



WLGA Executive Board

30th September 2022

Item 10

WLGA WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Purpose

1. For members to receive and endorse the WLGA Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2021-22.

Background

2. The Welsh Language Commissioner undertook a review of the WLGA between November 2014 and February 2015. A standards report outlining the conclusions of the investigation was then produced for Welsh Ministers in May 2015 and which was also shared with the WLGA.
3. In October 2015, the Welsh Language Commissioner highlighted the Welsh Ministers' full response to the report together with the proposed timetable for introducing Welsh language standards for the WLGA.
4. The Welsh Language Standards (No.2) Regulations 2016 came into effect on 16th of February 2016 and the Welsh Language Commissioner was then duly authorised to issue a notice to the WLGA requiring compliance with one or more of the standards.
5. A period of consultation followed between 31st March 2016 to 26th May 2016.
6. In response to further queries raised by the WLGA, the Welsh Language Commissioner issued a determination letter together with a revised compliance notice in May 2017.
7. In September 2018, the WLGA published its first Annual Report covering the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. This fifth Annual Report covers the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Recommendations

8. **Members are asked to receive and endorse the WLGA Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-22 for publication.**

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Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021 - 2022

September 2022



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

This document is also available in Welsh



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1. Welsh Local Government Association - The Voice of Welsh Councils

We are The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA); a politically led cross-party organisation that seeks to give local government a strong voice at a national level. We represent the interests of local government and promote local democracy in Wales.

The 22 councils in Wales are our members and the 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities are associate members.

We believe that the ideas that change people's lives, happen locally.

Communities are at their best when they feel connected to their council through local democracy. By championing, facilitating, and achieving these connections, we can build a vibrant local democracy that allows communities to thrive.

Our ultimate goal is to promote, protect, support and develop democratic local government and the interests of councils in Wales.

We'll achieve our vision by

- Promoting the role and prominence of councillors and council leaders
- Ensuring maximum local discretion in legislation or statutory guidance
- Championing and securing long-term and sustainable funding for councils
- Promoting sector-led improvement
- Encouraging a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity
- Supporting councils to effectively manage their workforce

Welsh Language Standards

The WLGA is fully committed to compliance with the Welsh language standards as set out by the Welsh Government under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

These standards set clear expectations on the WLGA to provide services in Welsh, and to promote the use of the Welsh language through all our services.

The Welsh language standards applicable to the Association fall under four categories:

- Service Delivery
- Policy Making
- Operational
- Record Keeping

This fifth Annual Report reviews the WLGA's compliance with the applicable Welsh language standards from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

This document is also available in Welsh.

The WLGA's Welsh Language Standards and Complaints Policy are available to view on the WLGA's website: <https://wlga.wales/welsh-language-standards>.

2. Executive Summary

This report outlines how the WLGA has adhered to the Welsh language standards from April 1st 2021, to March 31st 2022. The Association is pleased to provide the Welsh Language Commissioner with a high assurance of compliance over this period. The WLGA did not receive any formal complaints relating to the Welsh language standards during the period of this Annual Report. The WLGA has also continued to promote the use of Welsh within the workplace and with external stakeholders this year.

Several additional steps have been taken over 2021-2022 to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, such as:

- delivering all staff training sessions on Welsh language policies and standards
- conducting regular spot checks to monitor the implementation of Welsh language policies
- developing practical tools and guidance for all staff to increase their use of Welsh in the workplace
- promoting the use of Welsh via social media
- developing a new e-module aimed at supporting new and returning elected members to understand the Welsh language standards and how to promote the language
- supporting councils and associate member authorities to share best practice in relation to Welsh language policies via Rhwydiaith, a network for Welsh Language Officers.

The WLGA are pleased to report that staff confidence levels in Welsh have gradually increased over time. Compared with the baseline data collected in 2017, the percentages of WLGA staff reporting that they have “*no skills*” in listening, reading, speaking, and writing Welsh, has decreased significantly by 2022. This suggests that overall, staff are more confident in their Welsh language skills in each of these categories. In 2017 for example, 60.9% of staff reported that they had “*no skills*” in speaking Welsh whereas in 2022 only 38.7% of staff felt that they did not have any skills. The number of staff members reporting that they understand all conversations, reading material, and are fluent in speaking Welsh has also increased over the last 5 years. Twenty one percent of staff surveyed on Welsh language skills confirmed that they had received training that helps develop their Welsh language skills during their time at the Association. The WLGA continues to promote formal learning opportunities to learn Welsh through a range of different courses as part of the ‘Training and Development offer’ available to all staff.

