Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

For the year ending 31 March 2023

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

FOREWORD

By Councillor Menna Trenholme, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support in Cyngor Gwynedd with responsibility for the Welsh language during 2022-23

I am very proud of the work that has been achieved within the Council to ensure that Gwynedd residents are able to use all of our services through the medium of Welsh. We can take pride in this report which bears witness to the good work that is being done across all Council departments.

The new Language Policy was adopted in 2022 and a thorough review of the previous policy led to a number of changes that have strengthened the commitment of the Council to the Welsh language, as well as the guidance given to staff, ensuring that we continue to pro-actively offer Welsh language services to our residents.

An important statement was made when adopting the new policy, with the Council taking an important step to raise the public status of the language, and to promote the use of the Welsh language beyond its services and in the community, by deciding to call itself by its Welsh name only, Cyngor Gwynedd from now on, and also to only use the Welsh versions of place names and street names when communicating with the public.

We are currently planning the promotional work for the coming years, with the work of developing and establishing the Council's language strategy for the next five years already started. A public consultation on the content of the new draft strategy has recently been held and I look forward to sharing the content of the final strategy in the coming months.

I was also very pleased to see the Gwynedd Language Forum being established under the Council's guidance, to create a space for discussion and joint-planning between partners and key stakeholders as we go about promoting and increasing opportunities to use the Welsh language across the county.

The Council has a number of other plans in the pipeline that will priorities community prosperity and the prosperity of the language in the future. I am therefore pleased that Cyngor Gwynedd is continuing to lead the way, and to look beyond bilingual provision, by putting both the needs of residents and the commitment to operate in the interest of the Welsh language first.

SUMMARY

99.4% = number of Council staff who possess Welsh language **skills** on any level

93% = number of staff with foundation skills level or above

91% = number of staff who reach their post's language designation

833 jobs advertised during the year with Welsh language skills as **essential** (all the jobs advertised).

Research commissioned to develop an understanding of service user language practices.

Every public meeting is held in Welsh with translation available by default.

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, 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 during 2022-23

2.1 Reflecting on the year

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

The latest Language Policy was adopted during 2022, with a number of changes made to the previous policy to provide better clarity for staff on how to operate in different situations, especially those that are not directly or clearly covered by the requirements of the Standards, and also to strengthen the Council's commitment to promoting use of the Welsh language through its services and in the community.

In adopting the new policy, a decision was also made that the Council would refer to itself by its Welsh name only from now on, i.e. Cyngor Gwynedd, and would also only use the Welsh versions of place names and street names when communicating with the public. This is an important step in raising the language's public status and to be proactive in giving prominence to the Welsh language.

The awareness of the need to act in accordance with the Policy is fairly good within Council services, and the monitoring arrangements are improving year on year. Annual self-assessment arrangements are now in place, with every department within the Council having to report on compliance to the Language and Scrutiny Unit and to the Council's Language Committee. During the year, we have also looked at how we share information and resources with colleagues and have created a new page on the Council's internal website to share information with staff on matters relating to the Language Policy and the Standards. Resources such as a copy of the Council's new Welsh language logo and templates for the statements that we are required to include in documents and correspondence have been placed on the intranet for staff to easily access when required. Since the publication of the new Language Policy, we have been sharing messages with staff regularly to remind them of the requirements in different fields, and thus strengthening the services' compliance with the Standards.

The vast majority of Cyngor Gwynedd staff are able to speak Welsh, and a large number have fluent Welsh language skills, which means that the use of Welsh as the daily 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 decisions are made on changes to services or developing strategic plans without the Welsh language, and developing opportunities to use the Welsh language, being a core part of those plans.

The Council continues to lead the way, and go beyond the requirements of the Standards, in the practice of setting language requirements when recruiting, and also by conducting all of its public meetings in Welsh. The Democracy and Language Service, which includes the translation unit, has worked hard to overcome the obstacles faced when moving to holding on-line and hybrid meetings over the last two years, and have ensured that the running and the language medium of the Council's public meetings were not affected in any way, and that simultaneous translation facilities were available at all times to enable non-Welsh speakers to participate in full.

