



Snowdonia National Park Authority's Welsh Language Standards: 2021/22 Monitoring Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On the 30th of September 2015, the Welsh Language Commissioner issued the Authority with a Compliance Notice in accordance with section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which confirmed the Welsh Language Standards that the Authority is subject to.
- 1.2 As in required on an annual basis, this Monitoring Report looks back over the financial year 2021-22, and reports on how the Authority has complied with, and performed against each of the 162 Standards given to it.
- 1.3 This Annual Report is presented for approval to the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in June each year, before being published on the Authority's website. Publicity is given to the Annual Report via the Authority's social media channels.
- 1.4 The Head of Administration and Customer Care has the day-to-day responsibility over implementing the standards, and contact should be made by sending an e-mail to Bethan.Hughes@eryri.llyw.cymru or by telephoning 01766 772530 to discuss any matter relating to this report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The 2021-22 financial year has seen continued staff turnover, with 35 new or vacant posts being advertised during the year. Appointments were not made first time to all posts with many having to be re-advertised. On the 31st of March 2022, the Authority had 141 staff, of which 135 were able to undertake the duties of their post bilingually, which is 95.7%.
- 2.2 Staff recruitment and retention continues to be a major issue for the Authority, although we are not alone with this problem. Nationally, all kinds of organisations and businesses are experiencing difficulties in recruiting for positions at all levels. Wales Audit Office had already highlighted this as a risk area, in their report on the Authority's resilience in the provision of its services.

- 2.3 During the year, the Chief Executive commissioned research into Authority's salaries, which concluded that the Authority's pay structure was not competitive, compared to other public sector employers in Northwest Wales.
- 2.4 Members also recommended that acknowledging bilingualism should be included within the review of the Authority's pay structure. Members considered that the ability to be bilingual was essential in enabling the Authority to provide its services - there is a business case to recognise such in its pay structure.
- 2.5 Members agreed that a common standard across the workforce would be desirable. It was agreed that the current adopted Welsh language skills framework, could be adjusted for such a purpose. The framework sets out clearly the expectations and attainment of the Welsh language for all posts in four areas.
- 2.6 After staff and union consultation, the expected linguistic standard for both languages before progression onto the final pay point in any pay band was agreed. The linguistic standard for most jobs as identified under Welsh language skills framework, will however mostly be higher than a common standard across the Authority.
- 2.7 The attainment levels for both languages for the pay structure were set at
Listening (3)
Reading (2)
Talking (3) and
Writing (2).
- 2.8 Throughout 2021-22 the majority of head office staff continued to work from home, as various restrictions were put in place and lifted throughout the year.
- 2.9 A new VoIP telephone system was installed in April 2021, which now enables all staff to answer telephone calls to their direct office number both over their laptop and through an app on a mobile phone. This new system now ensures that staff who are working from home are contactable by members of the public as if they were in the office, which enables a seamless service.
- 2.10 All staff are instructed to set a bilingual voice mail message on their direct line numbers. However, if a personalised message hasn't been set for whatever reason, the voice mail message automatically defaults to a standard bilingual message set for reception, therefore ensuring compliance with the relevant Standards.
- 2.11 In November 2021 the Authority approved for publication, a report assessing the outcome of the Authority's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. The report highlighted examples of the positive work that has been done over the last 5 years in promoting and raising awareness of the Welsh language.

