



# Snowdonia National Park Authority's Welsh Language Standards: 2022/23 Monitoring Report

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 On the 30<sup>th</sup> 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 2022-23, 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](mailto:Bethan.Hughes@eryri.llyw.cymru) or by telephoning 01766 772530 to discuss any matter relating to this report.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The 2022-23 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 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023, the Authority had 149 staff, of which 145 were able to undertake the duties of their post bilingually, which is 97.3%.
- 2.2 It was noted in last year's annual report that staff recruitment and retention was a major issue for the Authority, and although it was acknowledged that this was a national problem, with all kinds of sectors experiencing difficulties in recruiting positions at all levels, it nonetheless was highlighted as a risk area by Audit Wales.

- 2.3 The resulting review of the Authority's pay structure which included the business case for acknowledging bilingualism within it, has enabled staff salaries to be increased which should make the Authority more competitive locally. Nonetheless, recruiting and retaining staff has remained challenging over the last year in some key areas, although the Welsh language skill requirements within posts is not considered to be the key barrier.
- 2.4 Staying on the topic of staff recruitment; although the test case that was due to be held this year which challenged the Welsh language skills level requirements of certain posts as being discriminatory, was settled out of court, we continue to be mindful of the need for our assessments to remain robust. In this regard, we continue to follow good practice guidance in this field and the advice of our Solicitor.
- 2.5 All aspects of the Authority's usual work in relation to the Welsh language continued apace during the last year. Now that the final Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, promotion work in relation to the Welsh language was enhanced by the increasing number of in-person events and activities now being able to take place, along with more opportunities available to volunteer with the Authority.
- 2.6 Work streams within the Authority's Engagement and Communication Strategy continues to be crucial in educating visitors that come to the area of the special qualities of Eryri, one of which is the Welsh language. Working with our partners for maximum impact continues to be an essential element to ensuring that the Welsh language is seen and promoted widely across the National Park as a working, living everyday language we are proud of.
- 2.7 At the Authority's Annual General Meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2022, a Steering Group was established to develop a new Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for the Authority for the next five years.
- 2.8 An initial meeting was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2022 in which the Terms of Reference for the group was agreed and a timetable set for the development of the Strategy.
- 2.9 Over the following months, the Steering Group developed the vision and identified key priority areas, which were then further developed in consultation with both staff and Members.
- 2.10 Following this, a public consultation on the draft Strategy took place between the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2022 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2023. Direct invitations to respond to the public consultation was sent to 137 organisations, which included the Authority's key stakeholders, community, charity and third sector groups and organisations as well as groups and organisations representing people with protected characteristics. Invitations were also sent to all Town and Community Councils within and bordering Eryri National Park.

- 2.11 Having taken into consideration the public consultation responses, a final draft of the Strategy was presented to the Authority's Performance and Resources Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2023, whereby it was formally adopted.
- 2.12 The Strategy's Action Plan will now be incorporated annually into the Authority's Corporate Work Programme over the next five years.
- 2.13 In November 2020, the Place Names Task and Finish Group was established by the Authority's Performance and Resources Committee with the following terms of reference:
- Develop a policy framework to enable the Authority to protect and standardise the use of place names within Eryri National Park by the Authority, its partners and stakeholders; by considering Eryri's and Wales' unique position and identifying good practice from other areas/countries in the development of a framework,
  - Raise awareness amongst different audiences including monolingual, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and international audiences of the importance of place names in Eryri; and as a source that strengthens links with the environment, history and heritage of the area.
  - To identify what success looks like, identify which programmes could be considered and who are the key people/organisations that are required to deliver with.
- 2.14 The role of the Task and Finish Group has now evolved into more long-term elements of work as a Place Names Scrutiny Panel, and there is recognition that the work involved is not short-term. Addressing, recording, standardising, protecting and promoting the thousands of landscape names in Eryri National Park, to raise awareness and educate people about their existence and significance to our heritage and identity, is ongoing work to which the Authority is committed. Place Names Principles have been formally adopted by the Authority to guide the Scrutiny Panel's work.
- 2.15 The initial and arguably the most important policy change endorsed by the Scrutiny Panel was put before the Authority on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2022. In this meeting, Members approved the use of the names Yr Wyddfa and Eryri in the Welsh and English languages, giving officers the discretion to use the terms, Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) and Eryri (Snowdonia) in English, should the context require this for education and engagement purposes. It is foreseen that Yr Wyddfa and Eryri will be the usual and common forms and that over time, as awareness increases, that these would be the only forms used by the Authority.
- 2.16 Another change that occurred during the year was the adoption of an internal language policy. The internal administrative language of the Authority since its inception has always been primarily Welsh, and bilingually when needed. This has become the unwritten norm over the years through custom and practice, but until this year was not formally written as a policy. To ensure the Authority complied with the relevant standard pertaining to this, the previous informal policy has now been formally documented and authorised by the Management Team.

