Closing the Gap

The Welsh Language Commissioner's
assurance report
2019-20

**Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner**

The Commissioner's foreword

The last few months have been challenging for all of us, and we have had to adapt quickly to provide public services in different ways. In the coming months I will look back at the crisis period, in order to understand how organisations' Welsh language provision was affected, and learn lessons for the future.

The pandemic has showed the value of robustness, leadership and expertise, and the flexibility to use staff creatively. It has forced us to accelerate developments in how we use technology. The crisis is likely to cause lasting changes in the ways we work.

Organisations may substantially reconfigure the ways they operate and provide public services. This is a golden opportunity to put the Welsh language front and centre.

This report states my findings regarding organisations' performance in implementing language duties in 2019-20 – before Covid-19 affected us. But as organisations begin acting on the findings, they will need to ensure that their arrangements boost the Welsh language provision in the new normal.

As I analysed organisations' performance in 2019-20, I became concerned that a gap is opening between organisations that comply well and continuously improve, and those organisations that do not have sufficient arrangements.

In some organisations, structured arrangements and hard work now mean that they comply with the standards and create dependable opportunities to use Welsh. But some organisations haven't used the standards as an impetus to improve arrangements and ensure that they have enough Welsh language capacity to provide the services people have a right to receive.

With over four years having passed since the standards came into force for the first time, my expectation is that every organisation complies fully with the requirements set. Over the coming period, I will consider the evidence that I have about organisations' performance, and will take whichever proportionate steps necessary to deal with any failure or deficiency.

Every Welsh speaker should be able to have high expectations of public organisations. It's time for every organisation to be doing the basic things every time – using Welsh in writing; having enough Welsh speaking staff to be able to provide reception and phone services; and following robust arrangements for key assessments regarding jobs skills and policy decisions.

Where services have a bigger impact on people's well-being, we should be able to assume that they will be available in Welsh. The standards need to bring about swift improvements in the services of health organisations, and I am of the opinion that county councils should work towards holding well-being meetings in Welsh by default with Welsh speakers.

I am eager to be able to take for granted that basic services are provided in Welsh as a matter of course, so that we can spend our time getting to grips with the big issues that will make a strategic difference to the future of the Welsh language. I want to see organisations creating a shift in the language used by service users and their own staff, and seriously considering how all the organisation's operating arrangements can boost the Welsh language in terms of economy, education and society.

I will not allow a situation where organisations continue to fail to meet the requirements they are subject to. And where organisations are willing to innovate in order to increase use of Welsh, I will support and facilitate their work.

Aled Roberts
Welsh Language Commissioner
September 2020

There is a concise version of this document <u>on the Commissioner's website</u>.

1   Introduction

1.1   Purpose of the report

1.1.1.   This is the sixth assurance report published by the Commissioner. The purpose of assurance reports is to provide the Commissioner's view on how organisations are operating to comply with their language duties, with particular regard to the experiences of users of Welsh language services.

1.1.2.   We want organisations to use the report as a basis for improving how they operate. They can do so by benchmarking their own performance against the trends identified in the report, and by emulating the successful practices described.

1.1.3.   The report addresses the issues on which organisations need to take action over the coming months. It includes evidence on:

- o **Organisations' performance** in providing Welsh language services and encouraging people to use them
- o **Compliance arrangements** – what organisations do to ensure their provision complies with the requirements
- o **Workforce capacity** – ensuring that there are enough Welsh speakers in the right roles
- o **Promoting the Welsh language** – contributing to the future of the Welsh language by considering the impact of policy and grant decisions on the Welsh language, and implementing Welsh language promotion strategies.

Action based on report findings

1.1.4.   Organisations are responsible for compliance with duties imposed upon them. This report provides clear guidance on how to ensure this happens.

1.1.5.   Other guidance is also available to organisations. In particular:

- o The Commissioner's code of practice for the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No. 1) 2015 was published in February 2020. The code of practice provides guidance for organisations in order to clarify what is expected of them in implementing the standards, drawing from their initial experience of implementing the standards. The code of practice has received the assent of the Welsh Ministers. The contents of the code may be relied upon when considering whether or not there is a failure to comply with a standard. The code is relevant to the standards in the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 – those relevant to local authorities, Welsh Ministers and National Park Authorities. The Commissioner intends to publish further codes of practice for other regulations in the future.
- o The Commissioner has published a series of good practice advice documents. These comprehensive, practical documents provide suggestions for ways to comply with the requirements of the standards and to promote the Welsh language in terms of encouraging the use of Welsh language services; operating on the basis of language choice;

overseeing compliance; Welsh language standards annual reports; and awarding grants.

1.1.6. As noted in the foreword, wherever monitoring work that forms the basis of this report has highlighted a failure by an organisation, we will consider what steps need to be taken to address that failure, taking into account the use of all the Commissioner's powers.

Covid-19

1.1.7. The evidence that forms the basis of this report is not related to the period when the Covid-19 crisis disrupted organisations' ability to operate.

1.1.8. Welsh language standards and Welsh language schemes remained in operation during the period, and it is important that the rights of Welsh speakers are respected despite the crisis.

1.1.9. The crisis may have had some impact on organisations' ability to comply. During 2020-21 we will look at how the crisis has affected the Welsh language services of organisations and the use of Welsh internally, with a view to facilitating the learning of lessons for the future. As we engage with organisations in 2020-21 to ensure that compliance improves, we will be mindful of the circumstances as we arrange meetings, gather evidence and so on.