- 2.12 Unfortunately, without the 2021 Census results, it is impossible to conclude if the target of a 2% increase in the number of Welsh speakers within the National Park had been reached.
- 2.13 Initial scoping work has commenced on producing a new strategy for the 5 next years, with a Member Steering Group due to be established at the Annual General Meeting of the Authority this summer, to drive the process forward.
- 2.14 In April 2021, a complaint was made to the Welsh Language Commissioner that the pre-book parking system that was implemented at Pen y Pass, did not enable an individual to proceed through the entire booking process through Welsh. This service, available by clicking a link from the Authority's website to a third-party provider, was not fully bilingual despite assurances from the company that this was possible prior to signing the initial contract.
- 2.15 After an investigation by the Welsh Language Commissioner, a Decision Notice was issued on the 15th of October 2021 confirming the Authority's failure to conform with Standards 50, 52 and 56.
- 2.16 The Authority was asked to draw up an action plan outlining the steps to be taken to ensure compliance with the appropriate Standards, and a timescale of a year was given to be fully compliant.
- 2.17 One of the difficulties the Authority faced with implementing such a system, is that it had to be fully integrated with ANPR technology, as the ultimate intention for the future is that the system can operate with minimum staffing resources. The limited number of companies that can both offer this technology and were willing to develop a bilingual solution was extremely limited.
- 2.18 Despite this, a contract was entered into with JustPark, and a system was implemented in time for the Easter holidays in April this year. At the time of writing, there are a couple of minor issues which are still to be resolved to ensure full compliance with the relevant Standards, and officers continue to work with the company to address these.
- 2.19 There were no other complaints regarding the Welsh language provision of services in any other area of the Authority's work during the year.
- 2.20 In conclusion, the Welsh language continues to be an integral part of the Authority's identity and culture, and this is reflected in the work that is done and the services provided.

3. Service Delivery Standards

- 3.1 Correspondence (Standards 1-7): The Authority sends out correspondence in the language of choice of the recipient, or in cases when this is not known a bilingual version of the correspondence is sent.
- 3.2 When bilingual correspondence is sent out, the Welsh and English language is treated equally by appearing side by side (where this is possible), with the same font and size used in both languages. On rare occasions when separate Welsh and English correspondence is produced, both versions are identical in terms of font and size, including contact details, signatures etc.
- 3.3 Telephone Calls (Standards 8-22): All staff who work at the Authority's main receptions and Information Centres are fully bilingual and accordingly are able to deal with all enquiries through the medium of Welsh at the first point of contact.
- 3.4 The Authority has an automated menu on the main contact number, which gives a choice to proceed in Welsh or English. Menu choices are then given in the language chosen. The pre-recorded message for out of hours is bilingual with the message in Welsh being transmitted first.
- 3.5 When contact is made through a direct line telephone number, staff are instructed to greet the caller with a bilingual greeting (with the Welsh first) or with a neutral greeting, ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language.
- 3.6 When contact is made through a direct line telephone number, staff are instructed to set a bilingual message on their voice mail, with the Welsh message playing first.
- 3.7 As the majority of the Authority staff are bilingual, any calls from Welsh speakers are dealt with at the first point of contact. For the staff that are not fully able to carry out a conversation in Welsh, they will transfer the call to a colleague without any delay.
- 3.8 During the year, the majority of office staff have continued to work from home. The new telephone system installed by the Authority in April 2021 now enables staff to answer their direct line office telephone numbers through an app on their mobile phone and through their laptop.

- 3.9 Meetings (Standards 23-38): All meetings arranged with an individual have and will continue to be conducted in the language of choice of the individual. For meetings that have been arranged for a group of individuals, they will be conducted in Welsh with simultaneous translation being arranged for any non-Welsh speakers in attendance (unless none of the invited individuals are able to communicate in Welsh, in which case the meeting will be conducted in English).
- 3.10 All public meetings of the Authority have and will continue to be conducted in Welsh with simultaneous translation available for those who cannot communicate through the Welsh language.
- 3.11 During the year, the majority of public meetings continued to be held virtually using Zoom, as this was the only software that was able to successfully accommodate simultaneous translation services. However, the Authority's Committees which are usually open for the public to observe were neither broadcasted live nor available for the public to join the meeting virtually.
- 3.12 Changes are currently being implemented to enable the Authority to commence broadcasting some of its committees and to put in place systems to enable hybrid meetings, therefore enabling the public to access the meetings virtually or in person.
- 3.13 All publicity, written materials and any documentation produced by the Authority and handed out at public events or meetings are fully bilingual, with the Welsh and English languages treated equally.
- 3.14 Public Documentation (Standards 40-51): All the Authority's public documents, including forms are bilingual with the Welsh appearing first or on the left hand side of the document. The Welsh and English languages are treated equally, with the same font and size of text used for both languages. The Welsh and English language versions are usually in a separate document when they are published on the website, and a sentence is included on the English version, stating that a Welsh version is available.
- 3.15 During the year, a compliance investigation by the Welsh Language Commissioner's office noted that not all documents published on the website had the sentence noting that a Welsh language version was available on the English document. During the process of transferring documents on to the new website, all documents were checked and for those that did not include the statement, this was added to ensure compliance.
- 3.16 Website, Apps and Social Media (Standards 52-59): The Authority's website and apps are fully bilingual with the user being able to choose their preferred language on the home page. Every single page of the new website has a toggle button which can be used to access the other language. All pages correspond fully between both languages.

