

Welsh Language Report 2020-21

September 2021



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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi. We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

Contents

Detailed report	4
Introduction	4
Communicating standards with staff	5
Welsh Language Strategy	6
Recruitment	7
Welsh-language skills and training	7
Training through the medium of Welsh	10
Policy Making	11
Complaints	12

Detailed report

Introduction

- 1 This annual report on the Welsh language outlines the work we have done to promote the language within Audit Wales during 2020-21 and gives a snapshot of our current situation.
- 2 Audit Wales is the umbrella brand for the Wales Audit Office and the Auditor General but is not a legal entity in itself and came into effect. The Wales Audit Office and the Auditor General have each received separate compliance notices and remain subject to them. This annual report summarises performance in respect of both sets of standards. It will be shared via our Audit Wales website, social media platforms and be made available at all our offices.
- 3 We received our compliance notices in respect of the Welsh Language Standards (the standards) for the Wales Audit Office and the Auditor General for Wales in July 2016 and the last imposition date for many fell in January 2017, a further 14 standards came into effect during 2017-18 and eight in 2018-19.
- 4 In conjunction with the standards, we publish an annual report on how we have complied with specific standards and in general during the previous financial year. Even though the primary function of this report is to assess compliance, it also provides an opportunity for us to reflect on what we have done to promote the use and awareness of the Welsh language during the previous year and identify how we can improve further.
- 5 We outline our arrangements for complying with the standards on our website. A full-time Welsh Language Officer works within Audit Wales and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the standards and promoting the Welsh language internally. The Director of Corporate Services is responsible for the strategic overview and corporate governance matters relating to the Welsh language.

- 6 We have carried out a wide range of activities during the previous year to promote the Welsh language within Audit Wales and we set details out below. More can be done, and we plan to build on the work of the previous year. Key to this has been a Welsh Language Strategy which sets out our current position, our ambitions and our proposed actions to realise those ambitions. As we enter the final year of the strategy we will be reviewing its impact to date and what our ambitions and actions will be in future.
- 7 The previous year has brought with it a drastic change in the ways we work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have maintained our commitment to provide a bilingual service throughout.

Communicating standards with staff

- 8 Communicating the requirements of the standards to staff is important to ensure they understand the Welsh-language provision available to them – including learning opportunities, technology and HR material. It is also important for ensuring staff understand their responsibilities under the standards, for example when answering external phone calls or correspondence.
- 9 When new staff arrive at the organisation, they receive a dedicated induction session where they are introduced to the standards in relation to their work and employment with us. Non-Welsh speaking new starters are also required to complete the National Centre for Learning Welsh's Welcome online course where they are taught some basic Welsh for the workplace and Welsh-language awareness. More information on this can be found in **paragraph 23**.
- 10 We have provided staff with numerous tools and guidance on the standards that impact on the way they work. For example, we provide guidance and templates for email signatures and 'out of office' emails, including a comprehensive list of job titles. A suite of Welsh-language technologies is also available for staff upon request that includes 'Cysill' and 'Cysgeir', Welsh Language Microsoft Office spell check and 'To Bach'. We have recently changed how we provide 'Cysill' and 'Cysgeir' to staff by actively including it in the build of new or updated laptops for all staff regardless of language requirements.

- 11 Our policy on using the Welsh language internally outlines the relevant standards that have an impact on our staff's day-to-day responsibilities. These include answering telephone calls and replying to correspondence, respecting the language preferences of our audited bodies and members of the public, and the considerations for displaying posters and signage around our offices. We have also added that any all-staff emails must be bilingual with the Welsh positioned so that it is likely to be read first. The policy also outlines the rights staff have under the standards such as the availability of Welsh-language technologies, their access to Welsh-language training, and training through the medium of Welsh. It also highlights their rights to have HR documents, as well as disciplinary and grievance meetings, in Welsh.
- 12 The Welsh-language policy is readily available for staff to read on our intranet and was reviewed and updated in January 2021.

