

Welsh Language Report 2023-24

Audit year: 2024-25

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Legislative Context

This annual report has been prepared in accordance with Welsh Language Standards 152, 158 and 164, and will highlight how the Auditor General for Wales and Audit Wales have complied with the Welsh Language Standards which were imposed on them by the Welsh Language Commissioner, set out in the appropriate Compliance Notices.

- Auditor General for Wales Compliance Notice
- Audit Wales Compliance Notice

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions. As well as outlining general compliance, this report also contains the specific information required by the Standards to be published annually.

This includes data on the number of complaints we have received, the Welsh language levels of our staff, the training we offer through the medium of Welsh, and the level of Welsh we require on all vacant and new posts we have advertised during the financial year.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties.

In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales and Audit Wales are relevant third parties.

Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to Audit Wales at infoofficer@audit.wales.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi. Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh

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Introduction

- 1 This annual report on the Welsh language outlines the work done to promote the language within Audit Wales during 2023-24 and gives a snapshot of our position.
- 2 Even though the primary function of this report is to assess compliance, it provides an opportunity for reflection and forward planning.
- 3 Our Welsh Language Strategy is being implemented through an Action Plan, and monitored via a Welsh Language Strategy Group.
- 4 We are updating our Welsh Language Awareness training and developing new modules looking at the history and culture of the language as well as highlighting our statutory obligations.
- 5 The lifting of restrictions on office working and attending conferences/seminars, has allowed Audit Wales to expand on its programme of events, including in-person seminars, workshops, and conferences in partnerships with other stakeholders, partners, and relevant organisations.
- 6 The Welsh Language Standards continue to provide Audit Wales with a framework within which to work and work towards Welsh Government's aspiration of delivering bilingual public services and reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 as per the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy.
- 7 Compliance arrangements relating to the Standards are published on the website, and the 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.
- 8 The Executive Director of Communications and Change is responsible for the strategic overview and corporate governance matters relating to the Welsh language.
- 9 Audit Wales continues to invest in the Welsh language, both to support internal compliance with standards, workforce development and to facilitate partnership and client relationships. This annual report provides updates on positive progress made this year, as well as identifying areas for continued development.

Review of financial year 2023-24

- 10 A range of activities and campaigns were undertaken during the year in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and delivery of the Welsh Language Strategy.
- 11 During 2023-24 we have undertaken a number of initiatives to promote the Welsh language both internally and with partners. In May, our Good Practice Exchange hosted an event 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language' which brought together organisations around Wales to discuss how we can collectively do more to embed language and culture into our everyday lives. Internally, we have

promoted Sh'mae Day, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Defnyddia dy Gymraeg campaign and cultural events such as Welsh Language Music Day and the National Eisteddfod.

- 12 The strategy sets out our current position, our ambitions, and proposed actions to realise those ambitions to be a bilingual organisation and go beyond the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

Welsh Language Awareness training

- 13 Welsh language awareness training was delivered via virtual sessions to new starters, and the process of updating the content and method of delivery has been agreed.
- 14 The Communications team is developing two short videos that will be delivered in 2024-25 to promote the history and culture of the Welsh language and the history of Welsh language legislation and what this means for staff.
- 15 New starters are captured via the on-boarding process while existing staff will be covered through training and our communications channels.

Communicating standards with staff

- 16 Communicating the requirements of the standards to staff ensures an understanding of their individual and collective responsibilities, for example when answering external phone calls or correspondence.
- 17 It is also important to the success of the Welsh language strategy and workforce development that they understand the Welsh-language provision available to them, including learning opportunities, technology, and HR material.
 - new starters 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.
 - staff are provided with tools and guidance on the standards that impact on the way they work. This includes templates for email signatures, "out of office" message and 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 'Tô 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.

Internal Policy

- 18 Our policy on using the Welsh language internally outlines the relevant standards that have an impact on our staff's day-to-day responsibilities.
- 19 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 increased the volume of Welsh language in internal communications, with all-staff emails published bilingually.
- 20 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.
- 21 During the year, we have refreshed our internal communications approaches, including the development of a new intranet platform. As part of this process we have engaged with Welsh speakers in the organisation to ensure their needs were met – this has resulted in greater visibility of the Welsh language on our home channels (including a bilingual greeting for all users).