1.2   Evidence base

1.2.1.   The report is based on robust and varied evidence, including:

- o **Monitoring** – conducting user experience surveys (verifying services such as correspondence, telephone, receptions, signage, self-service machines, documents, corporate identity, apps, websites, etc.); verifying annual reports, supplementary documents and job advertisements; and asking organisations for evidence through thematic studies in relation to assessing the impact of policy decisions, assessing job skills requirements, well-being meetings and 5-year strategies to promote the Welsh language
- o **Engagement** – holding discussion groups across Wales with various cohorts of Welsh speakers
- o **Contact with organisations** – the impressions of officers who deal with organisations in providing support with compliance, the imposition of standards, and conducting investigations.

1.2.2.   As in 2018-19, the results of the verification surveys are based on verifying the services of a sample of one third of these organisations (but no tribunals were included this year):

Group of organisations	Specific organisations	Duties
No. 1 regulations	County councils, national parks and the Welsh Government (26 organisations)	Implementation of standards from 30/03/2016
No. 2 regulations	Various national organisations (32 organisations)	Implementation of standards from 25/01/2017
No. 4 regulations	Welsh Tribunals (7 organisations)	Implementation of standards from 30/03/2017
No. 5 regulations	Police, police and crime commissioners, and fire services (16 organisations)	Implementation of standards from 30/03/2017
No. 6 regulations	Universities and further education organisations (25 organisations)	Implementation of standards from 01/04/2018
No. 7 regulations	Health boards, NHS trusts, and community health councils (18 organisations)	Implementation of standards from 30/05/2019
Welsh language schemes	UK Government departments and executive agencies and other companies and organisations implementing language schemes	Implementing language schemes (no intention of imposing standards on these organisations in the near future)

1.2.3.   Services were verified three times during the year in most cases. As usual, we report on the user experience rather than compliance with language standards or language schemes – sometimes the results include organisations that were not under a duty to comply with the specific requirements (e.g. who had challenged the duty, the imposition day was yet to apply, the standard was not imposed, lower requirements imposed, or they were implementing language schemes).

1.2.4.   A full methodology, and a list of the relevant organisations, is provided at the end of the report.

1.2.5. Where we refer to the practices of organisations, we do so because we believe that other organisations can learn from these practices – either by emulating the practice or adapting their arrangements. The fact that we refer to a particular practice by an organisation does not necessarily mean that the organisation complies fully with all requirements.

2 Providing and promoting services

With an increase in the availability of a number of services, and performance overall moving in the right direction, there is a temptation to be satisfied with these results. However, some concerns remain regarding the ability of Welsh speakers to access services in the language of their choice.

Some organisations did not provide certain services in Welsh on any of the occasions that we monitored those services.

We have not seen the necessary improvement in organisations' reception services. And in terms of other services where performance is quite favourable, such as documents, social media and websites, care must be taken to ensure that arrangements do not slip.

Some sectors – health organisations, and those implementing language schemes – comply less frequently than others. While there is no significant difference in the performance of councils across the different areas of Wales in most services, the regions of south Wales are lagging behind in terms of reception and telephone services.

Organisations need to seriously address the responsibility to promote services – generating an increase in the take up of Welsh language services. This means changing the way services are designed, providing services in Welsh by default where possible (especially where there is a more significant impact on individuals, such as meetings relating to well-being), and informing Welsh speakers of the services available.

There are examples of significant increases in the use of some Welsh language services, which highlight the potential for progress when services are designed and promoted effectively – but these examples are relatively rare.

The steps needed to improve compliance are outlined clearly in the following sections of this report, and it is up to organisations to take immediate action to meet the requirements.

The Commissioner's opinion

"Using Welsh language services can be a hassle because of the way some organisations treat the Welsh language and the way they treat Welsh speakers. People have to fight to be able to do things in Welsh."

Member of the public in discussion group

"It's all very well saying that you have a right to use the Welsh language but if they don't operate in Welsh as quickly as in English it makes sense to use English."

Member of the public in discussion group

2.1 Availability of Welsh language services

2.1.1. As was seen last year, organisations' performance is stronger in relation to services and materials that can be delivered once and for all by ensuring that text or systems are available in Welsh.

90% of automated phone options available in Welsh

89% of signs available in Welsh

88% of organisations' logos available in Welsh

81% of web pages available in Welsh

78% of forms available in Welsh

75% of self-service machines available in Welsh

2.1.2. Performance is also stronger for services and materials where text needs to be sent to a Welsh speaker (either to deal with the issue or to translate it), but where there is no significant time pressure. Job advertisements were an exception to this, with under half available in Welsh even though Welsh language skills were essential or desirable for 81%.

92% of responses to e-mails sent in Welsh were in Welsh

82% of press statements available in Welsh

74% of Facebook posts available in Welsh

73% of e-mails sent in Welsh received a reply (English 79%)

