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# Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2024-25

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September 2025



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**Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg.**

**This document is also available in Welsh.**



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# **Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2024-25**

**of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales  
for the year ended 31 March 2025**

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# Foreword

I am pleased to present this annual report detailing our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

At PSOW, we wholeheartedly support the Welsh language and are committed to supporting Welsh speakers and promoting the use of the Welsh language.

Our national awareness research shows that Welsh speakers are more likely than average member of the Welsh public to know about us, as well as to have confidence in our office.

Our service is fully bilingual and we always emphasise that contacting us in Welsh will not lead to any delay in how quickly we consider a complaint. This year we saw a big increase in the proportion of our staff with Welsh language skills. Despite this, we still see that very few people use our service in Welsh.

We have continued to work to overturn this trend. We regularly post about our services on social media and take steps to improve our website. We have also attended the National Eisteddfod, with an estimated 1000 visitors to our stand.

We will continue to encourage people to use our service in Welsh and support those that choose to do so in line with our Welsh Language Standards.

**Michelle Morris**

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales  
September 2025



# Background



## Our role

We have three main roles.



We investigate complaints about public services.



We consider complaints about councillors breaching the Code of Conduct.



We drive systemic improvement of public services and standards of conduct in local government in Wales.

## Our ambition



People of Wales feel that public services treat them fairly and respond when things go wrong.



Welsh public services listen to individuals and use their complaints to learn and improve.



Welsh local government is trusted to deliver the highest standards of conduct.



The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales continues to be an influential and respected voice in public service improvement.

## Our principles

We are independent, impartial, fair and open to all who need us.

## Our Welsh language duties

Under our legislation, we must comply with Welsh Language Standards (the Standards). We welcome the use of the Welsh language and we are committed to the aims of the Standards and to meeting the needs of Welsh speakers.

Click [here](#) to find our Welsh Language Standards, our compliance notice and our Welsh Language Policy.

### Responsibilities

Our Management Team has the overall responsibility for the strategic direction and governance of the office. Our Executive Director – Corporate Resources ensures that operational management complies with all legal, statutory and good practice guidance requirements of the Standards.

Day to day responsibility for the Welsh Language sits within our Improvement Team.

Our Head of Policy, Communications and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is responsible for overall policy development and reporting and can be contacted to discuss this report.

All staff receive information about our duties and commitments under the Standards and our Welsh Language Policy and comply and contribute as relevant and appropriate.

### How we prepared this report

In developing this report, we drew on guidance and advice from the Welsh Language Commissioner. The report was approved by our Management Team on 17 September 2025.

## Compliance with the Standards

We assess our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards every two years, in line with monitoring arrangement for organisations named in the No. 2 Welsh Language Standards Regulations.

Our last compliance assessment was due by 20 September 2024. We reviewed our internal documents and practices and reported high level of compliance with the Standards. Following this, we received an invitation from the Welsh Language Commissioner for us to familiarise ourselves with further guidance on policy making standards, as well as queries regarding our compliance with Standard 79 and 133. We supplied further information in March 2025 and our explanations were accepted by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

We take our duty to promote the Welsh language seriously. We regularly commission a survey to check how many people in Wales know about our services. To inform our promotion work, we make sure that we can analyse the results of that survey by

'ability to speak Welsh'. The latest results of this survey (January 2025) show that Welsh speakers are more likely than average members of the Welsh public to know about us, as well as to have confidence in our office.

Our service is fully bilingual and we always emphasise that contacting us in Welsh will not lead to any delay in how quickly we consider a complaint. Despite this, we continue to see that very few people use our service in Welsh.

We know from our casework staff that, while many fluent Welsh speakers choose to use our service in English, they often use Welsh when communicating with us about their case more informally. We will seek to capture that use of Welsh better on our Casework Management System.

We continue to promote our Welsh language service. This year, we again had a stand at the National Eisteddfod.

Click [here](#) to find more information about how to complain to us about our compliance with Welsh Language Standards.

**Our performance  
in 2024-25**



# Service delivery standards

## Use of our services

Service users expressed the preference to communicate with us in Welsh in less than 1% of our complaints in 2024-25.

Our staff are supported on how to make their email signature and out of office replies bilingual and we provide a banner to include in their signature if they are able to communicate in writing in Welsh.

## Correspondence (Standards 1-7)

We state in all emails and letter footers that we welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh, that we will respond to correspondence in Welsh and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay in how we will consider a complaint. We ensure that this happens consistently by including the statement in our standard email and correspondence templates on our casework management system and any emails sent from our 'Outlook' email system.

If anyone writes to us in Welsh, we will automatically reply in Welsh.