During the last year, a student at Bangor University has begun a PhD research project, which will look at people's attitudes towards using Welsh-medium services. We hope that this research will improve our understanding of how we can influence decisions and encourage more people to use the Welsh-medium services (especially the digital/on-line ones) that are provided by the Council.

The Council's language advisers are also members of the Welsh Language Sub-group which is part of the Public Services Board structure. A project was completed on behalf of the Sub-group during the year which looked at how the bodies seek to influence the public's use of language within front-line services. A number of receptions within the Council and in other public service partner organisations were chosen to be part of the research. As a result, a staff training resource was developed with suggestions for staff to encourage the public to increase their use of the Welsh language.

As we looked at developing and establishing the Council's next language Strategy, a language forum was established for the county, facilitated by the Language and Scrutiny Unit, that will enable us to be aware of partners' work in the area of language promotion, and to enable deliberate and constructive discussions and joint-planning between partners and key stakeholders in the work of promoting and increasing opportunities to use the Welsh language across the county.

A new in-house forum has also been established during the year to supervise the work of the Adults and Children's departments in the context of the More than Just Words framework. Officers from the Language and Scrutiny Unit attend the forum to ensure that the requirements of the Standards are also highlighted and implemented alongside the requirements of More than Just Words.

Specific actions taken to strengthen compliance

- **Adoption of a new Language Policy**

The amended language policy was adopted formally in October 2022.

A **Complaints Procedure** (as required by Standards 156,162,168) and a policy document on the **Grants Allocation and the Welsh Language** procedure (required by Standard 94) were published during the year to provide specific guidance to staff on those matters.

Officers in the Economy and Community Department and the language advisers have been working together to amend grant clauses and conditions in order to ensure the maximum benefit, and that any money that is allocated by the Council leads to a positive impact on Welsh. The conditions and the scoring system that have been developed for Arfor 2 funds are a good example of this, and are used across four counties in the Welsh language strongholds.

- **Promotional Strategy** (Promotional standards 145, 146)

Cyngor Gwynedd's current Welsh language strategy was published in 2018. We are now in the process of reviewing the Council's promotional strategy and forming a new strategy for 2023 onwards. An amended strategy was drafted during January - March 2023, and the consultation draft was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 28 March 2023.

- **Policy Making Standards** (Standards 88-93)

There has been some delay in releasing and using the digital version of the integrated impact assessment, but we are still seeing an increase in the number of assessments being submitted with Cabinet reports, using the interim paper version.

Following an investigation by the Commissioner, and also in light of a tribunal case decision and further guidance from the Commissioner, we have been working on developing our compliance and the understanding of the exact expectations in this field.

Specific steps were taken to improve compliance with Standards 91,92 and 93, which set out the expectation in terms of seeking the opinion of the public when consulting, with standard questions drawn up and shared with the Communications service, who are responsible for coordinating a large number of the Council's consultations and engagement processes.

We have also shared a brief guidance and standard questions on the intranet, and we will be amending the guidance as required and as our understanding of the Commissioner's definition of the Standards develops.

The fact that we receive regular enquiries for advice on consultation questions and the contents of the impact assessments demonstrates that awareness of this requirement is improving.

- **Responding to collective correspondence** (Standard 4) - IT Systems Review

Work is continuing on a review of the Council's IT systems to verify that they comply with the requirements of the Standards and to promote the use of the Welsh language among the public.

The main focus at the moment is on ensuring that every system that sends correspondence to the public is able to use Welsh addresses only, using Cyngor Gwynedd's Welsh name and logo, and comply with Standard 4.

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

A number of measures were taken to comply with these standards during the last year. Standard templates have been created for the different types of statements needed. Messages were sent to staff raising awareness of the need to act and include a statement on four separate occasions during the year.