### **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. For those who have not set a voicemail message, a standard Welsh greeting, recorded by one of the reception staff, asking the caller to leave a message is played instead.
- 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 followed a hybrid work pattern. The 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 While many meetings were still conducted virtually via Zoom, there have been many more in-person and hybrid meetings held. The Authority has invested in technology to enable hybrid public meetings, which mean that both staff and Members have the choice of attending in-person at Plas Tan y Bwlch or to join the meeting remotely. For members of the public, they also now have the choice of observing these committees in person or through the live webcast.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 Public Documentation (Standards 40-51): All the Authority's public documents, including forms are either bilingual with the Welsh appearing first or on the left hand side of the document or are two separate Welsh and English documents. 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.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 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.

- 3.16 Self-service Machines (Standard 60): 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.
- 3.17 On the 15<sup>th</sup> 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, following an investigation into a complaint that the pre-book system for parking at Pen y Pass was not fully bilingual.
- 3.18 The Authority was asked to produce an Action Plan detailing how it would ensure compliance and was given a year to comply. A bilingual pre-booking system was put in place in time for the Easter holidays in April 2022.
- 3.19 Work continues with JustPark on making continuous improvements to their website to make the Welsh version more customer friendly.
- 3.20 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.
- 3.21 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.
- 3.22 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.
- 3.23 Grant Schemes (Standards 71-75): The Authority has several grant schemes, namely
- Cronfa Partneriaeth Eryri Partnership Fund;
  - 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.
- 3.24 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.



- 3.25 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. The Authority has a formal Policy in place on Awarding Grants in relation to the Welsh language implications.
- 3.26 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.
- 3.27 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.
- 3.28 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 either adhere to this founding principle or will use Welsh only.
- 3.29 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, unless using some social media channels, in line with the Authority's corporate identity, ensuring that the Welsh and English language is treated on the basis of equality.
- 3.30 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.
- 3.31 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.
- 3.32 Public Address System (Standard 87): The Authority currently does not have any public address systems in place across its buildings.
- 3.33 Complaints relating to Complying with the Service Delivery Standards  
During the year no complaints were received relating to the way in which the Authority complied with the Service Delivery Standards.

#### 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 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 A Guidance Document for staff is in place outlining the requirement to ask specific questions regarding the impact (either positive or negative) of any proposal on the Welsh language, opportunities to use the Welsh language and opportunities to promote the language. The document also includes examples of appropriate wording to use in different consultation documents, which has been circulated to all services within the Authority.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023, the Authority employed 149 staff of which 145 are bilingual, representing 97.3%.
- 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. During the year a policy on the use of Welsh internally was agreed, to formalise the custom and practice and to assist new staff of operational expectations.
- 5.3 Staff Documentation (Standards 99-104): The Authority has a fully bilingual policy in place for all human resources matters. In practice, this means that all documentation relating to the employment of an individual is produced in Welsh as standard and given to all staff members. Staff can request an English version of any document if they wish. Any correspondence that is sent out periodically from the human resources service to individual staff members is also usually produced in Welsh only and occasionally bilingually.
- 5.4 Human Resources Policies (Standards 105-111): All human resources 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 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 2022-23, 35 vacant posts were advertised. Of these, all 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 new or 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 promoted on different social media channels. Depending on the channel, the posts are either bilingual or are produced in Welsh and English separately but are always posted together without exception. 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): On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2022 the Authority's Performance and Resources Committee adopted a new Strategy for Promoting the Welsh Language for the next five year period.
- 6.2 The strategy includes a target to "at least maintain the current number of Welsh speakers in Eryri, and to work with our public sector partners on increasing the numbers over the next 5 years".
- 6.3 As our previous Strategy demonstrated, although we cannot link the effect of our Welsh language promotion activities directly on the number of Welsh speakers in Eryri, there is still plenty of positive work we can undertake to influence the overall number. With this in mind, we have also set a second target of increasing the number of opportunities to use the Welsh language in Eryri. This target is both meaningful and measurable and within the control 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	101	100	99%
Planning and Land Management	48	45	94%

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+	43	40	93%
Up to Grade 6	93	93	100%

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	90	86	95%
Information Centres	11	11	100%
External Staff	31	31	100%
Plas Tan y Bwlch	17	17	100%

## 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%
Human Resources	3	3	100%
Administration	12	12	100%
Information Systems	5	4	80%
Property	7	7	100%
Legal	1	1	100%
Engagement	25	25	100%
Plas Tan y Bwlch	17	17	100%
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+	23	22	96%
Up to Grade 6	69	69	100%

## 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	16	13	81%
Cultural Heritage	16	16	100%
Conservation, Trees and Agriculture	15	15	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	%
Director	1	1	100%
Heads of Service	3	2	67%
Grade 7+	20	18	90%
Up to Grade 6	24	24	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	6	6	100%
Plas Tan y Bwlch	4	4	100%
Information Centres	11	11	100%