GWYNEDD COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

For the year 2021-22

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FOREWORD

By Councillor Nia Jeffreys, Gwynedd Council Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, with responsibility for the Welsh Language during 2021-22

"I am very pleased with the work being done within the Council to ensure that the residents of Gwynedd can access all services through the medium of Welsh.

We recognise that the Council doesn't always do everything perfectly, and that there is always room for improvement, but the commitment of the staff across the Council, and their natural understanding of the need to operate bilingually, and to put the Welsh first at all times, is certainly something to be proud of.

The self-assessment arrangements put in place during the year will mean that it will be possible to identify and respond quicker to any barriers to our compliance with the Standards, and plans are already in place to improve some procedures where gaps have been identified.

The challenges that faced the Council following the pandemic are still affecting many services, and there are many challenges ahead as everybody adjusts to new working arrangements. But I am confident that Council officers will carry on ensuring that Welsh services are offered throughout, and that they will protect the rights of the public through those challenges.

The Council are developing several big plans that contribute towards community prosperity, and the prosperity of the Welsh language, and so I am glad that the Council are still leading the way, looking beyond simply providing bilingual services, and putting the needs of the residents of Gwynedd, and the commitment to working in favour of the Welsh language first and foremost.

I am pleased now to be handing over the reins to my fellow Cabinet member, Councillor Menna Jones, as the new Cabinet Member with responsibility for this field, as I know it will be in safe hands."

SUMMARY

New procedures established for hybrid meetings with simultaneous translation

New self-assessment arrangements established for departments in order to monitor compliance with the Standards, and annual reporting arrangements to the language Committee so that individual departments can report on efforts and activities to promote the language further.

99.1% of Council staff have some degree of **Welsh language skills**

91% of staff **reach the language specification of their job** (according to the assessments completed so far)

909 job adverts were published over the year where language skills were essential

Graphics 'Designed by Freepick'

1. Background - the duty of the Standards

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 establishes a legal framework that places a duty on the Council to comply with the standards in relation to the Welsh language. The individual standards explain how organisations are expected to use the Welsh language in different situations.

The duties that derive from the standards mean that the Council should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language in Wales, and the Council should promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language (making it easier for people to use it in their everyday lives).

The Language Standards are divided into five fields:

- service delivery
- policy making
- action
- promotion
- record keeping

This Council received a compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner under Section 4 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, on 30 September 2015. This notice specified the precise standards the Council is required to comply with and on 30 March 2016, 147 standards came into effect, with four promotion standards coming into effect on 30 March 2017.

The Standards that the Council must comply with in their entirety, along with a copy of the Council's current Language Policy, can be viewed by going onto the Standards and Policy section of the corporate website:

https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Strategies-and-policies/Language-and-equality/Welsh-Language-Standards-and-Policy.aspx

2. Ensuring Compliance with the Standards

The Council's Language Policy is its main method of acting in accordance with the Language Standards and ensuring Welsh-medium services for the people of Gwynedd.

The current Language Policy was adopted in 2016 and follows the principle that Welsh and English should be treated equally in the delivery of services, that the language choice of individuals should be respected, and that every opportunity should be taken to promote the Welsh language beyond providing a bilingual service and be proactive in giving the Welsh language a prominent platform.

Awareness of the requirement to comply with the language policy is high amongst the Council services. The vast majority of Council staff are able to speak Welsh, and a large number have fluent Welsh language skills, which means that the use of Welsh as the language of work is now natural practice, and we can proactively and by default provide a Welsh language service. The need to consider the Welsh Language, and the Council's role in maintaining opportunities to use Welsh in our communities, is also a natural practice, and no service is planned and developed without considering the need to conduct them bilingually.

The language policy has been revised over the last year (there was a little delay with the time-schedule due to other pandemic priorities) and we hope that it will be adopted soon in 2022, once the new Council has been established. The Policy not only sets specific conditions to ensure that we respond to the requirements of the Standards, but also explains how the Council and its staff go beyond the requirements of the Standards and gives the Welsh Language prominence in all its work. This includes its continuous commitment to operate internally through the medium of Welsh and to ensure the proactive offer by providing through the medium of Welsh first, wherever this is possible. For example, the policy clauses that deal with meetings support the fundamental principle that meetings should be held in Welsh, with simultaneous translation facilities to enable non-Welsh speakers to fully participate, rather than providing translation to ensure the rights of Welsh speakers.