Welsh Language Strategy

- 22 The Welsh Language Strategy 2023–27 has been approved and supported through the Board and Executive Leadership Team.
- 23 Whilst there is no requirement on Audit Wales to develop a Welsh Language Strategy under the standards, it is felt this is an effective way to demonstrate our commitment, and ensure we go further than just complying.
- 24 A Welsh Language Strategy Group has been established to help drive the Welsh language forward and to ensure delivery of an implementation plan. The group is representative of the organisation and inclusive of key decision makers who can inform decisions. The group reviews the delivery of outcomes and measures from the strategy.
- 25 The Standards provide a baseline and framework and the strategy drives performance and commitment beyond that to strengthen compliance. It provides a focus and drive for the organisation to discharge its duties and responsibilities, with several drivers and priorities inform the strategy and delivery of Welsh language priorities to clients, stakeholders, and staff; covering four key areas of development – recruitment; training; opportunities; and knowledge.
- 26 A significant factor in the delivery of the strategy is to increase the number of, and levels of Welsh speakers across the organisation.

Recruitment

- 27 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 three or more positions will have at least 20% of vacancies being Welsh essential. During 2023/24 we ran 23 recruitment campaigns and recruited nine Welsh speakers into the organisation.
- 28 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

- 29 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, which is aligned to the ALTE Framework.
- 30 The Welsh-language skills of staff at Audit Wales recorded at the end of 2023-24 have remained consistent with 2022-23 with no change in the percentage breakdown. The data by organisation and directorate is as follows:

Table 1: Welsh-language skills of Audit Wales staff

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
0 - Awareness	105 (66%)	107 (71%)	106 (70%)	107 (70%)
1 – Entry	12 (8%)	6 (4%)	9 (6%)	10 (7%)
2 – Foundation	8 (5%)	4 (3%)	4 (3%)	3 (2%)
3 – Intermediate	6 (4%)	7 (5%)	8 (5%)	8 (5%)
4 – Advanced	8 (5%)	11 (7%)	3 (2%)	6 (4%)
5 – Proficiency	19 (12%)	15 (10%)	22 (14%)	19 (12%)

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

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
0 - Awareness	87 (67%)	91 (72%)	90 (70%)	91 (71%)
1 – Entry	10 (8%)	5 (4%)	7 (5%)	6 (5%)
2 – Foundation	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)
3 – Intermediate	5 (4%)	6 (5%)	7 (5%)	6 (5%)
4 – Advanced	8 (6%)	11 (9%)	3 (2%)	6 (5%)
5 – Proficient	16 (12%)	12 (10%)	19 (15%)	16 (13%)

Table 3: Welsh-language skills of Audit Wales staff within our corporate services/communications and change

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
0 - Awareness	18 (64%)	16 (67%)	16 (67%)	16 (64%)
1 – Entry	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	4 (16%)
2 – Foundation	4 (14%)	3 (13%)	2 (8%)	0
3 – Intermediate	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)
5 – Proficient	3 (11%)	3 (13%)	3 (13%)	3 (12%)

Training

Welsh language skills training

31 During 2023-24, staff took part in the courses as shown in Table 5.

Course	Delegates	Completed	In progress
Work Welsh Online 'Croeso' courses Part 1	13	13	0
Work Welsh Online 'Croeso' courses Rhan 2	13	9	4

Training through the medium of Welsh

32 During 2023-24 we offered Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) and Media training bilingually. All training is offered bilingually.

Policy Making

33 We have completed Welsh-language impact assessments in relation to four policies and projects on the Abergele office move, biodiversity plan, travel plan, pay award and the restructure of the data analytics team.

34 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.

Complaints

35 We did not receive any complaints during 2023-24.

Looking forward

36 It is important to look forward and consider what might be achieved and will look to set challenging next steps and targets that will drive the short-term, medium term and long-term agenda at Audit Wales.

37 This will include but not be limited to:

- continued delivery of our Welsh Language Strategy action plan

- review training provision and consult with staff on low uptake/interest
- develop a Welsh Language Skills Policy
- develop safe spaces for learners to use and develop their skills
- training delivery to support staff audit through the medium of Welsh
- to ensure we can offer training through the medium of Welsh as and when required
- work with colleagues in the Good Practice Team to develop and deliver events cognisant of the Welsh language



Audit Wales

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

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