Welsh language skills were listed as ‘desirable’ for 26 job roles advertised at the WLGA between April 2021 and March 2022. Welsh language skills were listed as ‘essential’ for the remaining 3 job roles during this period and the Association were successful in appointing members of staff who met this criterion for each of these roles.

The WLGA formally consulted on one significant new internal policy, the WLGA’s Draft Agile Working Policy, in 2021. Careful consideration was given to any potential effects on the use of the Welsh language ensuring that the Welsh language would not be treated less favourably than the English language.

Internal policies and staff guidance documents relating to the Welsh language were also updated and reviewed by the Strategic Management Team during this reporting period. Minor adjustments were made to reflect some of the new opportunities for staff to use their Welsh in the workplace, such as publicising virtual monthly meetings that are open to all members of staff to practise using their Welsh language skills with colleagues.

The WLGA keeps up to date records on the language preferences of staff members and stakeholders. The WLGA also keeps records of staff members' Welsh language skills, complaints and any policy making updates.

The remainder of the Annual Report provides more detail on the processes and guidance in place to support all members of staff in fulfilling their Welsh language compliance responsibilities. The WLGA has a shared vision on the importance of promoting the use of Welsh with all partners and internal staff, as reinforced by our Chief Executive Officer in 2022, *"Wales and the Welsh language are important to us as an Association and it's a privilege for us to be able to represent the local authorities, the communities and the people of Wales within the framework of local democratic accountability"*.

3. Background

The Welsh Language Commissioner undertook a review of the WLGA between November 2014 and February 2015. A Standards Report outlining the conclusions of the investigation was then produced for Welsh Ministers in May 2015 and shared with the WLGA.

In October 2015, the Welsh Language Commissioner highlighted the Welsh Ministers' full response to that report together with the proposed timetable for introducing Welsh language standards for the WLGA.

The Welsh Language Standards (No.2) Regulations 2016 came into effect on 16th of February 2016, and the Welsh Language Commissioner was then duly authorised to issue a notice to the WLGA requiring compliance with one or more of the standards. A period of consultation followed between 31st March 2016 to 26th May 2016. In response to further queries raised by the WLGA, the Welsh Language Commissioner issued a determination letter together with a revised compliance notice in May 2017.

In September 2018 the WLGA published the first Annual Report covering the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. This report is the fifth Annual Report covering the period between 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

The Annual Report is approved by the WLGA Spokesperson for the Welsh Language with a view to seeking endorsement of the full membership at a meeting of the WLGA's Executive Board.

4. Matters arising during the report

Publicising the standards and WLGA compliance

The WLGA's website has a webpage dedicated to the Welsh language standards where users can access the WLGA Complaints Policy and a comprehensive document detailing 'Our Welsh Language Standards and how we comply with them'.

Both documents are available on the following webpage: <https://www.wlga.wales/welsh-language-standards>

In July 2021, the WLGA provided the Welsh Language Commissioner's office with self-assessment evidence on compliance with the Welsh language standards. The WLGA undertook an internal review of our levels of compliance as part of this self-assessment exercise including additional spot checks and meetings with key departments such as the Central Administration Team and Human Resources. Following this review process the WLGA was pleased to provide a "high assurance of compliance" for each relevant standard in the self-assessment questionnaire provided, defined in the evidence request template as follows:

High assurance of compliance	The organisation complies with all requirements at all times, in all circumstances, except for rare exceptions.
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A similar self-assessment exercise was undertaken recently for other relevant standards and the WLGA also presented the Welsh Language Commissioner's office with supporting evidence demonstrating a high level of compliance with Welsh language standards in June 2022.

Several additional steps have been taken during 2021-2022 to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language within the Association, such as:

- delivering all staff training sessions on Welsh language policies and standards
- conducting regular spot checks to monitor and verify the implementation of Welsh language policies
- developing practical tools and guidance for all staff to increase their use of Welsh in the workplace.

Internal policies and staff guidance documents relating to the Welsh language were also updated and reviewed by the Strategic Management Team during this reporting window. Minor adjustments were made to reflect some of the new opportunities for staff to use their Welsh in the workplace. These policy documents and guidance documents are circulated regularly in staff bulletins and new staff members are instructed to familiarise themselves with these policies as part of their programme of induction.