Several other measures have been made during the year to ensure compliance, including establishing a new self-assessment system, and there is a developmental programme underway that will seek to raise staff awareness of the Council's obligations, starting with the adoption of the amended Language Policy during the first few months of the new Council. Further information regarding the developmental work completed in the next section the report.

3. Reflecting on the year - 2021-22

The challenges the Council faced during the year 2020-21 continued to a great extent in the year 2021-22, with the impact of the pandemic continuing to be felt, and staff and departments have worked hard to maintain services while responding to remote working and staffing challenges.

Once more, the fact that the Council has been able to secure the bilingual service throughout, is a clear indication of the success of the language policy, and of the way in which operating through the medium of the Welsh language is embedded in all the Council's work.

We now face a completely new way of working in the medium to long term, with many staff choosing to continue to work from home, and others returning to the offices. This creates a new situation for us to respond to, and consequently we have also had the opportunity to look again at our monitoring arrangements, and how we inform and remind staff of their commitments in terms of the Welsh Language.

The Commissioner's new self-assessment system has also enabled us to take a step back and look at some of our processes. As a result, there are a number of plans being implemented.

3.1 Actions to strengthen compliance

- **Simultaneous translation and hybrid meetings** (Standards 23 - 33)

Last year we reported on the essential work of ensuring simultaneous translation in virtual meetings, and the Council's success in holding Council committee meetings completely bilingually throughout lockdown. We also reported on the challenge faced with some other public organisations who did not permit the use of Zoom software. This meant that the Council had to organise and provide simultaneous translation on behalf of others and that at times the right of individuals to use the Welsh Language in meetings had been affected as no translation service was available to non-Welsh speakers. These challenges have continued in 2021-22, however, the Council itself has managed to secure simultaneous translation where required in all meetings held with members of the public, and has also managed to webcast several virtual live meetings, in both languages.

The obstacles with external meetings led to a call from Gwynedd Council's Language Committee on the Welsh Government to lead by example to promote the Welsh Language by offering meetings where it is possible to participate in Welsh or English by default, particularly as the technology enables this to be done with ease. Pressure was also placed to get the interpretation provision to work for Welsh and English languages within Microsoft Teams.

An additional challenge was introduced during 2021-22, as a result of longer term changes in our ways of working. A need was identified to develop the ability to hold hybrid meetings, with simultaneous translation provision, that would ensure that individuals who attend the Chamber in person or join a meeting remotely can participate easily, and are able to get access to a simultaneous translation service where necessary.

It was a challenge that took more time than expected to resolve as a result of the need to continue with Covid measures and remote working for an extended period, as well as collaboration with a national company who are trying to provide a hybrid service (without interpretation!) to a large number of authorities and business across the world. Through the commitment of officers from the Democratic Service, Language and Translation unit, arrangements have been established for the main meeting chamber at the headquarters in Caernarfon, to allow easy remote access to ensure that it is possible for meetings to continue to be held in Welsh with translation support. There is further work to refine the service, looking at providing simultaneous translation from different rooms or by using mobile equipment as the next step.

- **Impact Assessment** (Standards 88-93)

Work continues to refine and improve the Council's impact assess arrangements across the fields where there are statutory responsibilities for impact assessment. It was previously reported that an integrated impact assessment tool was being developed regionally for equality, language and the socio-economic duty. The Council has been developing a digital assessment based on this integrated assessment, and has also established a new system of submitting the assessments to the Council's Cabinet.

The Welsh language is a fundamental part of the priorities and service provision of the Council. No decision are made on changes to services, or on developing strategic plans, without the Welsh language and providing opportunities to use the Welsh language being a fundamental part of those plans.

We have seen an increase in the number of assessments submitted to the Cabinet, and that are being prepared for plans and projects, but there is still room for improvement, and we will work to raise awareness of the need to undertake timely and appropriate assessments over the next year.

