

Welsh Language Scheme Compliance Report 2022/23

August 2023



Welsh Language Scheme - Annual Compliance Report 2022/23

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1. Introduction

Qualifications Wales is a bilingual organisation that communicates through both Welsh and English.

In 2011, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure was introduced, making Welsh an official language in Wales, and introducing a set of legally binding requirements known as the Welsh Language Standards. The Measure introduced the principle that Welsh must be treated no less favourably than English.

No statutory requirements have yet been applied to Qualifications Wales, although we expect to be included in the Welsh Language Standards in time.

Qualifications Wales embraces its responsibilities as a public sector body. Although not yet expected to meet the Welsh Language Standards, we have confirmed our commitment to developing and implementing a [Welsh Language Scheme](#) (the Scheme) on a voluntary basis.

The current Scheme was introduced in 2019. The Scheme sets out how Qualifications Wales will deliver Welsh language services as part of its day-to-day operations.

The legislation that created Qualifications Wales requires us to have regard to 'eight matters' in considering how the organisation delivers its functions. One of these 'matters' states 'the desirability of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language'.

We were already delivering many of the commitments included in the Scheme prior to April 2019. However, the Scheme aims to create ongoing focus to achieve further improvements in the delivery of a bilingual workplace and Welsh-language provision throughout our work.

Discussions had been held with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office prior to publishing the Scheme and a copy was provided to them. All update reports are also provided to the Commissioner's office.

2. Our Commitment

We have embraced the principle of treating the English and Welsh languages equally in the conduct of our public business and communications in Wales and have voluntarily adopted a comprehensive scheme that demonstrates our commitment to promoting and supporting the Welsh Language. The scheme sets out how we will give effect to the principle of equity when delivering our functions and communicating with the public in Wales.

The scheme aims to make our organisation inclusive and accessible to Welsh speakers, enabling them to engage with us comfortably in their preferred language.

Alongside the Welsh Language Scheme we have developed a [Choice for All](#) strategy which clearly sets out our commitment to the Welsh language and our aim to increase the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications. The strategy emphasises our intention to work with awarding bodies and other partners in order to contribute towards Welsh Government's [Cymraeg 2050](#) priorities.

By giving equal importance to both the English and Welsh languages we contribute to the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act's](#) goal of 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' by preserving, promoting, and celebrating the linguistic diversity of Wales

3. The Scheme

The Scheme has four elements (or 'areas of focus'), as set out in the Welsh Language Commissioner's guidelines. These follow the key headings of the Welsh Language Standards (no.2) Regulations 2016, which we expect to be asked to comply with in due course. These include:

- service delivery
- policy making
- internal operations
- administering and monitoring the Scheme

Some of the four areas cut across the organisation. Some are the responsibility of specific teams within Qualifications Wales. The overall Scheme is owned by the Board of Qualifications Wales, which, together with the Executive, takes responsibility for ensuring we deliver on our commitments, and seeks to make improvements where possible and appropriate.

4. 2022/23 Compliance

During 2022/23 we complied with our Welsh Language Scheme by actively working to provide a welcoming and inclusive experience for Welsh speakers engaging with our organisation and investing in professional translation services to ensure our documentation and public-facing materials were readily available in both English and Welsh. We actively engaged with Welsh Language organisations, educational groups, and learners to ensure their voices and experiences were reflected in our work, and continued to encourage Welsh language training, programmes, and resources to our staff.

4.1. Key Highlights

Through our wider Welsh language strategy, we:

- Worked with awarding bodies, centres, and stakeholders to identify priority areas and qualifications to be made available in Welsh for post-16 learners.
- Monitored the impact of grant funding on the uptake of Welsh-medium qualifications by including a requirement in our grant conditions that awarding bodies collect and share data with us.
- Launched a consultation on proposed requirements on promoting the availability of, and facilitating access to, Welsh-medium qualifications.
- Focused the Welsh language grant funding on priorities identified through our work with awarding bodies, centres and stakeholders and undertook regular monitoring and reporting against the six key indicators from the strategy.