Over 2021-2022 all staff have also been encouraged to work with a lead Policy Officer whenever they require any further advice on implementing the Welsh language standards or

wish to develop more strategies to promote the use of Welsh within their teams or with their networks.

Complaints

The WLGA did not receive any official complaints relating to compliance with the Welsh language standards between April 1st 2021 and March 31st 2022.

5. Our Standards

The Chief Executive of the WLGA is responsible for ensuring that we follow the procedures the Association has set in place to monitor and ensure compliance with the standards. All members of staff also bear responsibility for ensuring that they comply with the standards, and in addition to copies of the WLGA's Welsh language standards, further comprehensive staff guidance has been issued as a reference and to assist in this regard.

The WLGA's Strategic Management Team welcome and encourage all queries and any ideas that improve the ways that we can support and enhance the use of Welsh, incorporating as appropriate any recommendations arising from the work of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The WLGA promotes Welsh language training for staff. Any member of staff who would like to use or learn Welsh can discuss this at any time with their line managers, and support is provided for those who wish to undertake training with the WLGA enabling time off from work to attend courses and/or payment of course fees (depending on the level of course being undertaken). Staff personal development and training needs are covered specifically as part of the WLGA's Staff Appraisal Scheme.

In addition to the formal opportunities for Welsh language training, the WLGA invites all colleagues to engage with monthly Coffi Cymraeg meetings and the Welsh language channel on Teams. These meetings aim to provide staff members with a safe space to practise their Welsh language skills in a 'low stake' environment. This has helped colleagues establish relationships with other Welsh speakers and learners which has in turn increased the use of Welsh in the workplace. The feedback for these sessions has been positive and learners have reflected on the usefulness of these sessions in helping build their confidence in speaking Welsh. These informal sessions have also helped motivate some learners to take the next step in their learning journey e.g., plans to attend the residential language training course in Nant Gwrtheyrn.

In August 2021, the WLGA provided all staff with two opportunities to attend compulsory staff training sessions on the Welsh language standards. These sessions provided all members of staff with information on the legislative background, relevant standards, and useful guidance to support high levels of compliance. The training session also aimed at developing colleagues' understanding of the WLGA's policy on using Welsh in the workplace and the opportunities to develop Welsh language skills through the Training and Development opportunities promoted by the Association. Two thirds of staff attended these live training sessions and all remaining staff members were instructed to view a recording of the session and review all relevant policies and guidance documents.

To maintain a high level of compliance all staff receive regular reminders and links to key policies and are encouraged to work with the lead Policy Officer on any further advice needed in relation to Welsh language matters.

5.1 Service delivery standards

These standards relate to how the WLGA interacts with its' customers and stakeholders.

Written Correspondence

Where the preferred language of the person we're contacting is not known, all initial correspondence is bilingual, with Welsh placed first either on the left or above any English text. The WLGA records language preferences of individuals. When corresponding with groups of people, all correspondence is issued bilingually. If a group convened by the WLGA expresses a language preference, that language preference is recorded and then used thereafter.

Telephone Calls

The WLGA actively encourages staff to use their Welsh at work and has developed a specific policy on 'Using Welsh in the Workplace'. The WLGA main telephone number is operated by a fully bilingual member of staff.

Staff Guidance has been issued on the WLGA Welsh language standards which specifies:

- The verbal greetings to be used and the content of pre-recorded messages for both office and mobile phones with the Welsh language first
- How to deal with incoming calls, and contacting someone by telephone for the first time
- How to record language preferences

The Guidance anticipates that there may be staff who don't feel confident at this stage in their personal development to conduct a conversation fluently in Welsh and if that is the case, they may transfer the call to a colleague who has agreed to provide Welsh language support.

The exceptions to transferring such calls are:

- Where the caller requires specific advice, and no Welsh speaker has the required knowledge/understanding of the subject;
- Where the caller requires specific advice, and there is no Welsh speaker available.

Telephone calls are spot checked internally to maintain a high level of compliance and to support colleagues to maintain a good understanding of all key requirements.