Welsh Language Strategy

- 13 In June 2019, the Wales Audit Office Board agreed on a three-year Welsh Language Strategy. A main driver for this strategy was a decision to not use firms to conduct some of our audits in future, with many of these audits based in bodies with a preference to conduct the work in Welsh. Another significant factor was our levels of Welsh speakers, the lack of increase of Welsh speakers over the past few years, and where in the organisation our Welsh speakers are.
- 14 The strategy covers four key areas of development – recruitment; training; opportunities; and knowledge.
- 15 Whilst we are not required to develop a Welsh Language Strategy under the standards, we feel that this is a good way to demonstrate our commitment, and ensure we go further than just complying. We see the standards as a base of what we should be doing with the language, and so the items discussed within this strategy go beyond or strengthen what we have through the standards.

Recruitment

- 16 During 2020-21, we advertised for 42 new or vacant posts, recruiting internally and externally. The Welsh-language skills for 8 of these positions were advertised as 'essential' and 34 positions advertised as Welsh 'desirable'.
- 17 We were successful in recruiting for all Welsh essential posts.
- 18 Of the 42 (8 Welsh essential) adverts, 23 (5 Welsh essential) were apprentices and graduate trainees, 36 (8 Welsh essential) were in the audit services, and 6 (0 Welsh essential) within the corporate service.
- 19 Within our apprentice and graduate recruitment campaigns, we have a commitment that at least 20% of our posts will be Welsh essential. With all other recruitment, any campaigns that are recruiting for 3 or more positions will have at least 20% of vacancies being Welsh essential. These are the minimum requirements for these recruitments and are still subject to Welsh language skills assessments which can increase the requirements.

Welsh-language skills and training

- 20 The Welsh-language skills of staff at Audit Wales as of the end of the 2020-21 financial year is outlined in **Table 1**. We have also provided a break-down of our Welsh language skills within our audit and corporate services. The Welsh-language skills of our staff are self-evaluated and recorded on the Employee Self-Service portal. Towards the end of each financial year we encourage all staff to update and record their Welsh-language skills and to match themselves against the Welsh Language Skills Matrix. This matrix has since been updated and staff now use the updated matrix to match their skills.

Table 1: Welsh-language skills of all Audit Wales staff

The number of Audit Wales staff at awareness, entry, foundation, intermediate, advanced or proficiency level of listening, reading, speaking and writing Welsh.

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
0 – Awareness	199	204	204	204
1 – Entry	9	5	8	10
2 – Foundation	11	9	7	5
3 – Intermediate	6	5	9	9
4 – Advanced	9	13	3	6
5 – Proficiency	26	24	29	26
Total	260	260	260	260

21 We also show the number of Welsh language skills broken down in the organisation by audit services and corporate services in **Tables 2 and 3** respectively.

Table 2: Welsh-language skills of Audit Wales staff within our audit services

The number of Audit Wales staff at awareness, entry, foundation, intermediate, advanced or proficiency level of listening, reading, speaking and writing Welsh.

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
0 – Awareness	162	165	165	164
1 – Entry	5	3	4	5
2 – Foundation	6	4	4	4
3 – Intermediate	5	4	8	8
4 – Advanced	9	12	3	5
5 – Proficiency	20	19	23	21
Total	207	207	207	207

Table 3: Welsh-language skills of Audit Wales staff within our corporate services

The number of Audit Wales staff at awareness, entry, foundation, intermediate, advanced or proficiency level of listening, reading, speaking and writing Welsh.

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
0 – Awareness	37	39	39	40
1 – Entry	4	2	4	5
2 – Foundation	5	5	3	1
3 – Intermediate	1	1	1	1
4 – Advanced	0	1	0	1
5 – Proficiency	6	5	6	5
Total	53	53	53	53

22 We have seen a slow increase in the percentage of Welsh language skills within Audit Wales during the last four years as shown in **Table 4** with an increase of 3% since 2017-18. This has been through a mixture of changes to the overall levels of staffing, staff self-reporting a progression in their Welsh language skills and updating their profiles accordingly, and through the recruitment of Welsh speaking staff.