- Provided £730k grant funding to promote and support Welsh medium and bilingual qualifications.
- Awarded £120k through competitive grant funding to support awarding bodies to make more qualifications available through the medium of Welsh and provided £410k of grant funding to the WJEC to contribute to the cost of preparing bilingual qualifications.
- Continued to manage the Welsh for Adults grant and Welsh Language Support grant and ran a seminar with interested awarding bodies to promote and explain the grants available for translating qualifications into the medium of Welsh.
- Worked with awarding bodies and stakeholders such as the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Welsh Government and learning providers to identify qualifications that should be prioritised to be made available in Welsh.
- Launched a new strategic partnership with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to work together so that learners and apprentices who choose Welsh-medium and bilingual provision have accessible bilingual qualifications available in all relevant subject areas.
- Developed and published an interactive resource pack, '[Cynnig Cymraeg - Active Offer](#)' to support awarding bodies to promote Welsh-medium or bilingual qualifications to learners in Wales.

The following sections outline how we have complied with each of our commitments under the Welsh Language Scheme during 2022/23. Some of the highlights include:


- Published 78 publications/reports during 2022/23, all of which were bilingual. These included regulation and research reports, and statistical information.
- Published 3798 social media posts across several platforms, all of which were bilingual.
- Translated 778,863 words.


4.2. Service Delivery

✓	When we received letters or emails in Welsh, we responded in Welsh.
✓	We worked to ensure individual language preferences were recorded on our CRM database so we could communicate with people in their preferred language. Where we were unsure of language preference, we initiated formal correspondence bilingually.
✓	We greeted callers bilingually and those who wanted to continue their conversation in Welsh were able to do so.
✓	Our signage in the reception area encouraged visitors to converse in Welsh if that was their preferred language and our reception staff were provided with training and instruction on responding appropriately to both Welsh and English-speaking visitors.
✓	To help ensure visitors and callers were able to converse with us in Welsh we kept an up-to-date list of bilingual staff members and made it available to reception staff.














✓	Our out-of-hours service provided Welsh and English information options.
✓	Advertisements and invitations for our public events were promoted bilingually and we aimed to ensure Welsh-speaking staff were available at events to speak to members of the public/event attendees whose preference was to speak Welsh. We also made simultaneous translation available wherever possible.
✓	When we published reports or minutes of events we ran, these were made available in Welsh and English.
✓	Documents we produced in relation to Wales were provided in Welsh and English and publicity materials and publications were produced bilingually.
✓	When documents were produced and published bilingually, we made sure they were available at the same time, and we used a high-quality translation service.
✓	Our website is fully bilingual and our social media messages were published in Welsh and English.
✓	We gave Welsh and English equal prominence in terms of format in the use of all materials and communications we made public.

4.3. Policy Making

	When approving new corporate employee policies or reviewing existing ones we considered how the policy decision would affect the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language. However, we found that this was not always documented. To ensure a more consistent approach to documenting Welsh language opportunities we will amend the Equalities Impact Assessment template to add consideration of the Welsh Language.
✓	Our Strategic Equalities Objectives referenced our Welsh Language Scheme. Our equalities objectives helped us focus on ensuring our regulated qualifications were designed, delivered, assessed, and awarded in a way that was fair for all types of learners, including Welsh speakers. They also helped us ensure that we communicated, engaged, and consulted with diverse groups including those from Welsh speaking communities. Our 2022/23 Strategic Equality Progress Report provides an overview of how we achieved our objectives over the past year and how we monitored our equal treatment of Welsh and English as part of our equalities work.
✓	When we carried out consultations in relation to our regulatory functions, we engaged Welsh speakers and encouraged them to contribute.
✓	Our Regulatory documents were available in Welsh and English and when we created/reviewed existing regulatory policies we considered the implications for the Welsh Language.
✓	We monitored engagement with Welsh-speakers in our consultation processes to ensure representation and engagement where appropriate. We consulted on several proposals including the Full 14-16 Offer and promoting and facilitating Welsh-medium qualifications.
✓	Documents used to recruit research respondents were available in Welsh and English.
✓	Research reports that we produced, or which were published on our behalf were usually done so in Welsh and English. The exception to this was when a report or section of a report was not intended for the general public or had very limited readership.

