

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2022-2023



Community Health Councils (CHCs) are the independent voice of people in Wales who use NHS services. We are made up of local volunteers who listen to and represent the interests of patients and the public. There are 7 CHCs covering different parts of Wales.

The Board of CHCs [the Board] exists to support, assist, advise and manage the performance of CHCs. It represents the collective views of CHCs across Wales.

An electronic copy of this document can be found on our website: www.hywelldachc.wales

This document is also available in Welsh. If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us:

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Executive summary

Hywel Dda Community Health Council (HDdHC) is a statutory body which works for the people of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. A statutory body is one which the Welsh Government has decided is important and exists to help people and provide services. We monitor and focus on people's health services, whether this is in our 3 counties or in health settings outside of our area.

HDdCHC is there to make sure that people in our three counties have someone to listen to them and help them when they have concerns about the health care and health services that they use.

When people have to use health services, it is often because they are unwell, and this can be a big worry for them. We want to make sure that people can share their views and stories with us in a way that is easy for them. This means that we want to be able to listen and talk to people in Welsh and English or during our day-to-day work. Where people are speakers of other languages we also try to make sure we can use interpreters and translators so that we can hear and understand what we are being told.

The Welsh language is one of the three official languages in Wales and about one third of our staff can speak Welsh. Some speak Welsh better than others, with some being fluent first-language Welsh speakers. A few of us need more opportunity to practice and develop our confidence and vocabulary. Some of us are just starting to learn and use simple phrases. We want to build on this and do more.

The way in which we have developed and integrated Welsh in our day-to-day business has grown during our 49 years of representing the people living within the three counties. In 2004 Community Health Councils in Wales adopted a Welsh Language

scheme to ensure that the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality. The Welsh Language Scheme was followed by the Welsh Language Standards, HDdCHC was issued with Compliance Notice in Nov 2018.

We already consider how we use the Welsh language every day:

- All the information on our website is available in Welsh and English. We do not publish any documents that we produce on our website unless we have both English and Welsh versions available.
- When we give people paper copies of our documents, reports, questionnaires we give them copies in Welsh and English.
- Whenever we make any decisions about the work we do, we always consider how that decision will impact on the way we use the Welsh language and the impact the decision has on Welsh language speakers.
- When we hold meetings we know that we have steps in place to make sure that we can conduct them bilingually as required.
- Our staff and volunteer members understand that we will consider the Welsh language in all of our activities and make sure that it is given appropriate prominence.
- Staff understand that all initial contact, whether by email or letter is bilingual and make note of the person's language of choice for the future.

Despite doing all of this, we know that this is something we must work on all the time so that we are always getting better.

This report covers the time period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Introduction

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets out a legal framework which imposes a duty on the Board and the 7 CHCs across Wales to comply with standards relating to the Welsh language.

The Welsh Language Standards [“the standards”] came into force for the Board and the 7 CHCs on 30 May 2019.

As 8 separate statutory bodies, the Board and each CHC in Wales has received separate notification of the Standards that apply to them, determined by the Welsh Language Commissioner and based upon their particular circumstances.

The link below provides details of the standards that have been applied to Hywel Dda CHC.

This is the Hywel Dda CHC’s third report on compliance with the standards. It covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Donna Coleman, Chief Officer, has overall responsibility at Hywel Dda CHC for the Welsh language. She is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the standards from day to day.

Our year at a glance

Staff continue to develop their skills in the workplace, with Welsh learners being supported by Welsh speaking colleagues

Information on Welsh language courses, online or classroom based, are shared with staff and members

Seek out training organisations such as Digital Communities Wales, who offer training through the medium of Welsh and / or English

Increase in bilingual emails / conversations internally with staff and members

Increase in bilingual emails and telephone conversations with external groups(3rd Sec)

What we've been doing

During 2022/2023 we have continued to build on and further develop our previous years' work and we continue to work toward fulfilling our obligations in respect of the Welsh Language Standards

- We have continued to reach out to more of our communities using social media and have extended into Instagram as well as Facebook and Twitter. Our social media pages are available in Welsh and English.
- Our website encourages people to complete online surveys in Welsh or English and has accessible bilingual documents such as the online enquiry form for the advocacy service.
- Staff Annual Appraisals: staff are offered the opportunity of having their annual appraisal through the medium of Welsh.
- Supporting documentation is available on the CHC shared drive.
- We take opportunities to attend sessions held by the Welsh Language Commissioner so that we are continuing to stay abreast of new ways of increasing our use of Welsh in our day-to-day activities:
 - Staff participated in the online CYG event 'Using Welsh language services: effective practices'
 - Welsh Language Commissioner event on policy making standard
- Share publications by the CYG with staff, members and on our social media e.g.:
 - More than just words
 - Welsh Speakers' Dementia Care
 - Using the Welsh language on social media: A practical guide for businesses and charities

- Share / promote the Welsh language on our social media platforms



Handling complaints about the Welsh language

Our 'making a complaints about us' procedure sets out the process for dealing with complaints about compliance with the Welsh language standards. You can find out more at the following link [Complain About Us - Hywel Dda Community Health Council \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthcare-complaints/healthcare-complaints-welsh-language-standards)]

During the period between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 we received 0 complaints in relation to the Welsh language.