- **Awarding grants policy** (Standard 94)

We have reviewed the Council's guidance on awarding grants during the year. By now, the Council does not allocate many grants directly (it is more likely to allocate money on behalf of other bodies such as the Welsh Government, and follows the conditions set out by those financiers), however, it was seen that general, clearer guidelines needed to be set for staff on the linguistic matters that need to be considered when allocating financial support. A policy document has been drafted, and an internal consultation has been carried out on its contents and implementation. This document will be shared officially with staff and the public as an appendix to the amended Language Policy during 2022.

- **Language Awareness** (Standards 132, 133)

A language awareness e-module is available to every member of staff and is included in the core training modules on the intranet. Every new member of staff will be referred to these core modules as part of the induction arrangements. We had not held face-to-face awareness sessions since before

the lockdown, and because of the changes in working patterns it was felt that there was a need to adapt training modules to be able to provide sessions on-line, via Microsoft Teams or Zoom.
Officers from the Language and Scrutiny Unit and the Learning and Development team worked together during the year to adapt face-to-face training to on-line, trialling the new training with staff from the Test and Trace service. This face-to-face training will be targeted and tailored to specific services, and the e-module will continue to be promoted as part of the core training.

The Language and Scrutiny Unit and the Learning and Development team also contributed to national work during the year to develop a language awareness module for elected members.

- **Complaints Procedure** (Standards 156, 162, 168)

We will deal with any language complaints by following the corporate complaints procedure. Usually, the Language Advisers deal with any complaints regarding compliance with the Standards and Language Policy, to ensure consistency and effective monitoring, however, complaints can be received from individual departments, by the corporate complaints officer, or by the Language and Scrutiny Unit. In order to ensure that the arrangements are clear to the public, and that the procedures and accountability are clear to staff, a new document has been created and shared explaining the procedure for dealing with language complaints specifically, and how it links with the corporate procedure. The document has been created and will be published soon in 2022 on the Council's website.

- **Self-assessment arrangements**

During the year a new self-assessment form was introduced to the Council departments to improve ownership and awareness of the requirements of the Standards. The departments have to submit annual assessments to the Language and Scrutiny Unit, in order to assist them to identify gaps, to develop a programme of interventions, and to be able to respond effectively to the requirement for a corporate self-assessment by the Language Commissioner.

- **Intranet for staff and elected members**

During the year, new pages were developed on the Council's intranet - one for internal staff and one for elected members - to include information about everything associated with the language field. It will act as one central place where staff and elected members can find information about the Language Policy, the Standards, the Council's language strategy and get guidance and templates that may be used in their work. We hope that this source of information will raise awareness and will strengthen compliance with some standards by ensuring that information and guidance are accessible and available to all. The page on the staff intranet will also link to the equality page, and the language learning and development page, that includes further information regarding impact assessment arrangements and the wide support available to develop the workforce's language skills.

- **Language Page of the public website**

A specific page has also been created for the public website, that brings different elements and sources of information regarding the language together in one place. The Welsh language (welsh.gov). We hope that this page will make it easier for the public to find information about the Council's priorities and obligations in terms of promoting the Welsh Language, and will develop as a source of information and resources on how to increase the use of Welsh within our communities.

- **Responding to collective correspondence** (Standard 4)

Work has started on reviewing the IT systems that send collective correspondence to the public to ensure, amongst other matters, that they are in compliance with the requirement in Standard 4. Several discussions have taken place during the year to understand exactly what some of the barriers are with IT systems, and where changes will be needed to ensure compliance. This work will continue in 2022.

- **Statements on documents** (Standards 7, 49, 50A)

Following the Commissioner's monitoring meeting, we set about to draft a number of templates for staff to use with documents, letters and e-mails, in order to comply with the requirements of standards 7, 49, 50A. The statements have been shared via e-mail, and they will also be available on the intranet for easy access by all, and reminders will also be shared regularly to increase the number of staff who use them.

- **Public use of services** (promoting services available in Welsh, standard 81)

In order to try and increase the use of services through the medium of Welsh we are collaborating on a First Contact Services project with our other partners in the public sector via the Welsh Language Sub-group of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board. The purpose of the project is to encourage the people of Gwynedd to speak Welsh when they come into reception areas (at the Council and other partners). A company was commissioned to create an assessment of the public's language choice when using services in 12 traditional receptions in Gwynedd and Anglesey and to look into possible interventions in order to encourage more people to use our services through the medium of Welsh. This work will continue in 2022.