Table 4: Welsh language skills from 2017-18 – 2020-21

	Listening		Reading		Speaking		Writing	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2017-18	27	10.1%	28	10.4%	25	9.3%	25	9.3%
2018-19	33	12.5%	33	12.5%	31	11.7%	30	11.4%
2019-20	33	12.3%	33	12.3%	32	11.9%	30	11.2%
2020-21	35	13.5%	37	14.2%	32	12.3%	32	12.3%

Welsh language skills training

- 23 During 2020-21, staff took part in more than 40.5 working days' worth of Welsh-language awareness and/or learning training as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Welsh-language training

The Welsh-language training provided for staff during 2019-20.

	Dates	Delegates	Total learning hours
Welsh-language awareness induction	Various dates April 2020 to March 2021	23	11.5
Work Welsh Online 'Croeso' courses	April 2020 to March 2021	17 sign-ups 10 completed	168
Say Something in Welsh	April 2020 to March 2021	15	73
Weekly classes	September 2020 to June 2021	1	18

- 24 To acknowledge the commitment needed for a member of staff to learn a new language, in June 2016 new procedures on time and financial commitments were agreed by senior management. Courses are fully paid for by Audit Wales, and staff can use up to five days of their allocated training allowance for learning Welsh (with time provided by Audit Wales being matched by the individual's own time). The procedure also outlined that if the Welsh-language requirement for a staff member's role is changed to 'essential', they are exempt from matching Audit Wales' time with their own.
- 25 We also have other initiatives to encourage staff to practice their Welsh. Although our coffee and a chat sessions are unable to be held during the pandemic, we started monthly 'Catch-up Cymraeg' sessions with fluent speakers and learners welcomed to discuss a range of subjects including social and work-related matters.

Training through the medium of Welsh

26 Two courses were provided bilingually within Audit Wales during 2020-21. An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webinar and Health and Safety at Work e-learning. The ED&I training involved staff being able to choose between a series of English medium sessions and a Welsh medium session. The H&S training was provided automatically in either Welsh or English according to their language preference for correspondence and could request to change this should they wish.

Table 6: Welsh medium training

The numbers and percentages of staff attending Welsh medium courses for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Health and Safety at Work.

Course	Learning Method	Numbers	Percentage
Equality Diversity and Inclusion	Interactive webinar	14	5.3%
Health and Safety at work	e-learning	12	4.5%

27 We note that as an organisation we are continuing to struggle with the provision of bilingual courses on the market that fit our requirements for our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Health and Safety courses. Our current provision is becoming outdated and we have been attempting to procure new provision for a while. We have three main requirements which are:

- a fully bilingual platform, with preferably the ability to swap languages easily during the course;
- online courses so that we can be flexible in when staff complete them, rather than fixed facilitated learning; and
- an ‘off the shelf’ course due to the limited number of staff we require to complete them as opposed to bespoke courses which require a considerable higher investment.

28 Many combinations of two of the three requirements above can be found, but the inclusion of a third requirement has meant we have struggled to procure such courses. We have previously sought advice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on specific cases, but would welcome any guidance or pressure on the industry to improve this area for the public sector in Wales.

Policy Making

- 29 We have completed Welsh-language impact assessments in relation to 7 policies and policy decisions during the year, as listed in **Table 7**. These impact assessments are required for all new and reviewed policies to ensure a positive effect on opportunities to use Welsh and to ensure the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

Table 7: policies and policy decisions

The policies and policy decisions that were subject to Welsh-language impact assessments during 2020-21.

Policy

AD&G proposed restructure

Financial Management
Handbook Review

Learning & Development policy

Temporary Allowance for
Additional Duties within Pay Policy

Smarter Working

Social Media Policy

Welsh Language Policy

- 30 Following the guidance published by the Welsh Language Commissioner on assessing the impact of policies and procedures, we reviewed our own impact assessing processes to ensure they were fit for purpose. One of the amends were to ensure the Welsh Language Officer is better included in the process.

- 31 Incidentally, the current Welsh Language Officer is the chair of Audit Wales' Equality Interest Group, PAWB, which is also consulted with on all policies.

Complaints

- 32 During 2020-21, we did not receive any complaints through the Welsh Language Commissioner or from the public.



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