How we have met the Welsh language standards in 2022-2023

We carried out 2 self-assessments of the Boards compliance with the standards during the year. The detailed findings of our most recent assessment is included at Appendix 1 (included as

a separate document). A summary of this assessment is shown in the following paragraphs.

Service delivery standards

These standards focus on providing services. Their aim is to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh or to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language in service provision.

They cover the Welsh language services we provide to the public, e.g. services by telephone, using the Welsh language in meetings, letters and documents, on-line services.

Service Delivery	Compliant	Working towards	Non-compliant	Not applicable
Number of Standards				
52	1-11, 13, 15, 16, 18,19, 21-22a,22ch, 26-39, 42-49, 57-59, 62	5,17,60,61	none	12,14,63

The service delivery standards make sure that we have the right processes and procedures in place so that we can offer a bilingual service to anyone who contacts us.

In most of the standards, we are already compliant but we are working hard to increase our efforts until we reach a point where we are fully compliant.

It has been helpful that a number of our staff are Welsh speakers, this helps us comply with the standards more easily than some other CHCs. Some Welsh speaking staff on occasion undertake in-house translation of items such as agendas and questionnaires as /when work commitments allow, for larger pieces of work we make use of the Board of CHCs in Wales translators or outsource our translation requests to meet some requirements and deadlines.

- During the past year, staff have continued to be aware of the standards, and what is required from us all in order to comply with standards.
- Staff using mobile phones to assist with home working have bilingual voicemail messages.
- Our HDdCHC Welsh speaking staff support staff in other CHCs when the need arises e.g. for ad hoc translations such as social media posts.
- Before undertaking any decisions about any of our work, we undertake an equality impact assessment. This means we have to consider the different needs of people using our services. As part of this we consider the impact of our different decisions on Welsh speakers and the Welsh language, with our aim always being to have a positive impact.
- We have steps in place to make sure that bilingual services are provided in meetings when appropriate.
- Documents that we provide to the public are available in Welsh and English. For example, meeting invitations, agendas and reports.

- We try to understand the language preferences of our staff, members and people we deal with on a daily basis. We know for example that we may have routinely dealt with some individuals in English but that they may wish to use or practice their Welsh speaking skills and so we revisit this regularly.
- Our website is fully bilingual, with corresponding pages throughout the site.
- All of our social media posts are posted bilingually, with the Welsh version first. Responses are made as/when required in Welsh/ English.
- All office signage, internal or external, temporary or permanent are bilingual, with the Welsh positioned either above or to the left of the English language.
- Encourage staff and members to make use of Comisynydd y Gymraeg Iaith Gwaith Badges and lanyards

Policy making standards

The policy making standards require us to consider the effect that its policy decisions may have on people's opportunities to use Welsh and the guiding principle not to treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

These standards require us to do the following 3 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 views of Welsh speakers and users of the language.

Policy making	Compliant	Working towards	Non-compliant	Not applicable
Number of Standards				
9	69,70,71	72-77	none	none

BCHCW developed an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is used to consider the effects of policy decisions on opportunities for use of the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.

We also refer to the Welsh Language Commissioner's good practice advice document in relation to:

- Policy Making Standards: Creating opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Operational standards

These standards deal with the way the Board and CHCs promote and use Welsh internally, working towards a bilingual workplace.

Operational Standards	Compliant	Working towards	Non-compliant	Not applicable
Number of Standards				

16	79,82-89, 104,105,111, 112,113,	none	none	97,98
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- Sharing logos with staff to use on their email signatures, indicate whether they speak Welsh or whether they are learning the language.
- Encouraging Welsh speaking staff to wear the Cymraeg badge or lanyard.
- Ensuring that all office signage, whether internal or external, and whether temporary or permanent are bilingual, with the Welsh positioned either above or to the left of the English language.
- Increase in the number of bilingual internal messages to staff and CHC members
- Increase in bilingual incoming emails and telephone conversations with external groups eg 3rd sector organisations

Record keeping standards

This standard covers keeping a record of the number of complaints received relating to our compliance with the standards.

Record keeping	Compliant	Working towards	Non-compliant	Not applicable
Number of Standards				
1	115	none	none	none

This Standard covers keeping a record of the number of complaints received relating to our compliance with the standards.