## Telephone (Standards 8-22)

All telephone calls are answered bilingually, with the Welsh greeting first. Our automated call answering service is also available in Welsh and callers have the option to choose to speak in Welsh. The Welsh option is always first.

During 2024-25, 157 callers to our office chose the option to speak in Welsh.

We have 3 members of staff who are available to answer the initial calls in Welsh and work on a rota to ensure cover.

Staff have been instructed to change personal answer phone messages, so they are bilingual. Staff have been provided with instructions and training on how to do this.

During 2024-25, in our Intake, Public Services Complaints, Code of Conduct and Improvement Teams we had 21 members of staff who could speak Welsh.

People who contact our office and who wish to have their complaint dealt with in Welsh, are allocated a Welsh speaking case officer for them to contact directly. On occasions where people call a direct number regarding a complaint where the person being called does not speak Welsh, we are able to transfer the call to a Welsh speaker to deal with the enquiry.

People who contact direct line numbers for other enquiries, such as for information about a job application or tender, can be transferred to someone who can speak to them in Welsh, in as far as someone with the requisite knowledge and skills is able to provide them with the service they require.

## Meetings (Standards 24 - 32)

Where we have not had contact and established how a person would want to conduct a meeting, we ascertain which language they would like to use in the meeting.

All larger meetings that we organise have bilingual and 'Welsh first' publicity, announcements and meeting papers and we check with the participants whether they would like to use Welsh, in case translation services are needed.

This year, we organised a training event about our remit and work for advice and advocacy organisations. We also organised a 'round table' event for a different selection of third sector organisations, to gather views on how we have used our power to investigate on our own initiative, to date.

Ahead of both events, we checked if the participants would want to contribute in Welsh. We also invited the participants on the day to use Welsh during the meeting if they so wished.

We generally do not hold meetings that are open to the general public in the delivery of our services and, as such, no meetings or public events were organised in the reporting period.

## **Publicity (Standards 33– 72)**

Our website is fully bilingual, and we always update the Welsh version of the website first. We endeavour to ensure that there are always direct links from English to corresponding Welsh pages and vice versa.

While we received no complaints this year about how we comply with Welsh Language Standards, the Welsh Language Commissioner made us aware of a complaint made to its office about our website. The Commissioner gave us an opportunity to resolve this issue early, without the need for a formal investigation. We addressed the issue promptly and continue to keep the accessibility of our website under review.

We ensure that the Welsh language content always appears first in our social media accounts. During the year, we posted 81 times on X, with many

of the posts replicated on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

Currently, our office receives few visitors, but we have these facilities:

- our door greeting is bilingual with the Welsh first.
- we display a sign in our reception which welcomes the use of the Welsh language.

All staff are able to greet people in Welsh.

There are badges available for staff to wear, who speak fluent Welsh and are able to speak to visitors in Welsh.

## **Procurement (Standards 72– 76)**

Our Procurement Policy states that tender applications in Welsh are welcome and that they will not be treated any less favourably than those submitted in English. During 2024–25, we advertised two tenders. None of the suppliers submitted a tender application in Welsh.

## Promotion of services (Standards 77 - 80)

Our complaints services are fully bilingual. We promoted our Welsh language services using the #DefnyddiaDyGymraeg hashtag.

Our Complaints Standards training is offered in Welsh, English or bilingual delivery. Some organisations talked to us about the option of carrying out the training in Welsh or contributing in Welsh. However, in the end, all organisations that received the training this year opted for the training in English.

All English versions of our reports and other publications include a statement that the document is also available in Welsh.

# Policy making standards

## New or revised policies and procedures (Standards 84– 86)

We make a conscientious effort to consider the potential effects of a policy decision on the Welsh Language. To ensure compliance with the policy making standards, we have in place the following arrangements:

- [Welsh Language Policy](#) – which sets out our duties and commitments with regard to compliance with the policy making standards. The policy was revised during the previous year, in consultation with the Welsh Language Commissioner.
- [Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment Policy and Procedure](#) – which includes a separate assessment of the impact on the Welsh language and aims to:
  - › anticipate or identify the consequences of a policy on individuals or groups of service users/employees and their use of the Welsh Language;
  - › ensure that any negative effects are eliminated or minimised;
  - › maximise opportunities for promoting positive effects.
- Policy Control Procedure – which ensures that all our policies are up to date, consistent in presentation, published appropriately and compliant with our equality and Welsh language duties.
- A dedicated Policy Control Officer – responsible for ensuring that the EIA procedure and the Policy Control Procedure are implemented correctly.

4 EIAs of policies were undertaken in 2024-25. All pointed to neutral impact on the Welsh language, reflecting our compliance with Welsh Language Standards.

