporting period: we saw an increase of 5% in reading skills (34 members of staff), 4.3% in speaking skills (32 members of staff), 4% in understanding skills (32 members of staff) and 5.1% in writing skills (21 members of staff).

Welsh language taster sessions were held in the office to celebrate 'Diwrnod Shwmae / Su'mae in October 2018. The session was hosted in conjunction with the

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National Centre for Learning Welsh. 71 members off staff attended the sessions across the Cardiff, Aberystwyth and Merthyr Tydfil offices. During the sessions staff were encouraged to seek out information on the Centre's website, and particular focus was given to the Centre's 10 hour online courses for entry level learners. Following the sessions in October and communications shared with staff on the intranet during the month, there were a further 97 enrolments by Welsh Government staff for the online course.

### 3.2 Complaints

No complaints relating to the Operational Standards were received in 2018-19.

### 3.3 Staff Skills

#### March 2019

	Reading	Speaking	Understanding	Writing
0	2145	2588	2333	2942
1	1349	1189	1098	972
2	446	271	553	301
3	321	190	194	305
4	315	279	295	329
5	714	774	824	433
X	267	266	260	275

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	Reading	Speaking	Understanding	Writing
0	38.6%	46.6%	42.0%	52.9%
1	24.3%	21.4%	19.8%	17.5%
2	8.0%	4.9%	10.0%	5.4%
3	5.8%	3.4%	3.5%	5.5%
4	5.7%	5.0%	5.3%	5.9%
5	12.8%	13.9%	14.8%	7.8%
X	4.8%	4.8%	4.7%	4.9%

#### 31 March 2018

	Reading	Speaking	Understanding	Writing
0	2090	2501	2271	2844
1	1289	1154	1050	947
2	433	258	522	282
3	305	179	189	302

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4	308	274	283	310
5	680	742	792	412
X	192	189	190	200

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	Reading	Speaking	Understanding	Writing
0	39.5%	47.2%	42.9%	53.7%
1	24.3%	21.8%	19.8%	17.9%
2	8.2%	4.9%	9.9%	5.3%
3	5.8%	3.4%	3.6%	5.7%
4	5.8%	5.2%	5.3%	5.9%
5	12.8%	14.0%	15.0%	7.8%
X	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%	3.8%

### 3.4 Staff attending Welsh Language Training in 2018-19

#### Courses for learning Welsh in the workplace

Level	Registered	Sitting the exam
Entry	32	4
Foundation	29	10
Intermediate	20	2
Advanced	30	0
Proficiency	1	0
Total	112	16

#### Work Welsh – National Centre for Learning Welsh

In addition to the formal weekly lessons staff have taken advantage of the learning offer being provided by the National Centre for Learning Welsh:

10 hour online courses

<b>'Croeso' Work Welsh</b>	<b>Total</b>
Enrolled	150

<b>'Croeso Nôl' Work Welsh</b>	<b>Total</b>
Enrolled	14

<b>5 day Residential Courses</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of staff attending a course	22

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## Induction sessions

Every member of new Welsh Government staff must undertake induction training. As part of induction process the Welsh Language Standards Compliance Team deliver an awareness session. During the reporting period 35 sessions were held with 414 members of staff attending. One of the sessions during 2018-19 was held through the medium of Welsh.

## Health and Safety courses

Five Welsh language health and safety courses have been held during the reporting period with 18 members of staff attending.

### 3.5 Number of new and vacant posts advertised and categorised as:

- i) Welsh language skills essential
- ii) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed
- iii) Welsh language skills desirable
- iv) Welsh language skills not necessary

<b>Category</b>	<b>Advertised internally</b>	<b>Advertised externally</b>
Essential	32	20
Learnt when appointed	0	0
Desirable	93	54
Not necessary	620	69
Total	745	143

## **4. Process**

Of the complaints referred to under each category above, a minority are received directly by the Welsh Government. In such cases a swift inquiry into the problem normally allows the problem complained about to be resolved quickly and remedied to the complainant's satisfaction. In general this is a positive way of enforcing the standards as it identifies problems that can be dealt with quickly.

However, where complaints are made to the Welsh Language Commissioner and then referred onwards to the Government, the process can be lengthy and resource intensive – often disproportionately so due to the steps taken to investigate problems that are often relatively minor in nature.

We understand that this is an issue that is being considered by the Commissioner's Office.

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