We hold an internal spreadsheet, which documents the number of complaints received during each financial year

Welsh language skills

Throughout 2022/2023 Hywel Dda CHC has continued to encourage and support staff and volunteer members to develop their Welsh language skills.

- Useful Welsh phrases such as 'Croeso i'n gyfarfod heddiw' and 'diolch am eich cyflwyniad' are regularly shared with members prior to CHC meetings.
- Provided staff with opportunities to attend residential courses for students to improve their Welsh Language skills at Nant Gwrtheyrn

We asked our CHC staff to self-assess their Welsh language skills using the framework at **Appendix 1**. The table below shows the results:

WELSH LANGUAGE SELF-ASSESSMENT COMPETENCIES MATRIX							
Numbers and levels of Welsh speaking staff working in Hywel Dda CHC							
Pay band	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
8b					1		1
7		1		1			2
6	3					1	4
5		1					1

4	1	1				1	3
Total	4	3	0	1	1	2	11

Staff attending Welsh language courses

Staff recruitment

The table below shows the number of vacancies advertised during the year requiring:

- Welsh language skills essential
- Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed
- Welsh language skills desirable
- Welsh language skills not necessary

Category	Advertised internally	Advertised externally
Essential	0	0
Learnt when appointed	0	0
Desirable	0	0
Not necessary	0	0
Total	0	0

Looking forward

Hywel Dda CHC is keen to continue to improve and find out more ways on which we can more effectively meet the Welsh Language Standards and promote the use of the Welsh Language

- We will continue to encourage our staff and members to undertake Welsh language courses.

- We will continue to work with the Board of CHCs and other CHCs to share good practice.
- Look at ways of holding focus groups for Welsh speakers so that they can share their experiences and views in a language they are comfortable

Appendix 1

Welsh language self-assessment tool

	LISTENING / SPEAKING	READING / UNDERSTANDING	WRITING
LEVEL 0 NO SKILL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No appreciable ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No appreciable ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No appreciable ability
LEVEL 1 ENTRY	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronounce Welsh words, place names, department names, etc. • Greet and understand a greeting. • Use basic every day words and phrases, e.g. thank you, please, excuse me, etc. • Understand / pass on simple verbal requests of a routine / familiar / predictable kind using simple language, e.g. 'May I speak to...' • State simple requests and follow up with extra questions / requests in a limited way 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand simple key words and sentences on familiar / predictable matters relating to my own job area, e.g. on signs, in letters. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill in simple forms, note down simple information, e.g. date and venue of a meeting, Welsh address, etc.
LEVEL 2 FOUNDATION	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the gist of Welsh conversations in work • Respond to simple job-related requests and requests for factual information 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand factual, routine information and the gist of non-routine information on familiar matters 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write short simple notes / letters / messages on a limited range of predictable topics related to my personal experiences or my own job area

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask simple questions and understand simple responses • Express opinions in a limited way as long as the topic is familiar • Understand instructions when simple language is used 	related to my own job area, e.g. in standard letters, leaflets, etc.	
LEVEL 3 INTERMEDIATE	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand much of what is said in an office, meeting, etc. • Keep up a simple conversation on a work related topic, but may need to revert to English to discuss / report on complex or technical information • Answer predictable or factual questions • Take and pass on most messages that are likely to require attention • Offer advice on simple job-related matters 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan texts for relevant information • Understand a fair range of job-related routine and non-routine correspondence, factual literature, etc. when standard language is used. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a detailed / descriptive letter relating to my own job area, but will need to have it checked by a Welsh speaker • Make reasonably accurate notes while someone is talking
LEVEL 4 HIGHER	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep up an extended casual work related conversation or give a presentation with a good degree of fluency and range of expression but may need to revert to English to answer unpredictable questions or explain complex points or technical information 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand information fairly quickly as long as no unusual vocabulary is used and no particularly complex or 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare formal letters of many familiar types such as enquiry, complaint, request and application • Take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or straightforward dictation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work ● Argue for/against a case 	technical information is involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write a report / document relating to my own job area, but will need to have it checked by a Welsh speaker
LEVEL 5 PROFICIENCY	<p style="text-align: center;">I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advise on / talk about routine, non-routine, complex, contentious or sensitive issues related to own experiences ● Give a presentation/demonstration ● Deal confidently with hostile or unpredictable questions ● Carry out negotiations using complex / technical terms ● Give media interviews 	<p style="text-align: center;">I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand complex ideas and information expressed in complex or specialist language in documents, reports correspondence and articles, etc. 	<p style="text-align: center;">I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write letters on any subject ● Write full / accurate notes of meetings while continuing to follow discussions and participate in them ● Write reports / documents with confidence but they may need to be checked for minor errors in terms of spelling and grammar