- 3.17 During the year, a compliance investigation by the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office noted that on the recruitment pages on the website, there were 2 headings in English on the Welsh pages. The problem was quickly rectified with the website company.
- 3.18 The Authority has corresponding Welsh and English versions of twitter accounts and a bilingual version of Facebook. All messages from the Authority are replicated identically on the Welsh and English versions of the various social media sites, or bilingually in some instances. Any messages received in Welsh through social media are always answered in Welsh.
- 3.19 All the Authority's pay and display machines in the car parks are able to provide the service in Welsh and English. On older machines, the initial screen displays a language choice before proceeding whilst newer machines change language every 3 seconds.
- 3.20 Since the summer of 2020, Eryri (Snowdonia) has experienced unprecedented numbers of visitors, which caused public safety problems around irresponsible parking experienced around Yr Wyddfa. Following a pre-book parking pilot for a few weeks at Pen y Pass in August 2020, a 1 year contract was signed with Just Park to trial a sustainable solution for the longer term. Despite assurances of being able to supply a Welsh and English service, the system was not fully bilingual and a formal complaint was submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner in early April 2021.
- 3.21 On the 15th of October 2021, the Commissioner issued a Decision Notice which concluded that the Authority was in breach of the Welsh Language Standards 50, 52 and 56.
- 3.22 The Authority was asked to produce an Acton Plan detailing how it would ensure compliance and was given a year to comply.
- 3.23 A bilingual pre-booking system was put in place in time for the Easter holidays in April 2022.
- 3.24 Signs (Standards 61-63): All signs erected by the Authority are fully bilingual, with the Welsh appearing first or on the left hand side. The Welsh and English languages are treated equally, with the same font and size of text used for both languages.
- 3.25 Reception Services (Standards 64-68): As previously stated all staff who work at the main reception areas or at Information Centres are fully bilingual. Each reception has the 'Iaith Gwaith' logo on display to indicate that a Welsh service is available and all reception staff have been given 'Iaith Gwaith' badges.

- 3.26 Official Notices (Standards 69-70): When the Authority publishes or displays an Official Notice they are always fully bilingual, with the Welsh appearing first or on the left hand side. The Welsh and English languages are treated equally, with the same font and size of text used for both languages.
- 3.27 Grant Schemes (Standards 71-75): The Authority has several grant schemes, namely
- Snowdonia Partnership Fund;
 - Grants for the repair of listed buildings at risk in Snowdonia;
 - Building grants in Dolgellau through the Dolgellau Townscape Heritage Initiative;
 - Cronfa Cymunedol y Carneddau which is funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund; and
 - Celtic Rainforest Fund which is funded by the EU LIFE.
- 3.28 For each of the grant schemes, all documentation including application forms and guidance notes are fully bilingual, and correspondence is carried out in the language of choice of the applicant or bilingually.
- 3.29 In addition, for those grants which are for community based projects, events and activities; conditions are set upon the grant to ensure that all activities and documentation funded by the grants are fully bilingual.
- 3.30 Although these measures have been in place for years, the Welsh Language Standards require that we have a formal Policy on Awarding Grant in relation to the Welsh language implications. To ensure compliance with the relevant Standard, a formal Policy on Awarding Grants was developed and adopted during the year.
- 3.31 All staff who have responsibility over administering grant schemes have been advised of the new policy and understand how to implement it.
- 3.32 Contract Tenders (Safonau 76-80): All Public Notices for Invitations to Tender or to Express an Interest are produced bilingually and usually published on the Authority's website. They are also published on the Sell2Wales website bilingually.
- 3.33 All submissions received in Welsh have been processed and treated in the same way as submission in English, and correspondence is carried out in the language of choice of the applicant or bilingually.