Meetings

WLGA Staff Guidance also sets out what must be done when staff invite someone to a meeting, or when more than one person is invited to the same meeting. For individuals who wish to use Welsh in a meeting, the WLGA will arrange for simultaneous Welsh translation services to be available, unless the member of staff conducting the meeting with that individual speaks Welsh fluently. The WLGA will arrange for simultaneous Welsh translation services for meetings involving ten or more people (including the WLGA's own staff) where a

threshold of 10% of those attending that meeting wish to use Welsh. For meetings that are open to the public:

- All invitations are sent bilingually, with Welsh first
- Speakers are asked if they wish to use Welsh, and encouraged to do so
- Simultaneous Welsh translation is always provided
- The person chairing the meeting will tell everyone present that simultaneous Welsh translation services are available, emphasising that everyone is welcome to use Welsh
- Any signs are bilingual, with Welsh first
- Any publicity and advertising material is bilingual, with Welsh first
- Any booking forms are bilingual, with Welsh first

Events

The WLGA did not host any public events during this reporting period. All members of staff are aware of the WLGA Corporate Guidance that must be followed when hosting public events.

- All publicity is issued bilingually with Welsh first
- Booking forms, attendance lists and feedback forms are fully bilingual with Welsh first
- Speakers are asked if they wish to use Welsh and encouraged to do so
- Simultaneous Welsh translation is always provided
- The person chairing the event will tell everyone present that simultaneous Welsh translation services are available, emphasising that everyone is welcome to use Welsh
- All written material is provided in Welsh (i.e. Conference Programmes)
- Presentations are available in Welsh
- Staff attending events are encouraged to wear badges and lanyards which indicate that they are able to speak Welsh

Publicity, Signs and Materials

Publicity, Signs and Materials are covered by WLGA Corporate Guidance and in each instance the WLGA adheres to bilingual design principles. Where there is a Welsh and English version of any sign, the Welsh version is always positioned where it is likely to be read first, either above or to the left of the English version. All WLGA signs outside and throughout the building are fully bilingual with Welsh positioned to be read first.

As from 1st January 2018 the WLGA has entered into a legal agreement with Conwy County Borough Council for the provision of Welsh/English translation services for:

- Translation of written documents from English into Welsh
- Translation of written documents from Welsh into English
- Establishment and management of a database of work being requested, being undertaken and completed; this database will endeavour to ensure that identical documents being submitted separately are not re-translated, and that similar documents can be identified and the translation needs evaluated to reduce duplication of translated work
- Proof reading of quality control of translated materials

This agreement is reviewed periodically and has been found to be operating well and in accordance with the contract. The Association's Risk Register also lists the agreement under 'business support'; the Risk Register is scrutinized by the WLGA Audit Committee as part of its remit.

During this reporting period approximately 885,700 words were professionally translated.

Website and Social Media

The WLGA's website and use of social media are covered by WLGA Corporate Guidance. The WLGA's website is bilingual and allows the user to toggle between Welsh and English language pages.

An exemption for certain documents is specified under Standard #36: <https://www.wlga.wales/welsh-language-standards> .

Posts to the WLGA's Twitter account are published in Welsh and in English as character limits don't usually permit bilingual tweets; the Welsh version is always published first. <https://twitter.com/WelshLGA>

This year the WLGA have also appointed a new bilingual Communications Officer responsible for media and social media which has been a further support to colleagues across the Association. With this increased capacity in the Communications Team, all staff are also now benefiting from an internal Media Bulletin which shares news articles in Welsh and English relating to councils, Welsh news and any relevant UK news. This initiative raises the status and visibility of the Welsh language daily within the Association and makes the news far more accessible to staff in Welsh, which in the long term could help improve staff members' confidence levels and skills when reading materials in Welsh.

Reception

In October 2021 the WLGA moved to a new office which we share with Data Cymru colleagues at One Canal Parade, Dumballs Road, Cardiff. There is no reception area or reception service at our new location. The office is not open to the public and most meetings with external stakeholders still take place virtually. Visits or in person meetings are by appointment only and under the new guidelines each officer leads on their respective meeting arrangements. All meeting arrangements take place in the visitor/s preferred language in accordance with the standards, e.g., from sending invitations to greeting on arrival and conducting the meeting. For group meetings invitations and papers are sent bilingually with the Welsh text placed before the English version. We offer a simultaneous translation service in line with our Service Delivery standards.

At the office there is a bilingual sign encouraging staff and visitors to speak Welsh. All members of staff are also asked to wear either a Welsh at Work lanyard or a badge to let visitors know that they can speak Welsh to promote its use in the workplace.

