



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

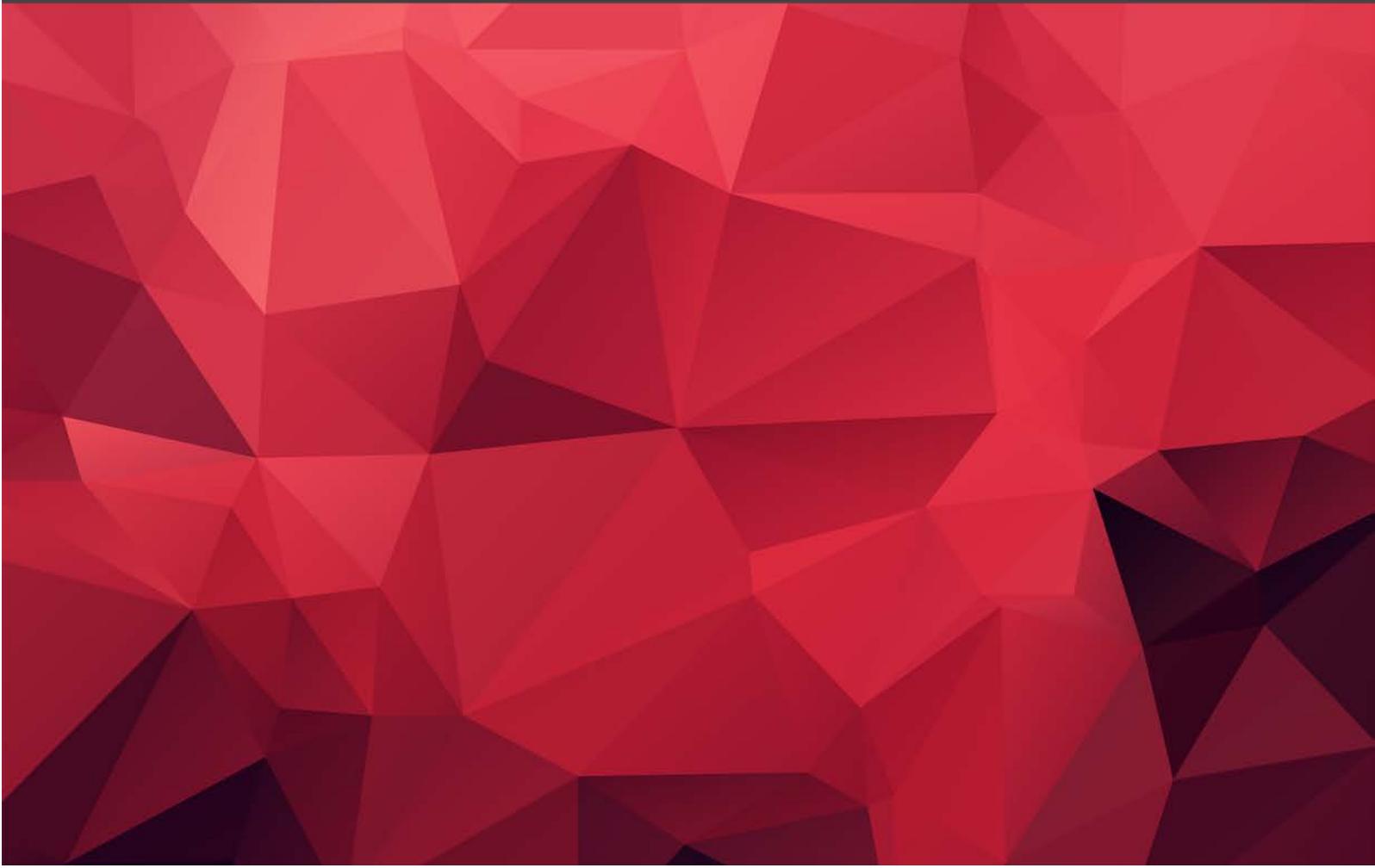
Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Welsh Language Report 2017-18