As this is a requirement that we have only just began to implement and monitor, we acknowledge that it will take time for awareness to grow and for the use of the statements to be mainstreamed. In the meantime, we will carry out occasional checks to monitor the use of statements, and take any further steps as needed to remind staff.

3. Challenges in moving forward - matters requiring attention

- **Implementing and raising awareness of the requirements of the Standards**

There is a good understanding of the need to provide bilingual services, and the importance of the proactive offer for the public, but it takes time for any requirements of practices that go beyond this to become embedded.

Reminding staff of the expectations of the Language Policy and the requirements of the Standards will be continuous work. The expectations on staff in terms of workload and the need to comply with different statutory and corporate duties are increasing all the time, and it is becoming increasingly challenging to ensure that every field receives the attention it requires. Regular staff turnover is also a challenge, with the new hybrid working arrangements, where teams are not always together in person, meaning that it is more challenging to convey messages effectively to staff.

We will need to think creatively of ways to get these messages to staff to ensure that the requirements are implemented in full and consistently.

- **Language Strategy**

Ensuring effective monitoring arrangements for the new strategy is crucial, along with developing ownership of the plans and priorities among Council departments. The departments already present annual reports to the Language Committee on the implementation of the Standards and the Policy, but they will be expected to provide more information and data on plans that contribute to the aims of the new strategy from now on. The work programme that will be formed for the strategy will facilitate this.

- **Training**

Most of the training that is provided directly to staff by the Council is held in Welsh, with some courses available in English also. We also endeavour to combine sessions and provide them bilingually, if this is possible.

Nevertheless, this is an area where we have seen changes in the data over recent years and we will need to keep an eye on it to make sure that we give every possible opportunity and encouragement to our staff to follow courses through the medium of Welsh, and that they also receive every possible opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills. Over the next months, we will be working on developing the Welsh language training provision, to ensure that Council staff have the best possible skills and knowledge to be able to offer Welsh language services to the public.

The language awareness module is one of the mandatory e-modules that every member of employed staff is expected to complete, therefore we will expect to see an increase in the number who complete it over the next year. Work is afoot corporately to improve the rates of completion for these core modules, and also to review the content of the e-module to ensure that it is up-to-date and current.

4. Reporting in Accordance with the Requirements of Standard 170

Reporting Requirements of Standard 170:

(1) *You must produce a report (an "annual report"), in Welsh, in relation to each financial year, which deals with the way in which you have complied with the policy making standards with which you were under a duty to comply during that year.*

(2) *The annual report must include the following information (where relevant, to the extent that you have a duty to comply with the standards referred to) -*

(a) number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question (based on the records you kept in accordance with Standard 151);

(b) number of members of staff who attended training courses offered in Welsh during the year (based on the records you kept in accordance with standard 152);

(c) if a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during the year, the percentage of the total number of staff who attended the course and who attended the Welsh version (based on the records kept in accordance with standard 152);

(ch) the number of new jobs and empty jobs advertised by you during the year categorised as posts that require -

- *(i) that Welsh language skills are essential*
- *(ii) that Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post,*
- *(iii) that Welsh language skills are desirable, or*
- *(iv) that Welsh language skills are not essential (based on the records kept in accordance with standard 154);*

(d) 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.

4.1 General Language Skills Overview

The information about the language designation of posts and staff's language skills is automatically gathered on the Language Skills System. The system enables us to see how many staff have the Welsh language skills that correspond to the language designation of their post and to generate live reports at any time, to track progress and changes across departments.

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

In terms of staff skills, the information gathered by the system answers two main questions:

	Question	NR Reply:
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, Foundation, Intermediate, Higher, Proficient

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 management teams of every department receive regular reports (quarterly or twice a year) from the Learning and Development service, showing the latest situation in terms of their staff's language designations. Sharing these regular reports is a way for departments to know where they are in terms of their staff's skills, to identify any changes, and to identify any individuals that could require support to develop skills (oral or written).

