

Item: 13

Title: Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2024/2025

Gweithredu / Action required -	For approval.
Amseru / Timing	Routine
Argymhelliad / Recommendation	That the Board notes and approves the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2024/2025.
Risg / Risk	<p>Failure to comply with our Welsh Language Standards, including the timely publication of our annual report, presents both regulatory and reputational risks. As a publicly funded body operating in Wales, non-compliance could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undermine public trust, particularly among Welsh-speaking communities • Attract scrutiny from the Welsh Language Commissioner and Welsh Government • Impact service delivery in regions with low Welsh language capacity (e.g. Powys, Gwent, Cwm Taf Morgannwg), especially where engagement relies on face-to-face or pop-up models • Limit our ability to meet the expectations of our Strategic Equality Plan and Annual Plan commitments. <p>Mitigations are in place through our Welsh Language Action Plan, ongoing monitoring by Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and targeted actions to address regional/departmental gaps, staff confidence, and recruitment practices.</p>
Cyllid / Finance	N/A

Amcan Cynllun Corfforaethol / Corporate Plan Objective	<p>Llais Compliance Notice – 1/4/2024</p> <p>Annual Plan: Growing and improving as an organisation</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan: Our People, Our Culture and Our Services (2,3&4)</p>
Cydraddoldeb / Equality	<p>Any major policy or process changes as part of the work relating to the Welsh Language Standards will have their own Integrated Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Encouragement to use the Welsh Language continues through both networks under the Head of EDI & Wellbeing's responsibility</p>
Cyfathrebu / Communications	<p>Please tick one of the following boxes if this activity will have an impact on:</p> <p>Internal: our people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>External: our customers/partners/stakeholders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>External: our organisation's reputation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Cymeradwyaeth / Approval/Clearance	Ben Eaton
Trafodaethau/ Penderfyniadau Blaenorol / Previous discussions/decisions	The Welsh Language Action Plan has been approved and signed-off by both Tim Arwain and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (December 2024)
Awdur/ Cyflwyno / Author/presenting	Charysse Harper & Roxanne Treacy/Ben Eaton
Dyddiad / Date	16 September 2025
Cefndir / Background	
<p>Llais has duties under The Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011.</p> <p>Our 'Compliance Notice' issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office came into effect on 1 April 2024 and details those standards that Llais must adhere to as an organisation to ensure we are meeting our duty.</p> <p>Our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee received a 6-month update following a self-assessment with all regions and departments, which</p>	

included our Board covering language skills and performance against each of the standards.

We are now due to publish our first annual report on our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. We will continue to publish a report once a year, in September, to update on our compliance and progress.

In this report you will find an overview of key areas, for more detailed information please see the final draft report (appendix). Whilst this report will outline some of the key themes and challenges across the organisation, its focus is primarily to reflect on progress and celebrate achievements, set against our legal duties.

Our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has considered the full report and agreed to seek Board approval to publish.

Manylion / Detail

Organisational 'Red Amber Green (RAG) assessment

There are no standards identified as red.

Of the 106 standards, 7 have been identified as amber. Those areas identified as amber have been addressed either in the next steps as outlined in the report or as part of wider work within the organisation e.g., review of recruitment approaches/process, induction that form part of our Annual Plan and Strategic Equality Plan. As at the 6-month stage, some will change over time as processes become more embedded, and risk reduces whilst others will change when specific actions are complete.

Key areas, themes and risks

These have been identified through our self-assessments and quality monitoring of our Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA's) which incorporate our duties under the standards into our considerations around policy (in the broadest sense) and decision-making.

Terminology and responsibility

At the 6-month stage we identified there was an inconsistency in understanding within regions and departments identifying certain standards as a central (national team) responsibility.

For example, standard 69 relates to formulating new policy and reviewing and revising existing policy. Most regions identified this as a central responsibility, when all regions contribute to this.

This is likely due to a broader definition of policy than that traditionally used by Welsh Government (that can relate to policy in its traditional form e.g., staff policy), instead extending to a range of activities and decisions that affect people, eg., engagement activities, processes, procedures etc.

This understanding has increased for some areas of the organisation, however, a further refresher session at the Strategic and Corporate Delivery groups will be delivered to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of terminology and responsibility.