3.2 Challenges in moving forward

A combination of factors have once again made this last year challenging. Adapting to new working arrangements presents a number of challenges in moving forward. Here is a summary of some of the matters we will address during next year to strengthen compliance and strengthen the Council's commitment to promote the Welsh Language.

- **Assessing the impact of large strategic schemes**

A number of large strategic schemes are currently being implemented by the Council and this contributes in several ways to sustaining the Welsh Language as a community language. These include schemes in the areas of Housing, Community Regeneration and Tourism. It will be essential that appropriate impact assessments are undertaken of these schemes as they are developed, but also that we develop measures and indicators that will enable us as a Council to monitor the impact and influence of these schemes as they are implemented, individually and jointly.

Considering how to incorporate these plans into the new language strategy will be a priority over the coming year.

- **IT Systems**

The increasing shift towards providing more on-line services means more challenges, especially when there is a need to buy-in specific systems. We have reported on these challenges many times to the Commissioner, and we continue to work to try and ensure the best provisions, which respond to the public's requirements and maintains the standards and requirements of the Council's Policy. We have also started the process of reviewing the Council's older systems, to ensure that the Welsh Language always has a prominent place, and that changes are made to improve the proactive offer as systems are renewed or re-commissioned.

- **Increasing staff skills and confidence**

One of the challenges we face is how the Council will be able to ensure effective opportunities to learn and practise Welsh language skills as the working model changes in the long term? As the Language Designations project moves to the next step, namely increasing the number of staff who complete the self-assessment, and supporting and monitoring the progress of learners or staff who have not yet attained the language designation of their posts, our attention will move from assessing to offering appropriate support to inceasing confidence and developing skills.

As the situation with the pandemic improves, and the work pressure on our staff gradually reduces, we will need to give some attention to the language skills of staff in these services. The fact that a variety of courses and learning methods are now available is a great benefit when trying to address this challenge, as well as the ability to commission special courses. The courses organised over the last two years have offered valuable opportunities for us to assess what works for different cohorts

of staff. We hope to take advantage of this information to continue to organise suitable and effective courses for staff in the future.

We will also look at developing our Language Champion and Cyfeillion Cymraeg schemes, to ensure that informal support is available for staff within the departments to increase their use and develop their confidence. With many staff still working from home, the lack of informal opportunities for learners to practise their Welsh that was identified during lockdown, continues to exist to some extent, and we are aware that we need to look at new development opportunities, that fit into the new hybrid working model.

We will also be looking at how we can support Managers with matters such as holding internal language meetings and support new non-Welsh speaking staff to take a full part in meetings and to develop their understanding. This will include developing guidance on holding bilingual meetings effectively.

- **Recruitment**

A new arrangement was established during the year where every department within the Council takes it in turn to submit a report to the Language Committee on the implementation of the Standards and their efforts to boost and promote the Welsh Language. Several departments reported recruitment difficulties and the fact that it was getting more difficult to recruit Welsh speakers to posts. This is obviously a concern in terms of the Standards, as the lack of staff with the appropriate language skills is a risk to our ability to provide default Welsh medium services. There were some expected work fields amongst those that were highlighted, such as the care workforce, but gaps were also identified in more specialist fields - engineers, environmental officers etc. - and we will need to ensure that this matter is addressed during the year as part of the Council's plans on workforce development.

4. REPORTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF STANDARD 170

4.1 Standard 151: Reporting on the number of staff members who can speak Welsh

We continue to use our new Language Skills System to collect our data, which gives us a better analysis of the skills our employees have. The information gathered by the system answers two main questions:

	Question	Answer
1	Does the member of staff meet the requirements of his/her post?	Yes / No
2	What is the member of staff's language level for Listening and Speaking, Reading and Understanding, and Writing?	No Skills, Entry, Basic, Intermediate, Higher, Proficiency

The information for **question 1** is gathered in two ways:

- **by Line Managers**: during meetings with managers across the Council, we ask them to note whether or not, in their opinion, their staff meet the language requirements of their posts.
- **through staff self-assessments**: staff complete a questionnaire which, based on their responses to the questions, calculates their level for Listening and Speaking, Reading and Understanding, and Writing. Those levels are compared with the Language Specifications of the post, and on this basis it is calculated whether or not the member of staff meets the requirements of their post.