A forum has been established in-house and includes representative from every Council department, where we will be discussing the language skills reports and any obstacles in gathering assessments or in targeting training. The feedback we have received from the officers on this forum have been very valuable and have enabled us to do things such as trialling paper questionnaires with some services where staff are not as likely to be using computers at work, to increase the number to complete the self-assessment.

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 are seen to be requesting language improvement courses, this can be responded to proactively. It enables us to tailor the training better.

4.2 Standard 154: Report on the number of posts advertised during the year according to each category

4.2.1 Posts advertised that have been categorised as essential

That Welsh language skills are essential = **833**
(1318 adverts published during the year)

That Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post = 0

That Welsh language skills are desirable = 0

That Welsh language skills are not necessary = 0

Please note:

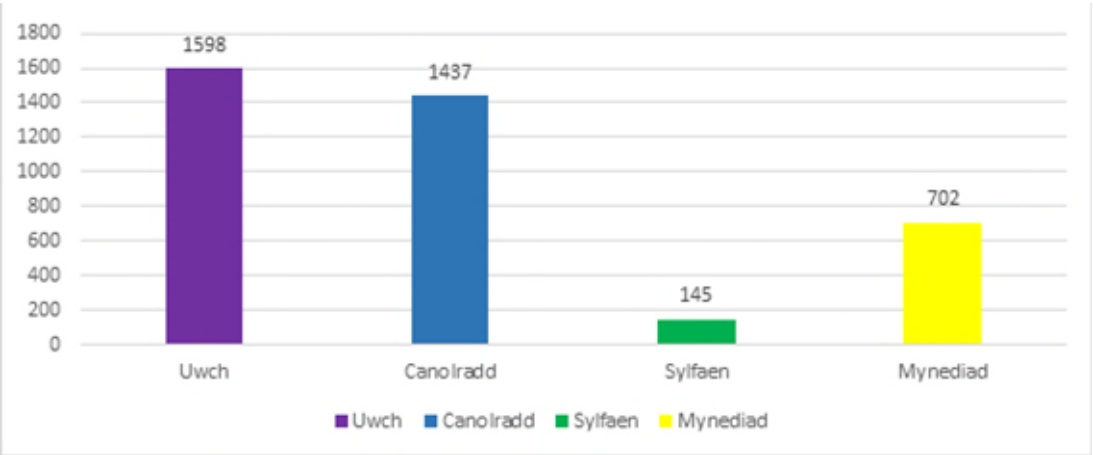
- Every post advertised by the Council notes the language requirement as an essential skill i.e. an element of language skills is required for every post in the Council.
- Every post in the Council has been checked to ensure that the language designation is correct for the post and continues to be reviewed regularly.
- Every new post must follow a specific procedure for setting the correct language designation.

4.2.2 Assessing and Setting the Language Levels of Jobs - number of posts across the Council that have been designated per level:

The following table shows the designation, or the linguistic level that has been set for every current post across the Council.

The language skills 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.

It therefore shows that more jobs have been identified as ones were Intermediate or Higher skills are required to fulfil the post in question.



(Uwch = Advanced, Canolradd = Intermediate, Sylfaen = Foundation, Mynediad = Entry)

4.3 Standard 151: Report on the number of staff members who possess Welsh language skills

Please note:

- The work of gathering information about individuals (staff members) is continuous, and the figures noted will never entirely reflect the actual number of staff employed by the Council. However, it is aimed to obtain the most accurate 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, Byw'n Iach, School staff - as they are not directly under the requirements of the Standards or because they have different accountability arrangements. Nevertheless, the Byw'n Iach service keeps up-to-date date and is part of the Language Forum (the requirement to assess and monitor skills is part of Byw'n Iach's contractual obligation with the Council), and work is afoot to collaborate with the education department and gather assessments for school staff also. The fact that the data is not reported on here does not mean that the data is not available.