Email signatures and automated messages

There are staff guidelines on the correct format for email signatures and automated messages and these are regularly spot checked. Email signatures are fully bilingual, with Welsh first and each signature emphasises that the WLGA welcomes correspondence in Welsh and in English and gives assurance that both languages will be treated equally. Staff are encouraged to add the Welsh at Work symbol next to their names on their email signatures where they are comfortable to do so.

Contracts

Staff guidelines stipulate that all published invitations to tender for contracts, and any accompanying documentation, should be available in Welsh. The WLGA welcomes related correspondence in either language. During this reporting period, the WLGA issued three public contracts through Sell2Wales; one was available in Welsh and English, though one officer mistakenly published the two remaining contracts in English only. This error has been picked up internally with the officer and since then all WLGA staff have been reminded of the requirements relating to any public contract.

Raising Awareness of Welsh Language Services

The WLGA ensures that elected members and officers from all councils, associate members and the public, understand what services we are able to deliver in Welsh. The WLGA's New Councillors Guide includes information on key Welsh language services available to promote the use of Welsh. This year, new training was developed in partnership with councils in the form of an e-module. This aimed to support new and returning councillors by providing useful information on Welsh language standards and rights and how they must comply with these to facilitate and promote the use of Welsh in communities.

Staff members also regularly review the Welsh language preferences of stakeholders and networks. The WLGA actively encourages staff to use their Welsh at work and this is underpinned by a specific policy on 'Using Welsh in the Workplace'.

In September 2021 the WLGA supported Welsh Language Officers across councils and associate members in the National Park authorities, and Fire and Rescue authorities, to re-establish their Rhwydiaith network. This group meets three or four times each year to share useful information and best practice. External stakeholders are also invited to provide key updates on wider Welsh language policies and opportunities where possible.

5.2 Operational standards

These standards relate to the internal use of Welsh by an organisation.

Using Welsh at Work

The WLGA actively encourages staff to use their Welsh at work through the 'Using Welsh in the Workplace' policy. The WLGA have also developed comprehensive Staff Guidance to support staff in implementing our Welsh language standards and increase their use of Welsh at work including guidance on:

- Making and receiving telephone calls
- Holding meetings with individuals or groups
- Issuing and answering correspondence
- Using social media
- Protocol for translating documents
- Guidance on confirming and recording language preferences
- Policy Impact Assessment
- Technical help sheets e.g., how to create 'language preference questionnaires' using Microsoft Forms and how to translate and set proofing languages in Outlook and Word.

All staff have been asked whether they wish to receive documents, forms and correspondence relating to their employment in Welsh and their language choices are recorded. Staff language preferences are ascertained when first joining the WLGA and these preferences are reviewed on an annual basis via a survey. Should language preferences change at any point in between then staff are encouraged to notify the Human Resources team so that all documents are provided in their preferred language.

Where available, Welsh language interfaces for software are made available, as are language packs and interfaces for Windows and Microsoft Word. Staff are actively encouraged to use Welsh language grammar and spell-checking software and use of Microsoft Translate however, guidance has been issued cautioning against over-reliance or complacency when using online tools in place of Translation Services.

All internal WLGA policies are available in Welsh and English.

Staff are encouraged to wear badges and lanyards which indicate that they are able to speak Welsh to promote the use of Welsh at work

Training opportunities are offered to those members of staff who wish to learn, or enhance their Welsh language skills, and any staff member can raise such requests at any time with their line managers.

Since April 2021 the WLGA has also offered staff the opportunity to meet virtually monthly to practise their Welsh language skills. These optional meetings offer colleagues the opportunity

to form relationships with other Welsh speakers and learners within the workplace so that they may practise their language skills and build confidence levels.

Staff feedback



“Coffi Cymraeg sessions have been a great way to practice speaking Welsh, learn new words and get to know the other Welsh speakers and learners in our organisation. They are well planned with themes and activities that build confidence whilst being most enjoyable at the same time. I look forward to the regular dates in my diary.”

“I have attended Coffi Cymraeg several times now and find it to be a really great place to explore my Welsh speaking. It’s such a friendly and supportive space and really encourages me to expand my Welsh language skills. Diolch yn fawr iawn!”



“As a new member of staff, I’ve appreciated the opportunity to keep in touch with the Welsh language, and the opportunity to practise over lockdown and I’ve signed up for a residential course up in Nant Gwrtheyrn in early August.”

“It’s really helpful to have a ‘safe space’ to build confidence.”