Llais locals

An area of risk relating to our Llais local approach has been identified in regions with few or no Welsh speakers, particularly amongst engagement staff, mainly Cwm Taf Morganwg, Gwent and Powys. This model of engagement, which has seen positive outcomes, uses a more 'pop-up' approach where the use of Eventbrite or other methods of capturing potential Welsh speaking attendees beforehand is less likely to be used.

This approach does not fit easily into the service delivery standards; however, further clarity is being sought from the Welsh Language Commissioner as to whether Llais locals are defined as 'public meetings' and therefore subject to standard 29.

For information standard 29 states 'if you arrange a meeting that is open to the public and at which public participation is allowed, you must ensure that simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English is available at the meeting, and you must orally inform those present in Welsh a) that they are welcome to use the Welsh language, and b) that a simultaneous translation service is available.'

Welsh speakers and learners

As part of our objective to grow as an organisation, the way we have asked our people to report their Welsh language skills assessment has changed. Skills are now updated for each person via our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This is to increase ease of access to this information for monitoring, reporting and our telephony service.

Around 85% of staff have disclosed their Welsh language skills to us.

Welsh Skill Level	Number of Employees	%
0-No Skills/ Dim Sgilliau	50	46.7%
1-Entry/Mynediad	16	15%
2-Foundation/Sylfaen	3	2.8%
3-Intermediate/Canolradd	4	3.7%
4-Higher/Uwch	4	3.7%
5-Proficiency/Hyfedredd	14	13.1%
Not disclosed	16	15%
Total	107	100 %

Difference: Disclosure has increased by 14% since our 6-month self-assessment. It should be noted there may be some non-disclosure due to sickness absence over the reporting period.

Around 19% of our staff with Welsh language skills from levels 1-5 are not confident in using Welsh as part of their role. Most of these have entry or foundation level skills, however, not all. This indicates that we need to do more to help our staff increase their confidence and feel more empowered to use the Welsh language skills they have in the workplace, no matter if they are fluent or not.

One person within the last 12 months took us up on our Welsh language learning offer. Whilst this is lower than we would have liked, we do know that around 8% of our staff are learning Welsh either via an app or online. The Head of EDI and People and Organisational Development Manager will work together over the coming months to increase awareness of what we can offer, considering how we can encourage people to participate and increase their confidence in using the Welsh language.

Future actions

More detail of what plan to achieve in 2025-2026 can be found in the appendix, however, this includes continuing engagement with Welsh speakers, considering how we attract, recruit and retain individuals with a range of skills including Welsh and updating our Welsh language policy.

Actions that sit outside of the report, but will increase assurance are:

- broader monitoring of our compliance will continue as usual throughout the year, the Head of EDI will continue to quality assure Integrated Impact Assessments' produced by the regions and the national team as part of the annual plan activities for projects, Llais locals and public fora to ensure service delivery standards are being considered sufficiently and met.

Support across the organisation outside of the annual plan that covers the other standards continues to be offered and provided e.g., policy reviews, strategy development etc.

- An update to the Integrated Impact Assessment form has been made. This provides clarity of the specific considerations we must make relating to the Welsh Language Standards, and incorporates the development of more detailed guidance of this process so that impacts are thought about comprehensively and considered alongside different characteristics that may overlap which affect people's experiences (intersectionality).

Governance and assurance

Oversight of our Welsh Language Standards compliance is provided by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Committee scrutinises regular updates reports on progress against our Welsh Language Action Plan.

Each region and department is responsible for monitoring their own compliance, with strategic oversight from the Head of EDI and the Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement.

In addition to internal monitoring, feedback from Welsh-speaking service users, captured through engagement activities, complaints advocacy, and public fora, is used to inform our understanding of service delivery and identify areas for improvement. This helps us to make sure our approach remains responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of Welsh-speaking communities.

Conclusion

The results of the self-assessment continue to be positive overall in

terms of our overall compliance. Whilst we still have some areas of growth, our improvement is encouraging considering the age of the organisation and that this is our first year of implementing the standards as the independent body for health and social care in Wales.

The actions for 2025-2026 alongside regular monitoring and reflective practice should increase confidence and provide further assurance in the future.