70% of Twitter posts available in Welsh

47% of job advertisements available in Welsh
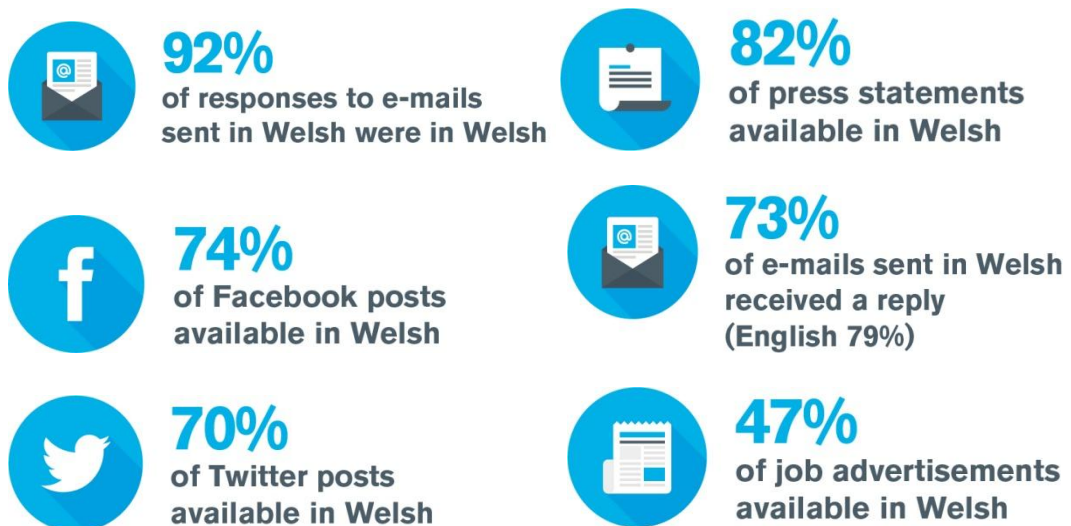
2.1.3. However, with the standards having been in place for a number of years, we would expect the results for some services – such as webpages, forms, self service machines and social media – to be better.

2.1.4. Once again this year, performance was weaker for personal services – where a Welsh speaking member of staff needs to be available at a specific location at the point at which the service is accessed in order to provide a personal service.

55% of telephone calls dealt with fully in Welsh

46% of reception enquiries dealt with in Welsh

2.1.5. The table below shows how often which the stated criterion was met, out of all the times we checked the services.

Main results – verifying services 2019-20

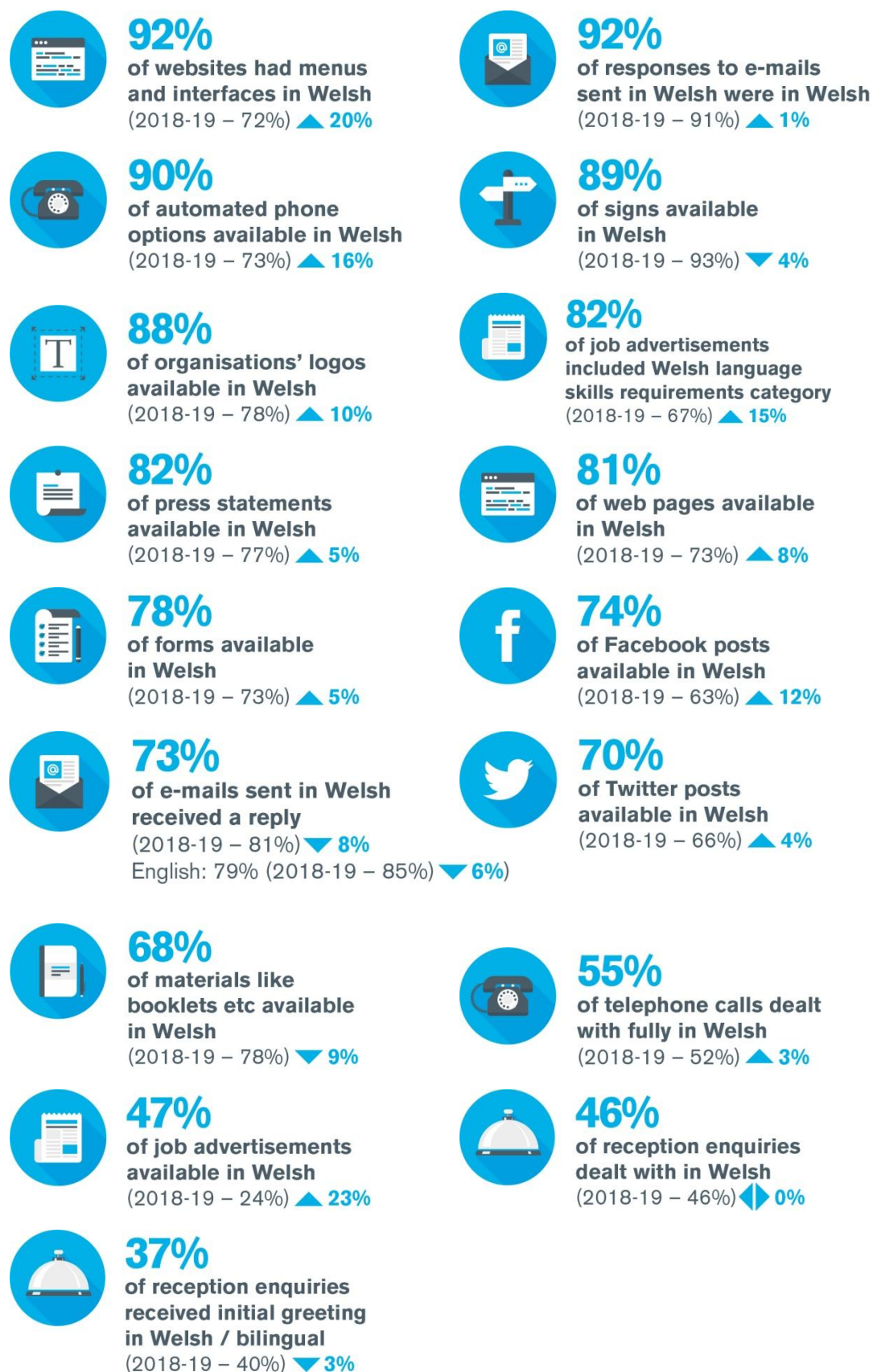| CORRESPONDENCE	
Welsh correspondence – received a response (any language)	73%
English correspondence – received a response (any language)	79%
Welsh correspondence – received a response in Welsh (where a response was received)	92%
TELEPHONE CALLS	
Automated options available in Welsh	90%
Dealing with call and providing full answer in Welsh	55%
Dealing with the first part of the call in Welsh, then transferring to a non Welsh speaking member of staff to provide an answer on a particular topic	4%
Dealing with the first part of the call in English, then transferring to a Welsh speaking member of staff	6%
RECEPTIONS	
Welsh or bilingual greeting	37%
Welsh or bilingual response to customer greeting	37%
Dealing with the enquiry in Welsh	46%
FORMS	
Form available in Welsh (in full)	78%
PRESS RELEASES	
Statement available in Welsh (in full)	82%
BROCHURE / PAMPHLET / LEAFLET / CARD	
Material available in Welsh (in full)	68%
CORPORATE IDENTITY	
Logo appearing in Welsh	88%
WEBSITES	
Interface and menus available in Welsh	92%
Pages available in Welsh (in full)	81%
FACEBOOK	
Account name / link in Welsh	62%
Messages available in Welsh (in full)	74%
TWITTER	
Account name / link in Welsh	61%
Messages available in Welsh (in full)	70%
POSTS	
Job advertisements containing Welsh language skills needs category	82%
Job advertisements available in Welsh	47%
SELF SERVICE MACHINES	
Self service machines working fully in Welsh	75%
SIGNS	
Signs with all text in Welsh	89%