4.3.1 General overview - number of staff with Welsh language skills:

	2021-22		**2022-23**	
Number of staff members (on the Council's payroll**)***	**3822**		**3886**	
Staff who possess Welsh language skills (of any kind**)**	2799	99.1%	**2726**	99.4%
Staff with no Welsh language skills at all	26	0.9%	**15**	0.6%

Staff who reach Foundation level and higher (able to speak Welsh)			**2549**	93%

4.3.2 Number of assessments held:

	2021-22		**2022-23**	
Number of staff members (on the Council's payroll)*	**3822**		**3886**	
Total assessments gathered (Line Manager Assessments and Self-assessments)	2825	74%	**2932**	75%
Number of Self-assessments gathered only (Question 2)*	2633	69%	**2741**	71%

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

4.3.3 Number of staff who reach their post's language designation:

	2021-22		2022-23	
Staff who reach the Language Designations of their post	2584	91%	**2679**	91%
Staff who do not reach the Language Specification of their post	241	9%	**253**	9%

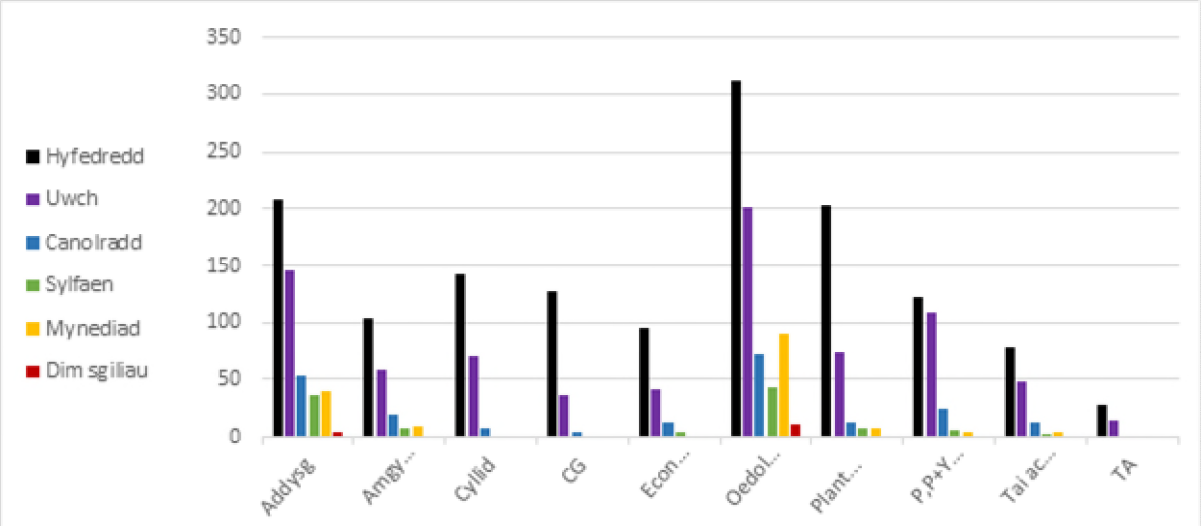
The following picture illustrates the language skills of the workforce as currently assessed. It can be seen that the majority of the workforce possess Higher or Proficiency skills.

Note: The highest level set for any post's language designation is Higher, but it is possible for the individual's language skills to be assessed on a Proficiency level. This means that a large number of staff possess language skills that are more advanced than the need identified for their post.

2022- 2023

4.3.4 Language Levels of staff per department:

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



	Education (not including schools)	Environment	Finance	Corporate Support	Economy and Community	Adults, Health and Well-being	Children and Supporting Families	Highways, Engineering and YGC	Housing and Property	Corporate Leadership Team
Proficiency	208	103	142	128	96	313	203	122	79	28
Higher	146	58	70	37	42	201	74	108	48	14
Intermediate	54	19	7	5	12	72	12	24	13	1
Foundation	36	8	1	0	5	43	8	6	3	0

Entry	40	9	0	0	1	91	8	4	5		0
No skills	4	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0		0

The number of officers with proficiency skills – which corresponds to fluency - has increased across nearly all departments. A significant increase was also seen in the number of staff within the Environment, Finance and Highways departments with Higher skills - this could be due to the fact that more of these departments have now completed the self-assessment.