The information for **question 2** is gathered through staff self-assessments.

The task of collecting the assessments is ongoing, so we report only on the number of staff who have been assessed. Therefore, this number will increase and change as we continue with the work over the next year.

As we gather more and more assessments, the system's ability to provide us with valuable information increases, and we can now begin to identify patterns by analysing the responses to the language self-assessment. For example, if a number of staff from one service is seen to be requesting language improvement courses, this can be responded to proactively.

All information is automatically gathered on the Language Skills System, enabling us to produce live reports at any time. The data recording element of the system is in place and operational, but we are continuing to develop reports that will produce the most useful data.

NOTE:

- **Every post** within the Council has now been verified to ensure that the language designation is correct for the post and continue to be reviewed regularly.
- **Every new post** has to follow a specific system to impose the correct language specification.
- **Every post** includes ***essential*** language requirements, i.e. some element of language skills are required for each post in the Council.

- The work of gathering information about individuals (staff members) is ongoing work, and the figures noted will never completely reflect the actual number of staff employed by the Council. However, it is aimed to obtain the most accurately correct picture of the workforce's skills at any time. Staff turnover, changes in jobs, restructuring and individuals who hold more than one job within the Council are all factors that affect data accuracy.
- We do not report on staff who are part of the following departments (although they are employed by the Council) - **GwE, North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent, North Wales Economic Ambition Board** - as they are all joint-committees and are therefore not accountable to the requirements of the Standards. We do not include school staff in our data either, as they are appointed directly by the schools or leisure centre staff as they come under the arm's length company, Byw'n Iach. However, both these services participate in the project, and undertake a self-assessment. There is also a requirement to assess and monitor skills that is part of the Byw'n Iach contractual commitment with the Council.

Skills Report:

The following information is correct at the time of writing the report and is extracted from our Language Skills System.

Overview of the situation

Number of staff members (on the Council's payroll)*	**3822**	
Total assessments gathered (Line Manager Assessments and Self-assessments)	**2825**	74%
Number of Self-assessments gathered only (Question 2)*	**2633**	69%

***** does not include staff from GwE, Trunk Road Agent, Byw'n Iach, North Wales Economic Ambition Board or Gwynedd schools' staff

Staff and Language Designations:

Staff who reach the Language Designations of their post	**2584**	91%
Staff who do not reach the Language Specification of their post	**241**	9%

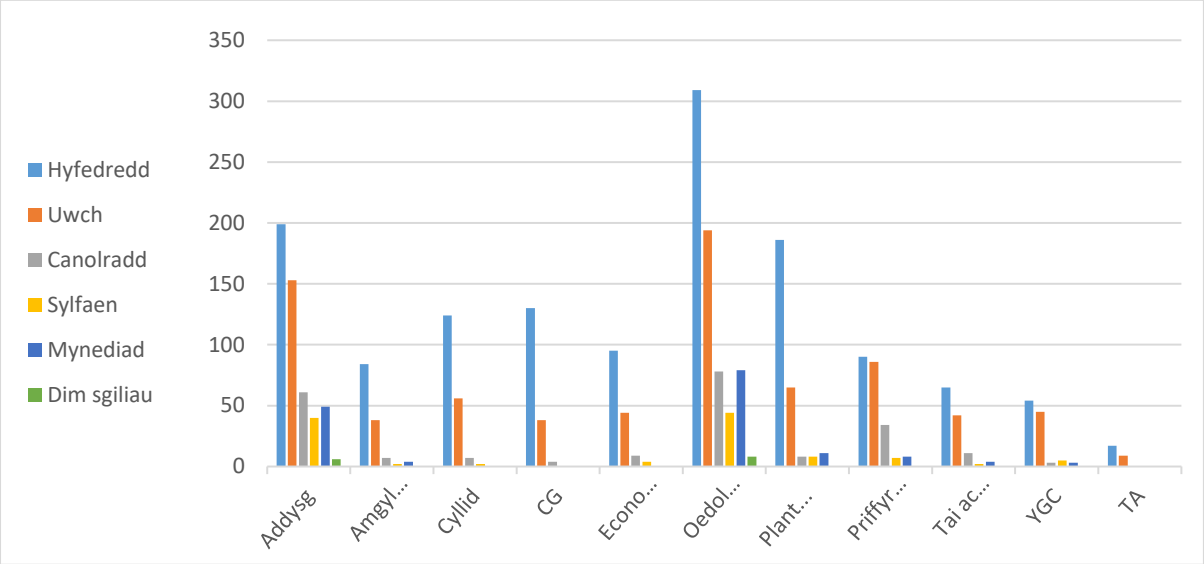
Overview of language Levels of staff:

Staff who possess Welsh language skills (of any kind)	**2799**	99.1%
Staff with no Welsh language skills at all	**26**	0.9%

Language Levels of staff per department:

The following graph illustrates the language skills of the workforce as currently assessed. It can be seen that the majority of the workforce possess Higher or Proficency skills.

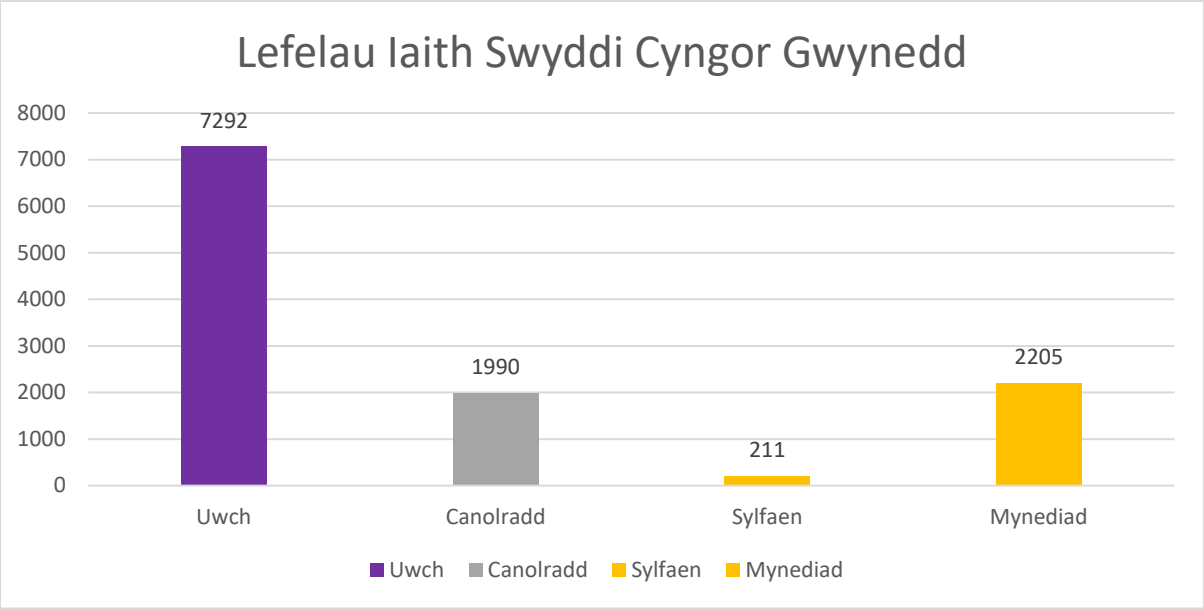
*For convenience, the names of the departments have been abbreviated in the graph below. Their names can be seen in full on the next page.



	Education (not including schools)	Environment	Finance	Corporate Support	Economy and Community	Adults, Health and Well-being	Children and Supporting Families	Highways and Municipal	Housing and Property	Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC)	Corporate Leadership Team
Proficiency	199	84	124	130	95	309	186	90	65	54	17
Higher	153	38	56	38	44	194	65	86	42	45	9
Intermediate	61	7	7	4	9	78	8	34	11	3	0
Basic	40	2	2	0	4	44	8	7	2	5	0
Entry	49	4	0	0	0	79	11	8	4	3	0
No skills	6	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0

Language Levels of posts - number of posts across the Council that have been designated per level:

The requirement levels of one job can vary from one skill to another, i.e. the Speaking and Listening level requirements may be higher than the Written level requirements. As a result, we count the Speaking and Listening level as the 'main level' for the purpose of reporting on post levels as this is normally the highest level.