Reliability of Welsh language services

2.1.6.   The above results are based on the total number of times we accessed the service or material, across all organisations. Because we checked each service more than once for each organisation, we can also see whether organisations met the criteria every time, sometimes, or not at all.

2.1.7.   For every service, with a few exceptions like web pages, between approximately half and three quarters of organisations provided the service in Welsh every time. (The low percentage for websites is due to the fact that we have verified quite a significant number of pages, increasing the chances of slippage, e.g. text partly in English.)

2.1.8.   But for every service too, there were some organisations that did not meet the criteria on any of the occasions that we checked – between around 5% and 20% organisations for most services. This was at its worst with telephone calls and job advertisements (over a quarter of organisations not providing a full telephone service in Welsh), and particularly with receptions (over half of organisations not dealing with any enquiry in Welsh).

2.1.9.   That leaves some organisations that were able to provide a service or material in Welsh on some occasions, but not on every occasion.

Verification results – did organisations meet the criteria every time?

	Result based on every time the service / material was accessed	Organisations that met the criterion every time	Organisations that did not meet the criterion at all
CORRESPONDENCE			
Welsh correspondence – received a response (any language)	73%	48%	8%
English correspondence – received a response (any language)	79%	52%	4%
Welsh correspondence – received a response in Welsh (where a response was received)	92%	77%	2%
TELEPHONE CALLS			
Dealing with call and providing full answer in Welsh	55%	36%	26%
RECEPTIONS			
Dealing with the enquiry in Welsh	46%	45%	52%
FORMS			
Form available in Welsh (in full)	78%	63%	9%
PRESS RELEASES			
Statement available in Welsh (in full)	82%	72%	11%
BROCHURE / PAMPHLET / LEAFLET / CARD			
Material available in Welsh (in full)	68%	53%	19%
CORPORATE IDENTITY			
Logo appearing in Welsh	88%	79%	4%
WEBSITES			
Pages available in Welsh (in full)	81%	31%	6%
FACEBOOK			
Messages available in Welsh (in full)	74%	40%	14%
TWITTER			
Messages available in Welsh (in full)	70%	46%	17%
POSTS			
Job advertisements containing Welsh language skills needs category	82%	46%	14%
Job advertisements available in Welsh	47%	54%	27%
SIGNS			
Signs available in Welsh	89%	76%	11%

2.1.10. In most cases, the same methodology was followed in 2019-20 and 2018-19, and so we are able to compare the results.

92%
of websites had menus and interfaces in Welsh
(2018-19 – 72%) ▲ 20%

92%
of responses to e-mails sent in Welsh were in Welsh
(2018-19 – 91%) ▲ 1%

90%
of automated phone options available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 73%) ▲ 16%

89%
of signs available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 93%) ▼ 4%

88%
of organisations' logos available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 78%) ▲ 10%

82%
of job advertisements included Welsh language skills requirements category
(2018-19 – 67%) ▲ 15%

82%
of press statements available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 77%) ▲ 5%

81%
of web pages available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 73%) ▲ 8%

78%
of forms available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 73%) ▲ 5%

74%
of Facebook posts available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 63%) ▲ 12%

73%
of e-mails sent in Welsh received a reply
(2018-19 – 81%) ▼ 8%
English: 79% (2018-19 – 85%) ▼ 6%)

70%
of Twitter posts available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 66%) ▲ 4%

68%
of materials like booklets etc available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 78%) ▼ 9%

55%
of telephone calls dealt with fully in Welsh
(2018-19 – 52%) ▲ 3%

47%
of job advertisements available in Welsh
(2018-19 – 24%) ▲ 23%

46%
of reception enquiries dealt with in Welsh
(2018-19 – 46%) ◀▶ 0%

37%
of reception enquiries received initial greeting in Welsh / bilingual
(2018-19 – 40%) ▼ 3%

2.1.11. Of course, as we verify only a third of organisations, the same organisations were not reviewed during the two years in question, but we consider that the sample is sufficient to be able to see how the experience of users has changed from year to year. All the no. 1 regulations organisations were reviewed during the two years in question (although only one third of them were included in the sample) and the trends for the whole sample are in line with those for the no. 1 regulations organisations for most services.