4.3 Standard 152: Report 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;
(ch) induction;
(d) dealing with the public; and
(dd) 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. ven 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 to improve Welsh medium training provision for the public sector in general.

General Training

The Learning and Organisational Development service is responsible for providing training for the Council's central departments, and also provides it to Byw'n Iach, the Trunk Roads Agent, GWE, North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Consortium, North Wales Bibliography Unit and the Council's Elected Members. The following information applies to the training provided to the Council's central departments only, namely the departments that are accountable to the requirements of the Standards. Information about the training provided centrally to the Byw'n Iach services is provided separately below.

Number of individual events between 01.04.22 and 31.03.23 **- 892**

Number of titles (level of Post/Organisation) between 01.04.22 and 31.03.23 **- 221**

TRAINING EVENTS	NUMBER	UNIQUE ATTENDEES
Welsh	**428**	**1409**
English	**295**	**881**
Bilingual	**169**	**519**

The change since 2019:

	NUMBER OF EVENTS			UNIQUE 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

Standard 128-
73 individuals attended the induction workshop in the period 01.04.22 – 31.03.23
8 events held. **All through the medium of Welsh.**

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.

Number of language awareness sessions during the year **- 0**
Number of staff who have completed the LA e-module - Council and department level - **611**

Training provided by the Council for the Byw'n Iach Service:
Number of individual events between 01.04.22 and 31.03.23 - **78**
Number of titles between 01.04.22 – 31.03.23 - **17**

TRAINING EVENTS	NUMBER	UNIQUE ATTENDEES
Welsh	**22**	**21**
English	**17**	**42**
Bilingual	**39**	**89**

5.4 Report 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 are 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.

COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRIES FROM THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER - RELATING TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE LANGUAGE STANDARDS

CS1038 "Aber Dwyryd", Maentwrog Sign (September 2022):

The Commissioner received a complaint about the use of an incorrect name on a sign near a bus stop in Maentwrog. It was confirmed that the Council was not responsible for installing the image and the name "Aber y Dwyryd" on the sign, and the Council had provided new images to Traws Cymru to install on the digital sign. The response was accepted and the Commissioner did not proceed to investigate this matter.

CS1026 Correspondence from the Libraries service (June 2022):

The Commissioner received a complaint that a member of the public had received correspondence in English only from the libraries service. The service confirmed that this had happened but that it was due to an error with the automatic response system. The response was accepted and the Commissioner did not proceed to investigate this matter.

CS1002 Correspondence from the Finance service (April 2022)

The Commissioner received a complaint that a member of the public had received correspondence from the Pensions service in English only, and had also received Welsh correspondence where the Welsh was treated less favourably than the English. This case was fully investigated. The Council has accepted responsibility for this situation from the start, and has explained that this arose as a result of a single error, and as the specific circumstances in question (correspondence sent to a family as a result of the death of a person in receipt a teacher's pension) asking the officer to act in a different way to the usual procedure.

A final decision was received in March 2023, noting the Commissioner's opinion that the Council had failed to comply with Standards 5, 6 and 7.

- This is based on the fact that the original letter was sent in English, and the Council did not know if the person wished to receive correspondence in Welsh,
- that the second correspondence sent in Welsh contained errors, that meant that we had treated the Welsh language less favourably than English, and
- the letters sent did not include the standard statements inviting the recipient to respond in Welsh, and noting that the Council would reply in Welsh.

Several actions have been set out in the adjudication to ensure that the Council complies fully. We will implement the actions and respond to the adjudication and the actions over the coming weeks.