“It was the motivation I had lost a little to keep going and you ran the session with X with real sensitivity and encouragement, da iawn! Onwards and upwards, I am going to look at the Siarad Sadwrn session later and register.”



To promote the use of Welsh in the workplace the WLGA have also supported campaigns such as *“Mae gen i hawl/ I have a right”* on Welsh Language Rights Day and ran a series of activities to promote the use of Welsh on St David’s Day 2022 including:

- A Welsh and English video address from the WLGA’s Chief Executive Officer promoting the Welsh language to all staff and to external partners through social media.
- Publicising a series of quotes from members of staff which celebrate the Welsh language and the benefits of bilingualism in the workplace and beyond.
- Launching a new Microsoft Teams channel for staff to help promote the Welsh language and culture within the organisation (sharing opportunities, articles, upcoming Welsh language events and recommendations).

Welsh Language Skills of the Workforce

In the period leading up to the implementation of the WLGA’s Welsh language standards, staff were asked to complete an online survey to establish a baseline audit of the Welsh language skills within the organisation and to determine staff levels of interest in developing,

or enhancing staff skills for listening, reading, speaking and writing in Welsh. The results from this baseline assessment of WLGA Staff Welsh language skills (March 2017) are presented in table 5, Appendix 1, for comparison with this year's skills audit data presented in table 1.

Table 1 - Audit of WLGA Staff Welsh Language Skills 2022
(62 responses).

Please tell us your Welsh language skill level for listening:	Response Percent	Response Total
No skills	38.71%	24
Able to understand basic enquiries in Welsh - 'Ble mae...?'; 'Ga i siarad â...?'	29.03%	18
Able to understand a basic social conversation in Welsh	4.84%	3
Able to follow routine conversations involving work between fluent Welsh speakers	3.23%	2
Able to follow the majority of conversations involving work including group discussions	8.06%	5
Able to understand all conversations involving work	16.13%	10

Please tell us your Welsh language skill level for reading:	Response Percent	Response Total
No skills	37.10%	23
Able to read basic words and phrases e.g. signs or short and simple notes	33.87%	21
Able to read basic material involving work (slowly)	1.61%	1
Able to read routine material with a dictionary	4.84%	3
Able to read the majority of material in own area	8.06%	5
Able to understand all material involving work	14.52%	9

Please tell us your Welsh language skill level for speaking:	Response Percent	Response Total
No skills	38.71%	24

Able to conduct a general conversation (greetings, names, sayings and place names)	29.03%	18
Able to answer simple enquiries involving work	4.84%	3
Able to converse with someone else, with some hesitancy, regarding routine work issues	4.84%	3
Able to speak the language in the majority of situations using some English words	8.06%	5
Fluent – able to conduct a conversation and answer questions, for an extended period of time where necessary	14.52%	9

Please tell us your Welsh language skill level for writing:	Response Percent	Response Total
No skills	56.45%	35
Able to write basic messages – ‘Diolch am y llythyr. Dyma gopi o'r map.’	14.52%	9
Able to answer simple correspondence with assistance	4.84%	3
Able to draft routine text, with editing assistance	6.45%	4
Able to prepare the majority of written material related to the area of work, with some assistance in terms of revision	6.45%	4
Skilled – able to complete complex written work without the need for revision	11.29%	7

Thinking more about how you could use Welsh at work, would you be interested in the opportunity to do any of the following:	Response Percent	Response Total
Learn Welsh (speaking/writing/reading)	51.02%	25
Develop specific work-related Welsh language skills (e.g. meet and greet or other work area specific language)	34.69%	17
Improve your spoken Welsh	32.65%	16
Improve your written Welsh	28.57%	14

Other (please specify):	6.12%	3
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During your time at the WLGA have you received training that helps develop your Welsh Language skills?	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	20.97%	13
No	79.03%	49

Do you wish to receive any personal correspondence relating to your employment contract in:	Response Percent	Response Total
English	75.81%	47
Welsh	1.61%	1
Bilingually	22.58%	14

Compared with the baseline data collected in 2017, the percentages of WLGA staff reporting they have “no skills” in listening, reading, speaking and writing Welsh has decreased significantly over the last 5 years suggesting that on the whole, staff are more confident in their Welsh language skills in each of these categories.

Table 2 – Data comparing “no skills” reported in 2017 and 2022.