2.1.12. For the large majority of services, there was progress between 2018-19 and 2019-20. In most cases, the progress is not dramatic but it is very encouraging that this is a common pattern across a wide range of services.

2.1.13. It appears that organisations are focussing more on the Welsh language when recruiting, and the results in terms of website interface and telephone options suggest that organisations are making changes to their systems that will improve Welsh language services once and for all.

2.1.14. Progress with services such as social media, statements and forms suggests that organisations are now more aware of the need to translate material before it is published. Taking this pattern into account, it is not clear why there has been a 9% reduction in the availability of material such as brochures, leaflets, etc., and a 4% reduction for signage.

2.1.15. A reduction was seen in the response rates to Welsh correspondence, but there was also a similar reduction in English language response rates.

2.1.16. There was very little movement in terms of dealing with telephone calls in Welsh, with a small increase. This year, we added an option to note whether organisations had answered a call in English and then transferred the call to a Welsh speaker. For organisations that implement standards, this is not an acceptable way of complying, but that is what happened in 6% of cases. In 2018-19 there was some element of Welsh language service in 63% of calls; the corresponding percentage this year was 65%.

2.1.17. It is disappointing that reception services have not improved at all, and it is of great concern that reception staff appear to be less aware now than before of the need to provide a greeting in Welsh. Organisations need to improve their reception services on the basis of what is outlined in this report regarding compliance and capacity building arrangements – specifically staff recruitment and preparing the workforce.

2.1.18. Telephone and reception services are the most challenging in terms of improvement as investment in staff is needed, therefore organisations need to urgently increase their capacity in order to improve performance for these services.

Verification results – changes between 2019-20 and 2018-19

	2019-20	2018-19	Change
CORRESPONDENCE			
Welsh correspondence – received a response (any language)	73%	81%	▼8%
English correspondence – received a response (any language)	79%	85%	▼6%
Welsh correspondence – received a response in Welsh (where a response was received)	92%	91%	▲1%
Welsh correspondence – response time	1.04 days	2.8 days	▼1.8 days
TELEPHONE CALLS			
Automated options available in Welsh	90%	73%	▲16%
Dealing with call and providing full answer in Welsh	55%	52%	▲3%
Dealing with the first part of the call in Welsh, then transferring to a non Welsh speaking member of staff to provide an answer on a particular topic	4%	11%	▼8%
Dealing with the first part of the call in English, then transferring to a Welsh speaking member of staff	6%	–	▲6%
RECEPTIONS			
Welsh or bilingual greeting	37%	40%	▼3%
Welsh or bilingual response to customer greeting	37%	57%	▼20%
Dealing with the enquiry in Welsh	46%	46%	–
FORMS			
Form available in Welsh (in full)	78%	73%	▲5%
PRESS RELEASES			
Statement available in Welsh (in full)	82%	77%	▲5%
BROCHURE / PAMPHLET / LEAFLET / CARD			
Material available in Welsh (in full)	68%	78%	▼9%
CORPORATE IDENTITY			
Logo appearing in Welsh	88%	78%	▲10%
WEBSITES			
Interface and menus available in Welsh	92%	72%	▲20%
Pages available in Welsh (in full)	81%	73%	▲8%
FACEBOOK			
Messages available in Welsh (in full)	74%	63%	▲12%
TWITTER			
Messages available in Welsh (in full)	70%	66%	▲4%
POSTS			
Job advertisements containing Welsh language skills needs category	82%	67%	▲15%
Job advertisements available in Welsh	47%	24%	▲23%
SIGNS			
Signs available in Welsh	89%	93%	▼4%

Comparing results between sectors

2.1.19. It is important to note that the average is provided here. Although there are fairly clear sectoral patterns, all sectors include organisations providing high quality Welsh language services consistently, however the reverse may also be true.

2.1.20. The performance of no. 1 and no. 2 regulations organisations is better than the total for all services / materials apart from receptions (and signs in the case of no. 1), with performance significantly better in most cases.

2.1.21. The performance of no. 5 regulations organisations is more mixed. The performance of the sector in total is over 10% poorer than the total for correspondence, forms, statements, corporate identity, and social media – however it is more than 10% better than the total for elements of telephone calls, receptions and signs.

2.1.22. The performance of no. 6 regulations organisations is close to the total for most services, with a few exceptions – over 10% poorer for booklets, and over 10% better for Twitter and Facebook.

2.1.23. The performance of no. 7 regulations organisations was over 10% better than the total for corporate identity and including the language category for posts, but over 10% poorer than the total for correspondence, forms, receptions and signs. The performance for telephone calls compared particularly poorly with the total – 15% compared to 59%. No. 7 regulations organisations have begun implementing standards during 2019-20. These results suggest that there is room for the standards to drive significant improvement in the coming period.

2.1.24. For language schemes organisations, performance is fairly close to the total for telephone, correspondence and forms, but performance is over 10% poorer than the total for statements, booklets, corporate identity, websites, Facebook, Twitter, jobs, receptions and signs.