We can also look at this analysis on a department level, and this enables us to see the jobs where the lower levels have been identified. A number of jobs in the Highways department, for example, are ones where higher skills in Welsh are not required because there is less direct and face-to-face contact with the public. We can take a sample of these posts at any time and verify the post's designation.

5.2 Standard 152: Reporting on the number of staff who attended Welsh-medium training

You must keep a record, for each financial year of — (a) the number of members of staff who attended training courses offered by you in Welsh (in accordance with standard 128), and (b) if a Welsh version of a course was offered by you in accordance with standard 128, the percentage of the total number of staff who attended that version of the course.

Standard 128: You must provide training in Welsh in the following areas, if you provide such training in English —

(a) recruitment and interviewing;
(b) performance management;
(c) complaints and disciplinary procedures;
(d) induction;
(e) dealing with the public; and
(f) health and safety.

All the Council's central training programme is provided in Welsh. A Welsh and English version of some courses are provided separately where there is a demand, but normally we seek to ensure that all training is Welsh-medium or bilingual.
English-only training will be offered when training is required in specialist fields, and the services of specialist trainers bought in. Even then, every effort will be made when commissioning services to obtain bilingual materials, and every opportunity will be taken to attempt to influence national providers.

General Training

The information below is noted for each department within the Council
ALL DEPARTMENTS (except Byw'n Iach, Trunk Road Agent, GwE, *North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Consortium, North Wales Bibliographic Unit, Councillors)*

Number of individual events - **972**
Number of titles – individual courses (level of Post/Organisation) - **180**

TRAINING EVENTS	NUMBER	UNIQUE ATTENDEES
Welsh	524	1612
English	402	1032
Bilingual	46	159

The change since 2019:

	NUMBER OF EVENTS			NUMBER OF ATTENDEES		
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Welsh	463	289	524	1805	1044	1612
English	225	305	402	1021	796	1032
Bilingual	222	92	46	765	453	159

Comparing these figures with what was reported in 2020-21, we can see that more training sessions were held during the year, and that a greater number of Welsh medium sessions were held. The numbers have returned to something similar to the levels reported in the 2019-20 report. The number of attendees (staff members) who have chosen Welsh medium training has also increased during the year, but it is not as high as the number reported in 2019-20. We will be discussing these figures with the Learning and Development team to see what encouragement can be given to staff to choose the Welsh medium courses, and how we can take advantage of the change to holding more sessions on-line to conduct training sessions in Welsh with translation facilitates, and reducing the number of English only sessions offered.

Standard 128 –
68 INDIVIDUALS ATTENDED THE INDUCTION WORKSHOP IN THE PERIOD 01.04.21 - 31.03.22
(9 events were held - 1 of these specifically for Trunk Road staff)
105 received it in Welsh (91%)
11 received it in English (9%)

Recently we decided to hold the Croeso workshops on Zoom to ensure translation provision for those who need it. This means that there is no need to hold 'corporate' sessions in English-only.

Training provided by the Council for the BYW'N IACH Service by the central learning and development service:
Number of individual events between 01.04.21 and 31.03.22 – **39**

Number of titles between 01.04.21 and 31.03.22 - **11**

TRAINING EVENTS	NUMBER	UNIQUE ATTENDEES
Welsh	21	29
English	15	40
Bilingual	3	3

5.3 Standard 154: Reporting on job categorisation

You must keep a record, in relation to each financial year of the number of new and vacant posts which were categorised (in accordance with standard 136) as posts where—

(a) Welsh language skills are essential;
(b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post;
(c) Welsh language skills are desirable; or
(ch) Welsh language skills are not necessary.

Welsh language skills are essential	909
Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post	**0**
Welsh language skills are desirable	**0**
Welsh language skills are not necessary	**0**

Every post advertised by the Council includes the ability to speak Welsh as an **essential** skill.

Every post is advertised with a statement that notes that Welsh is the Council's operational language, and applicants will need to possess language skills that have been noted in the job description (i.e. that Welsh language skills are essential). The exact level of oral, written and reading and comprehension skills needed are noted in the Person Specification for the post.

If it is not possible to appoint someone with the correct skills after advertising once, managers can request for the wording of the statement to be adapted to encourage new applicants and to allow the appointment of someone that has not yet met the requirements, but who are willing to commit to learn. It will be possible to include a clause within a contract to note the commitment and a training programme will be agreed jointly with the manager and the Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer. The language designation of the post **will not** be amended, therefore the above requirement that the Welsh Language is essential for each post will continue.