- 3.34 Corporate Identity and Promoting Services (Standards 81-83): The Authority's corporate identity has been fully bilingual since its inception, with the Welsh and English language being treated on the basis of equality. Any future changes or rebranding of the corporate identity will always adhere to this founding principle.
- 3.35 The Authority does not provide the same services separately in Welsh and English, but rather offers a bilingual service with one point of contact. The promotion of any services is therefore done bilingually in line with the Authority's corporate identity, ensuring that the Welsh and English language is treated on the basis of equality.
- 3.36 Education Courses (Standards 84-86): Until March 2020, Plas Tan y Bwlch the Authority's Study Centre, offered public education courses, which were subject to an assessment of the need for the courses to be offered through the medium of Welsh.
- 3.37 Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the running of day and residential courses has ceased. Commercial activity at the Centre currently extends to Bed & Breakfast accommodation and third party events only.
- 3.38 Public Address System (Standard 87): The Authority currently does not have any public address systems in place across its buildings.
- 3.39 Complaints relating to Complying with the Service Delivery Standards
During the year 1 complaint was received relating to the way in which the Authority complied with the Service Delivery Standards. That complaint related to the pre-book parking system in place through the Authority's website. Details have been included under 3.20 – 3.23.

4. Policy Making Standards

- 4.1 Policy Formulation and Associated Consultation (Standards 88-93): With every new policy* that is developed (or if a present policy is revised and updated) an Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment screening process is undertaken as part of the process. This integrated assessment process has this year been extended to include the socio-economic duty.
**Policy is defined in its wider context to include plans and strategies*
- 4.2 The screening process will determine if the proposed policy will or is likely to have a negative effect on the Welsh language or the ability of people to use the Welsh language. The assessment will also identify the potential for the proposed policy to have a positive effect on the language either through its use or through its promotion.

- 4.3 If the proposed policy goes out to public consultation, the responses received through the consultation will be taken into account in full when undertaking the impact assessment. Members of the Authority will also have an opportunity to scrutinise the proposed policy at various points through the process. If a negative impact were to be identified, a fully equality impact assessment would take place to identify mitigation measures required and to decide whether to proceed with the policy.
- 4.4 During a compliance investigation, the Welsh Language Commissioner's office noted that not all the Authority's consultation documents from the Planning Policy service included the required wording which specifically asks about the potential effect that particular policy could have on the Welsh language or the ability to use the Welsh language.
- 4.5 As a result, the requirements under the Standards were discussed and made clear to Planning Policy staff. In addition, a Guidance Document was produced which outlined the requirements and which gave examples of appropriate wording to use in different consultation documents, which has been circulated to all services within the Authority.
- 4.6 Awarding Grants and Commissioning Research and Projects (Standards 94-97): The requirement to take into consideration the effect (both positive or negative) on the Welsh language has been fully integrated into Cronfa Eryri, the new commissioning fund. Additional conditions on the use and the promotion of Welsh, and to ensure equality for the Welsh language will continue to be part of the fund's requirements.
- 4.7 During the year, research was commissioned from Cronfa Eryri on one of Eryri's (Snowdonia) special qualities, namely Tranquillity and Solitude. A survey was undertaken with residents of the National Park to seek their views. The survey respondents were able to undertake the survey through Welsh or English.
- 4.8 The research gathered the views of residents on many aspects surrounding this special quality. Many residents raised concerns around second home owners and the effect visitors have on our culture and language. The research outcomes will be used as part of ongoing work to realise the vision of Cynllun Eryri.
- 4.9 Complaints relating to Complying with the Policy Making Standards
During the year no complaints were received relating to the way in which the Authority complied with the Policy Making Standards