Staff reporting “no skills” in each category	Baseline 2017 percentage of staff members	2022 percentage of staff members
Listening	62.5%	38.7%
Reading	56.3%	37.1%
Speaking	60.9%	38.7%
Writing	71.9%	56.4%

There have been slight increases in reported ability levels across all Welsh language skills categories between 2017 and 2022. The number of staff members reporting they understand all conversations, reading material, and are fluent in speaking Welsh has also increased over the last 5 years.

Staff training

Staff are encouraged to discuss opportunities for developing their Welsh language skills with their line managers. The WLGA has registered for the Work Welsh scheme operated by The National Centre for Learning Welsh. The WLGA publicises a range of opportunities for members of staff to learn Welsh on the Training and Development shared area. These opportunities range from online taster courses to intensive residential courses through the Work Welsh programme: <https://learnwelsh.cymru/>

In the 2022 Staff survey on Welsh language skills and preferences around 21% responded that they had received training that helps develop their Welsh Language skills during their time at the WLGA.

Staff have also received additional training in 2021 on how to comply with the WLGA's Welsh language standards. This training reinforced the steps that all employees need to take to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and that it is promoted through all our services.

Recruitment

During this reporting period the WLGA appointed 26 new members of staff.

Twenty-nine posts were advertised in Welsh and English, and all posts were evaluated for the level of Welsh skills required. Welsh language skills were deemed essential for 3 of the 29 posts. The WLGA were successful in appointing Welsh speakers to the 3 roles where Welsh language skills were deemed 'essential'. Welsh language competencies were listed as 'desirable' for all 26 remaining posts advertised between April 1st, 2021 and March 31st 2022.

One job application was received entirely in Welsh this year and this candidate completed their interview and interview tasks in Welsh (Welsh language skills were deemed desirable but not essential for this post).

Applicants who are interviewed are encouraged to use Welsh at interview if they wish to do so. Simultaneous translation was made available for interviewers in cases where candidates completed interviews in Welsh. Successful applicants are given comprehensive Staff Induction, which includes familiarisation with the WLGA's guidance on compliance with the Welsh language standards.

5.3 Policy making

These standards require organisations to consider what effect their policy decisions will have on the ability of persons to use the language and on the principle of treating Welsh no less favourably than English.

WLGA Staff are expected to follow detailed guidance provided by the WLGA Policy Impact Assessment Tool.

The section of the WLGA Policy Impact Assessment Tool which relates specifically to the requirements of the WLGA Welsh language standards is reproduced below:

How will this policy impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?		
What positive or negative effects will this have?	What could be formulated or changed so that it would have positive or increased positive effects?	What could be formulated or changed so it would not have adverse effects or decreased effects? Internal WLGA policies are subject to the same assessment.

Internal WLGA policies are subject to the same assessment.

5.4 Record Keeping Standards

These standards make it necessary to keep records about some of the other standards, and about any complaints received by an organisation. These records will assist the Welsh Language Commissioner in regulating the organisation's compliance with standards and are available to the Commissioner on request.

Records in relation to complaints

The WLGA did not receive any official complaints relating to compliance with the Welsh language standards between April 1st 2021 and March 31st 2022. Copies of all complaints are kept, whether or not they relate to the standards to which the WLGA is under a duty to comply.

Records in relation to Policy Making

During the 2021-22 reporting period the WLGA formally consulted on one significant new internal policy, the WLGA's Draft Agile Working Policy.

All guidelines within the WLGA's Policy Impact Assessment Tool were followed. This ensured that due consideration was given to what effects, if any, policy decisions would have on the

opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and to ensure that the Welsh language was treated no less favourably than the English language.

A review meeting was also held focusing on the relevant Policy Making, Operational and Record Keeping standards. Several potential positive effects were identified when reviewing the possible effects of the Draft Agile Working Policy on Welsh language use.

The increased flexibility of working hours and working location, for example, could help broaden the recruitment pool, with a greater number of employees being able to work from communities across all of Wales. By reducing the commuting demands, this could in turn increase the number of employees working for the WLGA from communities which typically have a higher proportion of Welsh speakers. Likewise, the flexibility in terms of working location, i.e., reducing the need to work from the Cardiff office daily, could give employees the confidence to move to communities where the Welsh language may be more widely spoken. Increased working flexibility allows all colleagues to spend more time in their local communities and make greater contributions to local services, including Welsh language initiatives e.g., working in hubs, volunteering, school governance.