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

Detailed report

Introduction

- 1 This annual report on the Welsh language outlines the work we have done to promote the language within the Wales Audit Office during 2017-18 and gives a snapshot of our current situation.
- 2 We received our [compliance notices in respect of the Welsh Language Standards](#) (the standards) in July 2016. The imposition date for many fell in January 2017 and a further 14 standards came into effect during 2017-18.
- 3 We are required as part of the standards to publish an annual report on how we have complied with specific standards and in general during the previous financial year. This is the first annual report following a full year of complying with the standards. Even though the primary function of this report is for compliance, we see it as a good exercise in checking the health of the language within the organisation. It is also an opportunity to reflect on what we have done to promote the use and awareness of the Welsh language during the previous year and recognise gaps in what we could be doing.
- 4 The Wales Audit Office and the Auditor General for Wales both received separate compliance notices. This annual report reports on both sets of standards and will be shared via our social media platforms and be made available on our website and all our offices.
- 5 We outline our [arrangements for complying with the standards on our website](#). The Wales Audit Office employs a full time Welsh Language Officer who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the standards and promoting the Welsh language internally. A Director is responsible for the strategic overview of the Welsh language in the organisation and the Director of Corporate Services is responsible for any corporate governance matters relating to the Welsh language.
- 6 We have done a lot of activities during the previous year to promote the Welsh language within the Wales Audit Office and we set this out below. More can be done and we hope to build on the work of the previous year. Key to this will be a Welsh Language strategy which is to be published in the autumn and sets out our current position, our ambitions and our proposed actions to reach those ambitions.

Communicating standards with staff

- 7 Communicating the requirements of the standards to staff is important to ensure they understand the Welsh language provision available to them – including learning opportunities, technology and HR material. It is also important for ensuring staff understand their responsibilities under the standards, for example when answering external phone calls or correspondence.
- 8 When new staff arrive at the organisation, they receive a dedicated induction session where they are introduced to the standards in relation to their work and employment with us. Non-Welsh speaking new starters are also required to complete the National Centre for Learning Welsh's Work Welsh online course

where they are taught some basic Welsh for the workplace and Welsh language awareness. More information on this can be found in [paragraph 21](#).

- 9 We have provided staff with numerous tools and guidance on the standards that impact on the way they work. For example, we provide guidance and templates for email signatures and 'out of office' emails, including a comprehensive list of job titles. A suite of Welsh language technologies is also available for staff upon request that includes 'Cysill' and 'Cysgeir', Welsh Language Microsoft Office spell check and 'To Bach'.
- 10 Our policy on using the Welsh language internally outlines the relevant standards that have an impact on our staff's day-to-day responsibilities. These include answering telephone calls and replying to correspondence, respecting the language preferences of our audited bodies and members of the public, and the considerations for displaying posters and signage around our offices. We have also added that any all-staff emails must be bilingual with the Welsh positioned so that it is likely to be read first. The policy also outlines the new rights staff have under the standards such as the availability of Welsh language technologies, their access to Welsh language training, and training through the medium of Welsh. It also highlights their rights to have disciplinary and grievance meetings and HR documents in Welsh.
- 11 The Welsh language policy is readily available for staff to read on our intranet and was publicised through all-staff emails from directors and through news articles on the intranet.
- 12 Throughout the year, we reminded staff through awareness sessions, inductions and all-staff emails from directors the need to answer calls with a Welsh greeting. We also held a 'Bore da/Prynhawn da' campaign, with posters, intranet news articles and on electronic screens in our offices, to support and encourage staff to answer calls with the appropriate Welsh phrases.
- 13 To encourage staff to communicate with each other in Welsh over email, we have utilised the MailTip function of Outlook to automatically notify the sender if the recipient is 'happy to communicate in Welsh' or is learning, together with an indication of which level they are at. This has increased knowledge amongst staff of who else can speak Welsh and we have received anecdotal feedback that it has encouraged and reminded staff to practice their written Welsh with colleagues, especially amongst learners.

Additional activities

- 14 A Welsh Language Group has been set up to assist the Welsh Language Officer so that as well as complying with our statutory duties, we ensure there are activities that promote the language and culture within the organisation. Its aim is not to police compliance with the standards, but to look at innovative ways to promote the language. As of the end of the 2017-18 reporting year, the group's main activity was discussing a new Welsh language strategy which is to be published during 2018-19.

- 15 Our communications and translation teams have made the decision to ensure that our campaign and event titles and headlines are not direct translations. We have made the steps to consider the Welsh language at the start of creating campaigns which have resulted in non-direct translations that work independently of the other language. For example during an internal culture change campaign, we used the acronym GREAT in English to represent our behaviours, but used HYDER as the Welsh acronym.
- 16 In addition to ensuring our translations can stand alone in each language, we have taken a further step in ensuring we use clear Welsh in our documents as well as plain English. In our [Annual Report and Accounts 2016-17](#), we created a mini-site with an interactive summary where we concentrated on using plain and clear language. Using this method, we saw an increase of 788% in the numbers reading the Welsh version, where the English version saw an increase of 72%. We saw an increase of 11.4% in readers choosing to access the Welsh language version as opposed to the English version in 2017.