5. Operational Standards

- 5.1 On the 31st of March 2022, the Authority employed 142 staff of which 136 are fully bilingual, representing 95.7%.
- 5.2 Using Welsh internally (Standard 98): Since its inception, the Authority has established through custom and practice that the main language of internal communications is Welsh, with English being used as required. Staff are aware that any general written communication directed at all staff (such as e-mails) are to be produced bilingually.
- 5.3 Staff Documentation (Standards 99-104): The Authority has a fully bilingual policy in place for all personnel matters. This means that all documentation relating to the employment of an individual is produced bilingually as standard and given to all staff members. Any correspondence that is sent out periodically from the personnel service to individual staff members is also produced bilingually.
- 5.4 Personnel Policies (Standards 105-111): All personnel policies are produced bilingually as standard.
- 5.5 Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures (Standards 112-119): Staff are welcome to correspond in the language of their choice. Both Welsh and English are treated equally and there would be no delay in responding to correspondence received in either language. Disciplinary or appeal hearings are all conducted in the language of choice of the staff member, as well as all related documentation and correspondence.
- 5.6 Computer Software (Standard 120): Every staff computer and laptop has Cysgliad installed for checking spelling and grammar in Welsh, as standard.
- 5.7 Staff and Members Intranet (Standards 121-126): Currently, the new website which was launched in April 2022 does not have a Staff and Members intranet.
- 5.8 Skills Assessment (Standard 127): Data from the staff skills assessment is set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.9 Training (Standards 128-133): General training courses are always provided in Welsh where possible. During 2022-23, no members of staff attended a course entirely through Welsh.
- 5.10 Employees who cannot fully communicate in Welsh are encouraged to attend Welsh language courses and training, which can be undertaken in work time. One member of staff attended Welsh / Improving Welsh courses during the year.

- 5.11 E-mail Signatures and Contact Details (Standards 134-135): The Authority uses the 'Iaith Gwaith' badge for Welsh language speakers and learners to place within their e-mail signature. All contact details provided as part of an e-mail signature are fully bilingual, as required in the Authority's 'Clear Communications' booklet, the guide for staff on customer service standards and house style.
- 5.12 Vacant Posts and Recruitment (Standards 136-140): During 2021-22, 35 vacant posts were advertised. Of these, all 35 were classed as Welsh essential.
- 5.13 A Welsh language skills framework was developed at the start of 2020, which classifies the required skill level for each post from 0 to 5+ in for categories, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each Head of Service now scores each vacant post, with the scoring being moderated by the Head of Administration and Customer Care, before receiving final approval from the Management Team. Applicants are now aware before applying, the exact skill level required for the position.
- 5.14 All recruitment advertisements are advertised in Welsh. The Authority uses Webrecruits to accept and process applications, which allows applicants to submit their applications online. All documentation is available bilingually e.g. application form, job description, person specification and equality monitoring form. Job interviews are conducted in Welsh.
- 5.15 The Webrecruits system sends out an e-mail to job applicants if they have been unsuccessful in their application and have not been selected for interview. This e-mail is in Welsh and English. Letters or e-mails sent to job applicants informing them of the outcome of their interview are sent out in Welsh only or bilingually.
- 5.16 Internal Signage and Announcements (Standards 141-144): All signs erected by the Authority are fully bilingual, with the Welsh appearing first or on the left hand side. The Welsh and English languages are treated equally, with the same font and size of text used for both languages. The Authority doesn't currently have an internal address system.
- 5.17 Complaints relating to Complying with the Operational Standards
During the year no complaints were received relating to the way in which the Authority complied with the Operational Standards.