Verification results – sectors

	Whole sample	No. 1 regulations	No. 2 regulations	No. 5 regulations	No. 6 regulations	No. 7 regulations	Language schemes
Response in Welsh to Welsh query (where a response was received)	92%	95%	95%	78%	100%	81%	93%
Telephone calls – automated options in Welsh	90%	98%	100%	75%	100%	83%	71%
Telephone calls – dealing with call fully in Welsh	55%	60%	70%	60%	63%	15%	56%
Receptions – dealing with the enquiry in Welsh	46%	42%	39%	75%	44%	43%	40%
Forms available in Welsh	78%	83%	100%	69%	70%	52%	76%
Press releases available in Welsh	82%	96%	96%	67%	81%	91%	48%
Booklets etc available in Welsh	68%	92%	79%	67%	52%	63%	43%
Logo appearing in Welsh	88%	100%	80%	67%	96%	100%	74%
Webpages available in Welsh	81%	96%	95%	75%	77%	81%	53%
Facebook messages available in Welsh	74%	95%	85%	63%	81%	70%	39%
Twitter messages available in Welsh	70%	96%	88%	51%	83%	62%	30%
Job advertisements containing Welsh language skills needs category	82%	80%	88%	54%	79%	92%	0%
Job advertisements available in Welsh	47%	80%	100%	11%	58%	19%	0%
Signs available in Welsh	89%	88%	100%	100%	95%	78%	67%

Comparing results in different areas of Wales

2.1.25. By grouping local authority results according to area, we can see whether performance varies when comparing different regions within Wales. The table below indicates the performance according to region in 2019-20, with the change since 2018-19 also shown. These results are based on all the occasions on which the services or materials were accessed from organisations in the area concerned.

2.1.26. In the 2018-19 assurance report, Rights in Use, we said that the data suggests that there is no direct relationship between the percentage of Welsh speakers in an area and the performance of organisations. The same trends are seen this year, with some change:

o The best performance is seen by organisations in the north-west, but performance is comparable for the north-east and mid and west Wales too

o The performance of organisations in the north-east remains similar to mid and west Wales although the percentage of Welsh speakers there is significantly less

o In the 2018-19 report, it was noted that the performance of organisations in south Wales central surpassed south Wales west and south Wales east, although the percentage of Welsh speakers there is similar. The results do not vary to such an extent between these three regions this year. The results vary a great deal between services, but the performance of the south Wales west and south Wales east organisations had improved significantly in relation to a number of services in 2019-20.

2.1.27. Overall, with a few exceptions, performance is broadly similar between regions in terms of services and written material. The greatest variation is seen in the case of personal services:

o Dealing with telephone calls: north west 100%, mid and west 83%, north east 78%, south Wales central 56%, south Wales west 33%, south Wales east 22%

o Dealing with reception enquiries: north west 100%, mid and west 75%, north east 33%, three southern regions 0%

o There is also some variation in terms of the category of Welsh language skills needs in job advertisements – north west 100%, mid and west 94%, south Wales east 82%, north east 74%, south Wales central 59%, south Wales west 55%.

Verification results – county councils by area (change compared with 2018-19)

	All councils	North west[1]	Mid and west Wales[2]	North east[3]	South Wales west[4]	South Wales central[5]	South Wales east[6]
Percentage and number of Welsh speakers	19% 562,016	49% 146,168	32% 159,788	16% 58,238	12% 60,133	11% 77,703	10% 59,986
Response in Welsh to Welsh query (where a response was received)	94% ▲ 2%	100% ▲ 2%	100% ▲ 2%	100% ▲ 2%	100% ▲ 11%	86% ▼ 3%	83% ◄►
Telephone calls – automated options available in Welsh	98% ▲ 2%	100% ◄►	100% ▲ 22%	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	93% ▲ 7%
Telephone calls – Dealing with call fully in Welsh	58% ▲ 2%	100% ◄►	83% ▲ 8%	78% ▼ 8%	33% ▲ 11%	56% ▼ 15%	22% ▲ 4%
Receptions – dealing with the enquiry in Welsh	32% ▼ 23%	100% ◄►	75% ◄►	33% ◄►	0% ▼ 66%	0% ▼ 66%	0% ▼ 17%
Forms available in Welsh	85% ▲ 20%	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	89% ▼ 11%	78% ▲ 34%	89% ▲ 22%	67% ▲ 28%
Press releases available in Welsh	95% ▼ 2%	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	78% ▼ 22%	100% ◄►	94% ▲ 5%
Booklets etc available in Welsh	92% ▲ 14%	100% ▲ 11%	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	78% ▲ 22%	78% ▲ 28%	94% ▲ 22%
Logo appearing in Welsh	100% ▲ 6%	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	100% ◄►	100% ▲ 22%
Webpages available in Welsh	95% ▲ 3%	100% ▲ 2%	99% ▲ 1%	97% ▼ 1%	97% ▼ 1%	96% ▲ 7%	89% ▲ 6%
Facebook messages available in Welsh	95% ▲ 16%	100% ◄►	97% ▲ 13%	100% ◄►	89% ▲ 20%	91% ▼ 7%	94% ▲ 40%
Twitter messages available in Welsh	96% ▲ 12%	100% ◄►	98% ▲ 14%	98% ▲ 5%	100% ▲ 24%	87% ▼ 13%	93% ▲ 25%
Job advertisements containing Welsh language skills needs category	79% ▲ 6%	100% ▲ 5%	94% ▲ 31%	74% ▼ 9%	55% ▼ 31%	59% ▲ 9%	82% ▲ 10%
Job advertisements available in Welsh	79% ▼ 5%	73% ▼ 26%	100% ▲ 2%	97% ▲ 2%	74% ▼ 1%	100% ◄►	37% ▲ 3%

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[1] Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy

[2] Powys, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire

[3] Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham

[4] Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Bridgend

[5] Rhondda Cynon Taf, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan

[6] Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouthshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen

2.2 Quality of Welsh language services

2.2.1. We looked at a number of criteria in order to see whether the Welsh language is treated less favourably than the English language.

