

# Welsh Language Report 2019-20

August 2020



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

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# Detailed report

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## Introduction

- 1 This annual report on the Welsh language outlines the work we have done to promote the language within Audit Wales during 2019-20 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 on 1 April 2020. The Wales Audit Office and the Auditor General have each received separate Welsh-language 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. The 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.

## Communicating standards with staff

- 7 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.
- 8 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 Work Welsh 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 22**.
- 9 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'.
- 10 During the last financial year, we revamped the Welsh Language pages on our intranet, the Hub, that include the above information to ensure the text is clearer and more accessible. It now includes additional advice and extra resources for people wishing to know more about the standards, learning Welsh and our translation function.

- 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 new 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 is due to be reviewed and updated in the summer of 2020.

## 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. Many of the actions described in this year's report derive from this strategy, such as updating our Welsh Language Skills Matrix and our business case for new or vacant roles, using alternative learning Welsh methods, and holding coffee and a chat sessions. There are also other activities not described here such as encouraging Welsh learners to join Welsh-medium audits to help develop their use of Welsh in the workplace.
- 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 An action within the Welsh Language Strategy was to update our questions on Welsh-language skills in our new or vacant post business case. We felt that we could go further in guiding recruiting managers to fully consider the Welsh-language skills needed for the role.
- 17 The updated form asks questions on the extent the postholder would come into contact with people externally, the extent the team can currently meet the language preferences of its clients, and how resilient the team is to respond to changes in staffing and language preferences.
- 18 We monitor the language preferences of our audited bodies through conducting a triennial survey. The last survey was run in March 2019 and the results published in May 2019 and are available to all staff on our intranet. During this round, we especially encouraged organisations to include officers from democratic services, board secretarial support, Welsh-language officers, and heads of finance to get the most accurate picture of language preferences as possible.
- 19 During 2019-20, we advertised for 60 new or vacant positions, recruiting internally and externally across 21 separate campaigns. The Welsh-language skills for three of these positions were advertised as 'essential' and 37 positions advertised as Welsh 'desirable'. The remaining 20 positions did not state a language preference as they were internal roles following a restructure or for redeployment.
- 20 We were successful in recruiting for two of the three Welsh-essential posts. These were for our graduate recruitment programme where we have seen a significant decrease in the number of Welsh-speaking applicants. During 2020-21, we will be working closer with schools, colleges and universities in Wales to encourage more Welsh speakers to apply for our apprentice and graduate trainee programmes.

## Welsh-language skills and training

21 The Welsh-language skills of staff at Audit Wales as of the end of the 2019-20 financial year is outlined in **Table 1**. Since 2014-15, we have seen an increase of eight Welsh speakers at Advanced or Proficient level, which means a total of 12% of the organisation are Welsh speakers. 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 will 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	209	214	214	214
1 – Entry	9	6	9	11
2 – Foundation	10	7	4	4
3 – Intermediate	7	8	9	9
4 – Advanced	11	13	5	6
5 – Proficiency	22	20	27	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>268</b>

- 22 During 2019-20, staff took part in more than 43.5 working days' worth of Welsh-language awareness and/or learning training as shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: 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 2019 to March 2020	35	17.5
Work Welsh Online 'Croeso' course	April 2019 to 22 January 2020	41 (27 new 15 completed)	183
Work Welsh Online 'Gwella' course	April 2019 to 22 January 2020	3	11
Say Something in Welsh	April 2019 to 9 March 2020	8	27
Weekly classes	September 2019 to June 2020	1	60

- 23 This year, we have strongly encouraged staff to learn Welsh through Say Something in Welsh and have had very positive interest and feedback. By being a part of their workplace programme, we receive regular updates on progress and advice on how to help learners in the workplace and hope to continue this in future.
- 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. Coffee and a chat sessions are held every Tuesday at 10 am and provide a space for staff to have a very quick chat in Welsh during the time it takes to make a cup of tea or coffee. It is also an opportunity for non-Welsh speakers to attend to ask about opportunities to learn Welsh and to practise using simple phrases and words. We also have a 'Word of the Moment' on our screens around the offices which includes a phonetic spelling of the words and their translation.

## Policy Making

- 26 We have completed Welsh-language impact assessments in relation to six policies and policy decisions during the year, with a further one in progress as listed in **Table 3**. 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. Incidentally, the current Welsh Language Officer sits on the Equality Interest Group, PAWB, which is consulted with on all policies.

### Table 3: Policies and policy decisions

The policies and policy decisions that were subject to Welsh-language impact assessments during 2019-20.

#### Policy

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Real Time Recording Policy

Financial Audit Lead Assessment

360 Feedback questionnaire

Equality & Diversity Policy

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Partnership Working in the Wales Audit Office

Smarter Working Policy (still in progress)

- 27 Guidance on how to ensure that impact assessments are completed meaningfully in relation to the Welsh language would be greatly appreciated to help us ensure we do this in the best way possible.

## Complaints

- 28 During 2019-20, we did not receive any complaints through the Welsh Language Commissioner or from the public.
- 29 In January 2020, an issue was raised from a member of the public regarding a telephone survey we conducted through the use of a third-party company, but they did not want to make a formal complaint. We contacted the third-party company who took action to rectify the situation with the individual and ensure their staff were fully aware of their Welsh-language responsibilities. We also looked at our Welsh-language expectations on our contracts with third-party companies and have now amended our contracts template to ensure clarity in the future. We also took the opportunity to clarify our internal arrangements for handling complaints, including complaints received in Welsh.



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