Recruitment

- 17 When recruiting within the audit teams, recruiting managers review the Welsh language capabilities of the whole team and take into consideration the percentage of Welsh speakers already within the team, and the responses from bodies to our triennial language preference survey. The next survey will be conducted at the end of 2018.
- 18 When a new or vacant post arises, the recruiting manager must fill out a business case and return it to the HR department. A section within the business case asks for the required Welsh language skills for that role based on our [Welsh Language Matrix](#) which is itself based on the Centre for Learning Welsh levels. If a manager wishes to change the Welsh language requirements for a vacant role, they must provide a reasoning behind any change.
- 19 During 2017-18 we advertised for 47 new or vacant positions, recruiting internally and externally for 19 different roles. The Welsh language skills for two of these positions were advertised as 'essential' with the other 45 positions advertised as Welsh 'desirable'. We were successful in recruiting a Welsh speaker for both Welsh essential roles.

Welsh language skills and training

- 20 The Welsh language skills of the Wales Audit Office staff at the end of the 2017-18 financial year is outlined in [Table 1](#). Since 2014-15 we have seen an increase of 1 Welsh speaker at Advanced or Proficient level, which means a decrease of around 1% across the organisation when considering overall staff numbers. The Welsh language skills of our staff are self-evaluated and recorded on the Employee Self-Service portal.

Table 1: Welsh language skills of all Wales Audit Office staff

The number of Wales Audit Office staff at awareness, entry, foundation, intermediate, advanced or proficiency level of listening, reading, speaking and writing Welsh.

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
0 – Awareness	217	221	221	222
1 – Entry	6	5	7	9
2 – Foundation	11	8	6	4
3 – Intermediate	7	6	9	8
4 – Advanced	9	12	1	4
5 – Proficiency	18	16	24	21
Total	268	268	268	268

21 During 2017-18, a total of 50 members of staff took part in Welsh language awareness and/or learning training, totalling over 450 hours as shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2: Welsh language training

The Welsh language training provided for staff during 2017-18

Table heading	Dates	Delegates	Total learning hours
Welsh language awareness induction	Various dates April 2017 – March 2018	34	17
Work Welsh Online Taster course	September 2017 – March 2018	17 (4 completed)	80 hours completed
Intensive course	April 2017	1	35
	August 2017	1	35
Work Welsh Residential course	November 2017	3	105
Weekly classes	September 2016 – June 2017	3	180
	September 2017 - 2018	2	120
	January 2017 – June 2020	1	250

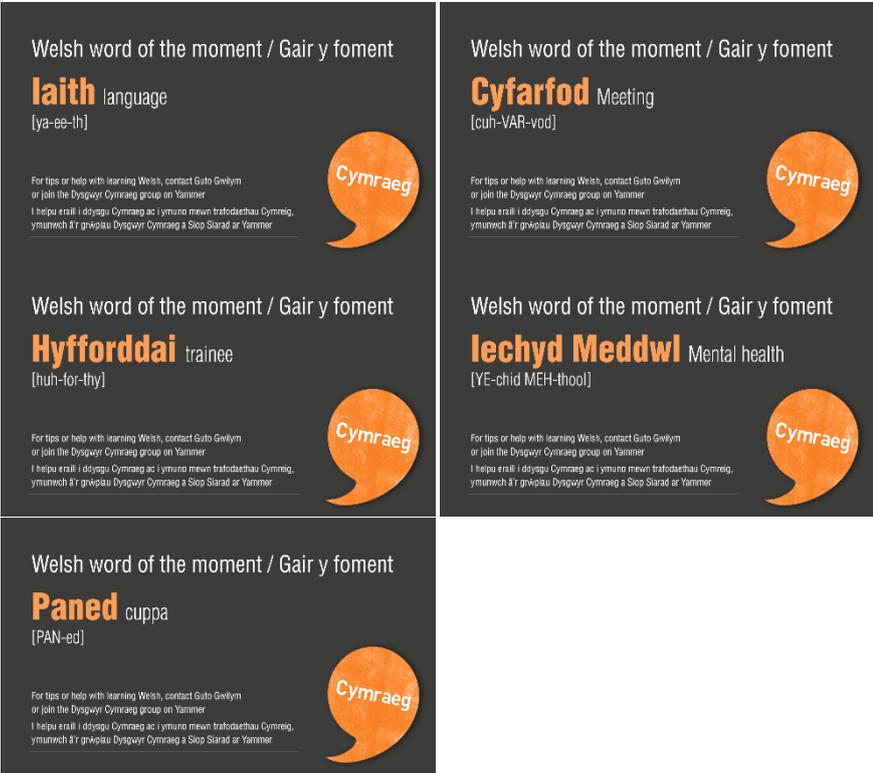
22 The National Centre for Learning Welsh’s Work Welsh scheme had been an important part of our Welsh language learning provision during 2017-18. We signed up to the three options available – online, residential and intensive courses. We hope to continue to use the Work Welsh scheme during 2018-19, but hope that improvements have been made to the organisation of some of their courses