	The requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme were provided to contractors appointed to undertake research on our behalf and we built the requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme into research briefs and contracts as appropriate.
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4.4. Internal Operations

	When posts became vacant, we assessed the Welsh-language requirements and advertised vacant posts in Welsh and English where Welsh-language skills were required for the post.
	Shortlisted Welsh-speaking candidates were offered the option of an interview conducted in Welsh with simultaneous translation if required and successful candidates were provided with a contract of employment in Welsh if requested.
	We made staff aware that several employment processes could be provided in Welsh and provided opportunities for staff to undertake basic and further Welsh-language courses.
	We considered opportunities for senior managers to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role; including training on using Welsh in meetings, interviews, and formal procedures.
	We provided regular opportunities for our staff to raise awareness about the Welsh language, its history, and its role in Welsh culture.
	We procured training in Welsh and English if it was available and met our quality standards.
	We kept a record of all Welsh-speakers in the organisation, based on an annual assessment and reported the numbers of Welsh-speakers, those learning Welsh and the opportunities available to staff to learn more about the Welsh language and culture in our Annual Accounts.
	We included the Welsh Language Scheme in our induction process.
	All our external and internal organisational signage was bilingual.
	Our email signatures were bilingual.
	While our monitoring activities highlighted that the majority of our staff's out of office messages were bilingual we did identify some gaps. To help ensure organisational wide compliance with this commitment, we will review our standard bilingual out of office templates and make them more accessible to all staff.
	For any staff members who regularly write in Welsh, we provide software for checking spelling and grammar in Welsh. Our monitoring activities highlighted that there is a variety of different software being accessed by staff who regularly write in Welsh. However we intend to make this more accessible and we will work to ensure our systems allow all staff to access the software that can check Welsh spelling and grammar.
	We published contract notices for procurement purposes and invitations to tender in Welsh and English where a significant part of the contract required Welsh-language skills.

✓	Tender responses received in Welsh were treated no less favourably than tenders in English and the time frame for tenders was the same for Welsh responses as those in English.
✓	Our translators and interpreters were members of the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters or had satisfied our quality assurance criteria during a formal procurement exercise.
✓	We provided instructions for staff handling contracts and procurement to help ensure they met the requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme and made sure contractors were aware of the scheme and our commitment to the Welsh language.
✓	Grant application packs and application processes were made available bilingually and we treated applications for grants in Welsh no less favourably than applications in English. We applied the same timescales in our administration of grants in whichever language they were submitted.

4.5. Administering and Monitoring

✓	We monitored the deliver and reporting of the Welsh Language Scheme and our website provided information on how complaints about our Welsh Language Scheme could be made.
✓	We ran the annual Lite Bite session to promote the Welsh Language Scheme to all staff.
⚠	We are committed to promoting the Welsh Language Scheme to all staff. Training sessions to provide an overview of the Scheme and promote the Welsh language in a wider context were introduced in the last two years. These have been well received by staff and will continue. However, we will broaden this to include a specific information session for members of the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) on what they can do as leaders to help us ensure the scheme is embedded across the organisation. We have also joined Welsh Governments 'Leading in a Bilingual Country' programme which aims to help organisations explore how they can further develop a culture of bilingualism.

5. Forward Look

Our journey towards complying with our Welsh Language Scheme has been marked with significant progress and achievements and we continue to demonstrate our commitment to language equality within Wales.

Through our regulatory work, our ambitious programme of reform, engagement with the Welsh language community and our commitment to developing our staff's language skills, we have created an environment that values and supports the Welsh language.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to continuous compliance with our Welsh Language Scheme and to delivering linguistic parity, accessibility, and inclusivity. We will continue to engage stakeholders, evaluate our practices, and embrace innovative approaches to further enhance our support for the Welsh language.