2.2.2. The Welsh language was treated more favourably than English in terms of response times to correspondence. However, English correspondence was marginally more likely to receive a response that fully answered the query, and of receiving additional material.

2.2.3. For the other services where verification was possible, the figures suggest that the Welsh language is treated less favourably than English in around 10% of cases. This figure is not huge, but it is important to remember that this can impact on people's faith in Welsh language services. For documents and so on, common reasons for noting that the Welsh language was treated less favourably were that text was missing, inaccurate, or less prominent in the Welsh version, or that the format of the English version was better.

Verification results – service quality

CORRESPONDENCE	
Welsh correspondence – average response time	1.04 days
English correspondence – average response time	1.12 days
Welsh correspondence – response answered the query in full	93%
English correspondence – response answered the query in full	100%
Welsh correspondence – additional material provided with the response	49%
English correspondence – additional material provided with the response	52%
Welsh correspondence – response including a signature / contact details	84%
English correspondence – response including a signature / contact details	81%
FORMS	
Forms treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language	11%
PRESS RELEASES	
Press releases treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language	11%
BROCHURE / PAMPHLET / LEAFLET / CARD	
Materials treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language	9%
CORPORATE IDENTITY	
Logos treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language	5%
WEBSITES	
Webpages treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language	11%
FACEBOOK	
Messages treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language	13%
TWITTER	
Messages treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language	11%
SIGNS	
Text on a sign not positioned so that the Welsh language is likely to be read first	16%
Welsh language text on signs inaccurate in terms of meaning and expression	10%

2.3 Designing services to increase the use of Welsh

2.3.1. In the 2018-19 assurance report, Rights in Use, we used our original research and theory to demonstrate the importance of designing services in a way that nudges people towards using Welsh rather than English. We encouraged organisations to offer Welsh language services by default or proactively – service users shouldn't have to go out of their way to use Welsh. The language should be clear, with services offered bilingually if possible.

2.3.2. Following publication of the report, improvement workshops were held with organisations discussing practical approaches to increasing the number of people using Welsh language services. The monitoring work and meetings underpinning much of the evidence in this chapter were carried out at around the same time as the workshops, so it was too early at the time to see any significant change.

Offering Welsh language services by default or proactively

2.3.3. On the whole, organisations had not made significant changes to their practices.

2.3.4. However, some organisations had made simple and effective changes so that the Welsh language service is seen as the most prominent option. For example:

- o Natural Resources Wales found that the numbers telephoning Floodline in Welsh were low, but the option for using the Welsh language service was number 5, so the system was changed so that the Welsh language service was offered straight away to callers from Wales. They will monitor the use of the service following this change
- o The S4C website is in Welsh by default.

Services that appeal to Welsh speakers

2.3.5. Some organisations said that they look carefully at usage statistics and try to use them to ensure that their Welsh language services meet the needs of Welsh speakers.

2.3.6. For example, the Arts Council of Wales has separate Twitter accounts in both Welsh and English. The content on both accounts is similar and shares the same information, but they use engagement statistics to schedule tweets in the way that attracts the most readers in both languages.

2.3.7. More than one organisation has said that Welsh speakers were more willing to read succinct documents in Welsh. This may be because complex documents used to be published in English only, and that Welsh versions used to be in language that was difficult to understand or contained errors. Both of the organisations below noted that engagement had improved for both languages when presenting information in a more straightforward and appealing way, but that the improvement was greater in the case of Welsh:

- o Ofcom has found that Welsh speakers are more inclined to engage with information that is presented in the form of videos, and therefore intends to make greater use of the medium
- o Audit Wales saw a large increase in Welsh language engagement with its annual general report as a result of changing the format of the report (in both languages) to be shorter and less complex, using clearer language, and with a more attractive design.

2.3.8. Some organisations such as the Arts Council of Wales and Estyn reported that they had developed their corporate tone of voice during the year, meaning that their materials were now clearer to readers.

Acting on language choice

2.3.9. We heard that some organisations had put in place arrangements to establish the language choice of users and to act on this in all subsequent contact. For example:

- o The National Lottery Community Fund identifies language choice as part of the initial conversation with grant applicants and recipients. Language choice is recorded on the organisation's contact management system, which is available to staff in all settings – in and out of the office – as they use tablets
- o South Wales Police have developed a method of identifying and recording individuals who choose to use Welsh with them so that services can be tailored for them where possible, with 4,500 individuals identified to date. Training for staff includes how to deal with Welsh speakers and the importance of recording language choice.

Language choice of inpatients in hospitals

2.3.10. There are specific standards set on health organisations, which require them to:

- o Ask inpatients when they are first admitted to hospital whether they wish to use Welsh during their visit
- o Inform staff who are likely to communicate with those patients of their wishes.

2.3.11. Betsi Cadwaladr UHB is mainstreaming the requirements of the standards through its Ward Accreditation Scheme, which introduces a set of standards for staff on the quality, safety and care of patients on wards. After the scheme was successfully piloted on specific wards at Ysbyty Gwynedd at the beginning of 2017, the Betsi Cadwaladr Language Choice Scheme was extended to all wards at Ysbyty Gwynedd and Ysbyty Glan Clwyd by May 2019.

2.3.12. The scheme means that patients must be asked what is their language choice. Having done so – and if the patient agrees to be part of the scheme – the Iaith Gwaith logo magnet is placed on the magnetic whiteboard by / above the indvidual's bed, to show staff that they wish to communicate with them in Welsh. Beyond Ysbyty Gwynedd and Glan Clwyd Hospital, the Language

Choice Scheme is also already in place on wards in many community hospitals, and there was an intention to extend it further, by introducing it on wards in Wrexham Maelor Hospital and more community locations in the north-east, during 2019-20.