The WLGA's 'Using Welsh in the Workplace' policy was also reviewed by the Strategic Management Team in 2021. A minor amendment was made to publicise the optional monthly meeting which is open to all members of staff with the specific aim of promoting the use of Welsh in the workplace and practising Welsh oracy skills.

Records in relation to employee Welsh Language Skills

Staff are surveyed at the end of the financial year to record current Welsh language skills and records will be kept by the Human Resources team. Please find the survey results for 2021-2022 in table 1 within the 'Welsh Language Skills of the Workforce' section of this report.

Table 3 - Records in relation to training courses attended by employees

Training courses	Number of staff
Introduction to Welsh	0
Basic Entry Level	0
Work Welsh on-line	1

Records in relation to Welsh Language Assessments for new or vacant posts and how they were categorised

The Association assesses the language needs of each new or vacant post. Table 4 summaries the number of new or vacant posts that fall into each of the WLGA's four Welsh language skills categories for all posts advertised between April 1st 2021 and March 31st 2022:

Table 4 – Welsh language categorisation for all new or vacant posts in 2021-2022.

Welsh language skills category	Number of posts
Essential	3
Needs to be learned	0
Desirable	26
Not necessary/specified	0
Total new or vacant posts advertised in 2021-2022	29

6. Conclusion and next steps

The WLGA has continued to promote the Welsh language and build on opportunities for partners, stakeholders and internal staff to use Welsh over the period of this Annual Report. Despite the challenges and changes to working patterns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WLGA have continued to provide our key stakeholders and staff with quality Welsh language services and support. The WLGA are pleased to be able to provide the Welsh Language Commissioner's office with a high assurance of compliance with our language standards during this period. Furthermore, the WLGA has taken several additional steps to encourage members of staff to develop their Welsh language skills and practise regularly with others. Over the next year it is important that we continue to build on this work by maintaining an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere that encourages staff to move along the Welsh language learning continuum and confidently put into practice their skills at work.

Appendix 1: Baseline data

Table 5 – Baseline Audit of WLGA Staff Welsh Language Skills March 2017.
(64 responses)

3a: Welsh Language Skills Levels for Listening	No.	%
No skills	40	62.5
Able to understand basic enquiries in Welsh - 'Ble mae ...?', Ga I siarad â ...?'	8	12.5
Able to understand a basic social conversation in Welsh	3	4.7
Able to follow routine conversations involving work between fluent Welsh speakers	3	4.7
Able to follow the majority of conversations involving work including group discussions	3	4.7
Able to understand all conversations involving work	7	10.9

3b: Welsh language Skills Levels for Reading	No.	%
No skills	36	56.3
Able to read basic words and phrases, e.g. signs or short simple notes	13	20.3
Able to read basic material involving work (slowly)	3	4.7
Able to read routine material with a dictionary	3	4.7
Able to read the majority of material in own area	2	3.1
Able to understand all material involving work	7	10.9

3c: Welsh language Skills Levels for Speaking	No.	%
No skills	39	60.9
Able to conduct a general conversation (greetings, names, sayings and place names)	11	17.2
Able to answer simple enquiries involving work	1	1.6
Able to converse with someone else, with some hesitancy, regarding routine work issues	2	3.1
Able to speak the language in the majority of situations using some English words	4	6.3
Fluent – able to conduct a conversation and answer questions for an extended period of time where necessary	7	10.9

3d: Welsh language Skills Levels for Writing		No.	%
No skills		46	71.9
Able to write basic messages – ‘Diolch am y llythyr. Dyma gopi o'r map.’		5	7.8
Able to answer simple correspondence with assistance		2	3.1
Able to draft routine text, with editing assistance		2	3.1
Able to prepare the majority of written material related to the area of work, with some assistance in terms of revision		4	6.3
Skilled – able to complete complex written work without the need for Revision		5	7.8

Staff were asked to think about how they could use Welsh at work, and whether they would be interested in opportunities to learn, develop and improve their skills.

3e: Thinking about how you could use Welsh at work, would you be interested in the opportunity to do any of the following:		No.	%
Learn Welsh (speaking, writing, reading)		27	49.1
Develop specific work-related Welsh language skills (e.g. meet and greet other work area specific languages)		27	49.1
Improve your spoken Welsh		17	30.9
Improve your written Welsh		16	29.1
Other (please specify):		4	7.3