CS102 Ysgol Abersoch Consultation (December 2021)

The Commissioner received a complaint that the Council had not followed appropriate consultation processes and that it had not sufficiently consulted with local residents or considered adequately the impact of the decision to close Ysgol Abersoch on the Welsh language and the community. A full and thorough investigation was held into this complaint. We have received the draft outcome of the investigation which noted the Commissioner's opinion that the Council failed to comply with Standards 91,92 and 93, namely the standards that places a duty on the Council to ask a specific question about the impact of the decision on the Welsh language when consulting. The draft adjudication notes, however, that the Council did not fail to comply with Standards 88,89 and 90, namely the Standards that impose a duty on the Council to assess and consider the impact of decisions on the Welsh language. The Council provided a significant amount of evidence that included minutes of meetings and reports as a result of the consultation period and these indicated that the Council had carefully considered the possible impact, and the Commissioner's report acknowledges that the Council gave 'conscientious consideration' to the impacts.

The judgement for failing to comply with Standards 91, 92 and 93 is based on the fact that the right questions were not asked during the consultation. The Education Department had followed the directions in the Schools Organisation Code for the consultation process, and those guidelines did not give guidance on how to follow the requirements of the Code and the Standards at the same time.
The Council was of the view that not asking the specific questions about the linguistic impact had not affected the ability of individuals to express a view about the impact of the decision on the Welsh language, and a great number of observations had been submitted by local residents as part of the consultation process and had been considered when assessing the impact of the decision, however we accept that there was a failure in terms of compliance with the exact requirements of these Standards.

The actions proposed to strengthen our arrangements when undertaking consultations are those that are already afoot or have already been delivered by the Council.

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

Department	Number of complaints	The matter relating to the complaint	Explanation and actions taken
Corporate Support (January 2023)	**1**	Complaint that it was not possible to note that they were Welsh learners on the equality questionnaire used with public consultations.	The standard question used is in line with the question about linguistic ability that appears in the census. This enables the Council to compare data that indicates if responders to consultations are representative of the Gwynedd population. Having discussed the question with relevant officers from the research, communication and equality team, it was resolved to trial a new question, that asks about the level of ability and skills in a different manner, and includes an option to note if anyone is a Welsh language learner. We will look at the results of both consultations that trial the question to see if this form gives us more useful information. A response was sent to the complainant and they were thanked for bringing the matter to our attention and to explain the change we are trialling.
Corporate Support / Highways and Municipal	**1**	A complaint that the Council's recruitment policy is unfair by stipulating the need to be fluent in Welsh for every post. The individual had a hearing impairment meaning that they could not understand or learn Welsh very well. At they were under the impression that the linguistic requirement for posts meant there was a need to be fluent, he felt that he could not apply for a post with the Council. He had been turned away from the Council's recycling centre when trying to submit his CV as he was unable to speak Welsh. He therefore felt that	An apology was sent to the complainant as a result of the response he received at the recycling centre, and the policy was explained in terms of setting language requirements for posts. One of the posts in question by the complainant (LGV driver post) was looked at and it was confirmed that the language requirements were Basic/Access level for that post. The Equality Advisor was also part of the response to this complaint as the complainant claimed there was discrimination based on disability. The possible action to this complaint is to look at the wording shown in job descriptions to ensure that the requirements are clear and understandable to residents who apply for jobs.

		the policy discriminated against him.	
Byw'n Iach	**1**	A complaint was received about the use of English in swimming lessons.	Discussions have been held between the management team and the swimming development officer and a work plan drafted by them to get to grips with this matter. The situation had arisen recently as a result of staffing problems that led to the need to appoint swimming officers with the correct qualifications, but did not reach the language designation of the post. Explanation sent to the complainant.
Finance	**1**	Complaint about the lack of a Welsh language service from the Excel company, who provide a debt collection service on behalf of the Council	Circumstances at the company (staff sickness and recruitment problems) had meant there were no fluent Welsh speakers available on the day the complainant called who were able to deal with the call and respond to their enquiry in full in Welsh. It is part of the agreement with the company that the service is offered in Welsh and they have worked hard to ensure this service by recruiting and training local workers rather than recruiting from over the border. Although the service usually provided answers the requirements of the agreement, the Finance service is considering whether the work in question can be in-house by the Council in the future