## **Consultations (Standards 87 - 89)**

During the year, we undertook one consultation – on our practice of not informing an accused member of a Code of Conduct complaint until after it has been assessed. While the consultation was published bilingually, through oversight we omitted to include in the consultation paper questions about the Welsh language. We will tighten our process to make sure this does not happen again. Of 34 responses to the consultation, 3 were submitted bilingually and 1 in Welsh only.

## **Commissioning research (Standards 91–93)**

We have not commissioned or undertaken any research in pursuit of making a policy decision during 2024-25.

# Operational standards

## Policy for using Welsh internally (Standard 94)

We have in place a Welsh Language Policy, aligned with our duties under the Standards. The policy includes a section clarifying our approach to using Welsh internally. It is available on the Hub/Yr Hwb (our intranet) and our public facing website.

## Employment documents (Standards 95 - 100)

We ask all new colleagues joining us to state whether they would like any correspondence and documents relating to employment, training, performance objectives or career planning in Welsh or English. During 2024-25, 16 new colleagues joined our team, 4 of which were temporary and 4 were bank workers. Of the 16 staff members, 1 had Welsh language requirements.

In the application form, we ask applicants if they would like documentation relating to potential employment in Welsh or English.

## Employment policies (Standards 101 - 107)

All our human resources policies relating to behaviour, health and safety, work place benefits, performance management, absence, working conditions and work patterns are available in Welsh, on both our website and intranet site.

## Staff grievance and disciplinary procedures (Standards 108 - 115)

Our arrangements for grievance and disciplinary procedures can be undertaken in Welsh. We did not receive any grievances in Welsh nor take disciplinary action in Welsh, during 2024-25.

## Technology to facilitate use of Welsh by staff (Standards 116 - 122)

All staff have access to Welsh grammar and spellchecking apps.

All staff have been provided with instructions on how to switch language settings for the following:

- Microsoft EDGE
- Microsoft Outlook  
Language proofing
- Microsoft Windows
- Microsoft Office
- HUB (Home page / News page / Policy page).

We have a site on our Intranet which includes information about our translation process, access to Welsh language training, our duties under the standards and other relevant information.

## Staff Welsh language skills (Standard 123)

We undertake an annual survey of our staff and we collect information on the level of Welsh language skills as part of that survey.

In 2024-25, 12% of our staff said that Welsh was their main language. This was an increase from 8% last year.

The proportion of people who spoke Welsh fairly well or fluently has increased compared to the previous year:

- Speaking: 28% (compared to 21%)
- Reading: 27% (compared to 24%)
- Writing: 26% (compared to 21%)
- Understanding: 28% (compared to 21%).

Whilst we hold and have analysed the data, owing to the small numbers of staff at certain levels or in certain teams, it is not feasible for us to share data relating to Welsh speakers at different grades or in different teams without risking the identification of individuals and the disclosure of personal data.

## Training and communication support (Standards 124 - 131)

Attention to the Welsh Language Standards is included in our induction programme (Module 2 – Introduction to the Organisation). Much of our induction material is available in Welsh, though, as yet, there has been no call to have it delivered in the Welsh language.

We encourage staff to learn Welsh, including in work time, and we support those who wish to continue to improve their Welsh to do so. We supported 3 colleagues to undertake Welsh language training during the year.

We support the use of the Welsh language in meetings and interviews. On-line training from our training provider, iHASCO, has the narration and script available in Welsh. This includes Health & Safety training. We have not provided training on the other elements included under standard 124 (in English or Welsh) during 2024-25.

## Recruitment (Standards 132 - 136)

Our Recruitment and Selection Policy confirms that we will not commence the recruitment procedure until the need for Welsh language skills has been assessed and recorded. We establish the need for Welsh language skills as part of the development of individual job descriptions and person specifications, based on skills shortages and needs within the organisation. We detail the need for Welsh language skills in both the job description and advertisement, prior to the vacancy going "live".

We advertise all our vacancies bilingually and the advertisements state that applications may be submitted in Welsh and that an application submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than an application submitted in English. All documents published as part of the recruitment pack are published bilingually. Our recruitment forms give applicants an opportunity to indicate whether they would want the recruitment process to be conducted in Welsh.

We always seek to communicate with the job applicant in the language of their choice. This includes the 'offer letter'. Following feedback from the Welsh Language Commissioner, we also now ensure that calls to notify successful applicants are made according to the applicant's language preference.

## **Signs (Standards 138–139)**

As we rent our offices, we do not have control of the permanent external signs to our office. However, all our new temporary and permanent signs, put up since the introduction of the Standards, are fully compliant.



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