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Ugain Mlynedd
Twenty Years

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2025-26

September 2026



We can provide a summary of this document in accessible formats, including Braille, large print and Easy Read.

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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 2025-26

of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
for the year ended 31 March 2026

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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.

Once again, our national awareness research showed this year that Welsh speakers were 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. We also continue to see an increase in the proportion of our staff with Welsh language skills.

Despite this, we still see that very few people interact with our service in Welsh. Only very few people ask us to communicate with them in Welsh only or use some Welsh when they speak to us. Also, our Welsh language website remains underused.

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 also attended the National Eisteddfod, with an estimated 1600 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.

In April 2026, we launched our new Strategic Plan 2026-29 in which we explicitly commit to increase the number of interactions with our service in Welsh. We look forward to this work.

Michelle Morris

Public Services Ombudsman
for Wales

September 2026

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.



We continue to be an influential and respected voice in public service improvement.

Our principles

We are **independent**. We are funded by and accountable to Senedd Cymru.

We are **impartial and fair**. We do not take sides. We examine the facts before us and reach our own, unbiased conclusions.

We are **open to all who need us**. Our service is free to use, and we are committed to ensuring seamless access, for all.

We are **people centred**. We understand that people come to us at difficult moments, and that complaints processes can feel daunting. Whatever the outcome, everyone who interacts with us should feel respected, heard and understood.

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.

[Go to 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.

Our Head of Policy and Engagement 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 final report was approved by our Management Team on 12 August 2026.

Compliance with the Standards

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

Our last compliance assessment was submitted on 14 January 2026. We reviewed our internal documents and practices and reported almost universally a high level of compliance with the Standards. The areas where compliance was not high related to

- isolated instances where the English version of a document or form did not include a clear statement that the form was also available in Welsh.
- some instances where our Welsh Language and Equality Impact Assessments were not completed as promptly as they should have been.

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 2026) showed that Welsh speakers were 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. This year we started to capture the number of people who use some Welsh when speaking to us. However, this number remains low.

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

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

Our performance in 2025-26



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 2025-26.

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 2025-26, 128 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 2025-26, in our Intake, Public Services Complaints and Code of Conduct Teams we had 14 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 three online engagement sessions, open to the public, as part of our consultation on our new Strategic Plan.

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.

Publicity (Standards 33– 72)

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

We ensure that the Welsh language content always appears first in our social media accounts. During the year, we posted 79 times on Facebook, 72 times on LinkedIn and 64 times on 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 2025–26, 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.

Our Complaints Standards training is offered in Welsh, English or bilingual delivery.

All English versions of our reports and other publications include a statement that the document is also available in Welsh. This was with the exception of a few isolated instances this year where an English version of a document or form did not include that statement.

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.
- [Welsh Language and Equality Impact Assessment \(WL&EIA\) 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.

Our Head of Policy and Engagement is responsible for ensuring that the WL&EIA procedure is implemented correctly.

6 EIAs of policies or projects were undertaken in 2025-26. Where a small risk of negative impact was identified in three instances, appropriate mitigation was put in place.

Beyond that, all assessments pointed to positive or neutral impact on the Welsh language, reflecting our compliance with Welsh Language Standards.

Consultations (Standards 87 - 89)

During the year, we undertook two consultations open to the general public – on our proposed own initiative investigation into responding to reports of disrepair, damp and mould from vulnerable tenants; and on our proposed Strategic Plan 2026-29. The consultations were published bilingually. The consultation documents included an overview of the relevant information that could inform evaluation of possible impact on the Welsh language.

Commissioning research (Standards 91–93)

We have not commissioned or undertaken any research in pursuit of making a policy decision during 2025-26.

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. [Go to our 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 2025-26, 12 new colleagues joined our organisation. 2 of these roles had Welsh as essential on the Job Description. Welsh is desirable on all job descriptions where it has not been identified as essential/compulsory.

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, workplace benefits, performance management, absence, working conditions and work patterns are available in Welsh.

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 2025-26.

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 2025-26, 12% of our staff said that Welsh was their main language – the same proportion as last year.

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

- speaking: 30% (compared to 28%)
- reading: 28% (compared to 27%)
- writing: 25% (compared to 26%)
- understanding: 29% (compared to 28%).

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 2 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 2025-26.

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'. We also 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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