The new posts system has been developed and launched towards the end of the year, and officers in the Language and Scrutiny Unit and the Learning and Development Team (who are responsible for the language designations project), have collaborated with the project officers to ensure that specific questions are built into the system to enable us to analyse more detailed information about linguistic considerations within the future recruitment process. This will include information about how many jobs are advertised on the different language levels.

5.4 Reporting on language complaints

The number of complaints you received during the year that related to your compliance with the operating standards with which you had a duty to comply.

In accordance with the Council's accountability and internal reporting arrangements, any complaints or enquiries about services received in relation to the Standards or the Council's Language Policy will be recorded by the Language and Scrutiny Unit, and reported to the Council's Language Committee. A full report was provided on complaints for the year March 2021 to March 2022 to the April 2022 meeting of the Language Committee.

Number of pre-investigation enquiries received, or required actions sent by the Welsh Language Comissioner: 3

Training for election officers:
An enquiry was received by the Commissioner about training for polling station officers. They had received a complaint from a member of the public about a lack of Welsh language training. It was possible to confirm that the training was not part of the Council's responsibility. The training comes under the role of the Returning Officer, and therefore does not come under the requirements of the Standards. This response, and the role of the Returning Officer being independent of the Council, was accepted and therefore did not lead to an investigation.

Libraries' Self-service:
An enquiry was received in February 2022 about the Library service's use of photocopiers and printers. The Commissioner's office wanted to know how these machines were used by the public and whether the software on them was available in Welsh. A response was sent confirming that the photocopiers were available for public use, but did not operate as self-service, and that they had to be operated by a member of staff. They did not therefore come under the Standards' requirements for self-service machines.

Monitoring Compliance

A monitoring meeting was held with the Commissioner's liaison officer in January 2022. This followed the completion of a corporate self-assessment exercise in the summer of 2021. The Council have been given a number of actions following the meeting, to improve compliance with the Standards. The Language Unit have also begun a new self-assessment process within the Council, with a departmental self-assessment being shared with all heads of departments that will feed into our next corporate self-assessment in the summer. These self-assessments will enable us to identify gaps and areas for improvement more effectively.

Investigations completed bye the Welsh Language Comissioner during th year: 1

1. **Investigation CS018 – Advertisement for the Post of Chief Executive**

It was judged that the Council had failed to comly with Standards 136A an 137 in advertising for the post of Chief Excecutive.

The investigation was realting to the advertisement of the post of Chief Executive, and the fact that the Council had not included details of language requirements in the advertisement, and had not invited applicants to submit applications in Welsh.

The requirements of the Standards mean that all job advertisements must state whether language requirements are essential, desirable or that there is a need to learn when appointed.

A principle has already been set within the Council's Language Policy and Recruitment Policy that Welsh language skills are an essential requirement for all posts within the Council, and the Language Designations project has gone to great lengths to ensure that the exact level of language skills are set out in the Person Specification document.

This particular advertisement, however, followed a different procedure to the usual, and did not include Job Description and Person Specification documents as usual adverts do. A language designation for the post had been recorded in the jobs system, but had not been included in the advertisement. Also, although the information pack shared with potential applicants mentioned the Council's culture and operating principles, it did not explicitly state anywhere the need for Welsh language skills. It was believed that the reference to the culture of the Council and the county had made the need to be able to communicate in Welsh very clear.

The final ruling acknowledged that this post had been advertised in a different way to the usual, and that this occasion did not reflect the Council's normal procedures. The Council was, however, asked to make changes to the Recruitment Policy to note that any posts advertised through different methods would meet the same requirements and would ensure that the language requirements and invitation to submit applications in Welsh were clearly evident.

COMPLAINTS and ENQUIRIES REGARDING A SERVICE OR RELATING TO THE COUNCIL'S LANGUAGE POLICY

Department	The number of complaints	The matter relating to the complaint
Finance	**1**	A Council Tax letter using the English version of an address
Economy	**1**	A lack of use of the Welsh language by businesses
Highways and Municipal	**1**	An English-only leaflet was received by the public