6. Promotion Standards

- 6.1 Promoting the Welsh Language (Standards 145-146): During 2016/17 a Strategy for Promoting the Welsh Language was adopted by the Authority. The strategy includes a target of 'an increase of 2% of Snowdonia National Park's population which can speak Welsh by 2021'.

- 6.2 In November 2021, the Authority published a report assessing the outcome of the Promotion Strategy. Without the release of the 2021 Census data on the numbers of Welsh speakers, it has not been possible to assess whether the Authority has reached its target of increasing the number of Welsh speakers within the National Park by 2%.
- 6.3 Work has commenced on developing a new Strategy, although the work of promoting the Welsh language continues as always to be an integral part of the daily work of the Authority.

7. Record Keeping and Supplementary Standards

- 7.1 Keeping Records of Compliance with the Standards (Standards 147-176): A document titled 'Snowdonia National Park Authority Welsh Language Standards' has been produced, which is available in the Authority's offices and on the website. The document outlines all the Standards that the Authority is subject to and sets out how members of the public can make a complaint about the Authority's compliance with the Standards or any aspect of the Welsh language service offered by the Authority.
- 7.2 The Authority has kept records of how it complies with the Standards in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

APPENDIX 1

1. Staff Skill Levels - Overview

The number and % of staff within the Authority's services which are able to speak Welsh according to directorate			
	No. of Staff	No. of Welsh Speakers	%
Corporate	92	90	98%
Planning and Land Management	49	45	92%

The number and % of staff within the Authority's services which are able to speak Welsh according to post grade			
	No. of Staff	No. of Welsh Speakers	%
Management Team	3	3	100%
Heads of Service	10	9	90%
Grade 7+	57	53	93%
Up to Grade 6	71	70	98.6%

The number and % of staff within the Authority's services which are able to speak Welsh according to workplace			
	No. of Staff	No. of Welsh Speakers	%
Head Office	87	82	94%
Information Centres	10	10	100%
External Staff	31	31	100%
Plas Tan y Bwlch	13	12	92%

2. Staff Skill Levels by Service

Corporate Directorate

The number and % of staff within the service which are able to speak Welsh			
Section	No. of Staff	No. of Welsh Speakers	%
Management Team	2	2	100%
Finance	5	5	100%
Personnel	1	1	100%
Administration	12	12	100%
Information Systems	5	4	80%
Property	4	4	100%
Legal	1	1	100%
Engagement	25	25	100%
Plas Tan y Bwlch	13	12	92%
Wardens	24	24	100%

Number and % of staff within the service, by post grades, which are able to speak Welsh			
Section	No. of Staff	No. of Welsh Speakers	%
Chief Executive	1	1	100%
Director	1	1	100%
Heads of Service	7	7	100%
Grade 7+	30	29	97%
Up to Grade 6	53	52	98%

Planning and Land Management

The number and % of staff within the service which are able to speak Welsh			
Section	No. of Staff	No. of Welsh Speakers	%
Director	1	1	100%
Planning	17	14	82%
Cultural Heritage	15	15	100%
Conservation, Trees and Agriculture	16	15	94%

Number and % of staff within the service, by post grades, which are able to speak Welsh			
Section	No. of Staff	No. of Welsh Speakers	%
Director	1	1	100%
Heads of Service	3	2	67%
Grade 7+	27	24	89%
Up to Grade 6	18	18	100%

3. Staff Skill Levels – Reception

The number and % of posts in the main reception areas that have been designated 'Welsh essential' and that were filled by bilingual staff.			
Section	No. of Staff	No. of Welsh Speakers	%
Head Office	7	7	100%
Plas Tan y Bwlch	4	4	100%
Information Centres	10	10	100%