following feedback. We are also aiming to offer either the 2-year or 6-month Say Something in Welsh courses to those who are interested.

- 23 To acknowledge the commitment needed for a member of staff to learn a new language, in June 2016 new procedures on time and financial commitments were agreed by senior management. Courses will now be fully paid for by the Wales Audit Office, and staff can use up to 5 days of their allocated training allowance for learning Welsh (with time provided by the Wales Audit Office being matched by the individual’s own time). The procedure also outlined that any staff member whose Welsh language requirement for their role is ‘essential’ is exempt from matching the Wales Audit Office’s time with their own.
- 24 We have other initiatives to encourage staff to practice their Welsh. A bi-weekly lunchtime session is held to allow staff to have discussions in Welsh with other learners and fluent speakers and to help prepare for Welsh language exams. It is also an opportunity for non-Welsh speakers to attend to ask about opportunities to learn Welsh and to practice using simple phrases and words. We also have ‘Word of the Moment’ on our screens around the offices which include a phonetic spelling of the words and their translation as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Word of the moment

Examples of posters placed on screens around our offices to highlight Welsh words.



Policy Making

- 25 We have undertaken Welsh language impact assessments in relation to 17 policies and policy decisions during the year as listed in [Table 3](#). These impact assessments are required of all new and reviewed policies to ensure positive effect on opportunities to use Welsh and to ensure the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language. Incidentally, the current Welsh Language Officer sits on the Equality Interest Group who are consulted with on all policies.

Table 3: policies and policy decisions

The policies and policy decisions that were subject to Welsh language impact assessments.

Policy
Internal Whistleblowing Policy
Welsh Language Internal Policy
Counter Fraud Strategy
Fraud Response Plan
Annual Plan 2017-18
WAO Employee Members Election Arrangement 2018
Relocation Policy
Recruitment and Selection Policy
WAO Board Travel & Subsistence Policy
CCTV Policy
Probation, Secondment and Restructure Policies
Sickness Absence Toolkit
Appeals Policy
Travel Centre Review (North Wales region)
Pay Offer 2018
Draft Strategic Equality Plan
Voluntary Exit Scheme 2017-18

Complaints

- 26 During 2017-18, we received a complaint via the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding a firm engaged by the Wales Audit Office to undertake audit work on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales. The complaint concerned the firm's ability to communicate in Welsh with town and community councils, ie it was a complaint in relation to the service delivery standards.
- 27 Under the Welsh Language Standards, the Wales Audit Office is only responsible for firms' compliance with the Standards when firms are carrying out a service on behalf of the Wales Audit Office, not any other party, such as the Auditor General. Furthermore, the Auditor General is prohibited by the Public Audit (Wales) Act

2013 from arranging for a firm to carry out services on his behalf. Accordingly, neither the Wales Audit Office nor the Auditor General can lawfully be subject to an investigation. Nevertheless, to address the concerns raised by town and community councils, the Wales Audit Office is developing an improvement plan so as to help ensure that service delivery is improved.

- 28 We also received a service delivery complaint regarding the same firm directly from a community council, though the complaint also concerned other matters, such as understanding of Welsh culture, the nature of requests for information and the level of the audit fee. We undertook a full investigation. In relation to the Welsh language standards, the investigator did not find any clear-cut instances of where the firm had failed to meet the standards.
- 29 While not a formal complaint, we also received an expression of dissatisfaction regarding our handling of an enquiry, particularly in relation to being advised that a Welsh language enquiry would take longer to deal with than an English language enquiry. We investigated this matter and provided Welsh language awareness training for the staff concerned.

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