2.3.13. At the same time, the health board has now also begun piloting the use of electronic screens to display patient information on some wards at Glan Clwyd Hospital. The Iaith Gwaith logo can be placed alongside patient names on the screens, which makes it easier for everyone to see which patients have said they prefer to use Welsh.

2.3.14. Two other health boards have published a ward pack, which includes resources such as magnets, lanyards and posters to facilitate the identification and sharing of information about inpatient language choice and staff language ability. In Cwm Taf Health Board care wards for the elderly and children have received them, whilst all wards in each hospital across the three counties of Hywel Dda Health Board have received them. Resources have been designed to boost the confidence of staff or to encourage them to use the Welsh language more often. Hywel Dda UHB has identified language champions in almost every ward, available to provide advice or resources and to inspire colleagues.

Meetings relating to well-being

Background

2.3.15. County councils must enable people to use Welsh in meetings relating to their well-being if they so wish. For all but two of the councils, it is acceptable to use simultaneous translation.

2.3.16. A legal interpretation of 'well-being' is provided in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Accordingly, meetings about well-being may be regarding 'physical health, mental health and emotional well-being', 'protection from abuse and neglect', 'education, training and leisure activities', 'domestic, family and personal relationships', 'contribution made to society', 'securing rights and entitlements', 'social and economic well-being', and 'suitability of residential accommodation'. For children, it includes 'physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development', and for adults it includes 'control over everyday life' and 'participation in work'.

2.3.17. The codes of practice for the act emphasise the importance of the Welsh language in assessing the care needs of individuals. In particular, paragraph 52, code of practice 3 states that "assessments should be conducted through the medium of English or Welsh as appropriate to the individual or family concerned. The requirement for an assessment to be in the medium of Welsh should not delay the process."

2.3.18. We asked 11 county councils to answer a series of questions regarding their compliance with these standards. All 11 organisations responded to the request.

Meetings held

2.3.19. The organisations held a wide range of meetings relating to the well-being of individuals, with the most commonly cited including:

o meetings – multidisciplinary / multi-agency; safeguarding / protection strategy; best interests; care planning; consultation/assessment meetings.
o assessments – care / mental health; learning disability support; health / occupational therapy; housing, housing adaptations and homelessness; social care for carers, adults and children; mental capacity; statutory assessments and statements of special educational needs
o interviews – vulnerable witnesses; suspected vulnerable people; for carers / parents; citizen feedback
o others – case conferences; consumer advice interventions; occupational health appointments and counselling sessions; blue badge applications.

2.3.20. A range of different departments had meetings with individuals regarding their well-being, including education, highways, planning, housing, trading standards, social services (adults and children), supporting people and democratic services.

Arrangements to comply with the standards

2.3.21. In terms of organisations' arrangements for establishing language choice:

- o The 11 organisations stated that they asked individuals whether they wished to use Welsh in such meetings, with 3 organisations confirming that the option was offered throughout the contact period
- o 3 organisations referred to an active offer, with a further 3 organisations indicating that language choice was identified at the first point of contact. 2 organisations stated that the focus was on language need rather than language choice, while another organisation identified an individual's language before any meeting
- o 2 organisations confirmed that there was no specific procedure across the organisations' departments to record language choice, with some departments lacking software systems. Some departments also have no formal processes for this
- o One organisation referred to the Eclipse IT system, with a number of references to the WCCIS system as a system where language choice was recorded.

2.3.22. In relation to organisations' arrangements for enabling individuals to use Welsh in meetings if they wish to do so:

- o Most organisations stated that they had not used an interpretation service at well-being meetings, noting that they would prefer to find Welsh-speaking staff to hold the meeting. One organisation referred to the sensitive and confidential nature of such meetings. 2 of those organisations had circulated guidance/guidelines to its staff on how to organise meetings
- o 4 organisations suggested that using a simultaneous translation service would be their way of enabling individuals to use Welsh at the meetings
- o One organisation provided a number of different responses from various departments. This suggested that there was inconsistency across the organisation, with some departments using simultaneous translation centrally, but some departments did not have explicit processes in place.

Staffing

2.3.23. Some organisations reported that they had enough Welsh speakers in the social care workforce to meet demand. Others said that they were recruiting more staff, assessing the skills of their existing staff, or improving the skills of those staff.

2.3.24. Carmarthenshire County Council said that its Welsh in Care and Communities Strategic Group, chaired by the Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Service, had undertaken a detailed data exercise to look at the workforce. The Council produced a report identifying gaps in staff skills data records. The work resulted in 5 action points including:

- Conducting a new sample of staff skills data through formal assessment rather than self-assessment concluding that 50% of the sample had been under-assessed
- 'Welsh language for carers' specialist Welsh language course targeted at internal staff and staff of organisations providing a service on behalf of the Council;
- Piloting recruitment of social workers to level 4 Welsh posts rather than level 2 and targeting specific geographical areas.
- A language audit showing a large number of domiciliary care officers at level 2. A specific training scheme was held with the aim of moving those officers up one level to be more confident in using Welsh daily.

Use

2.3.25. The majority of organisations did not gather data on the number of well-being meetings held in Welsh. 4 councils shared figures that showed very low use. One organisation shared data on the number of their social care clients with Welsh as a first language, but there was no data available per meeting. The lack of data makes it difficult to assess the adequacy of organisations' arrangements, and therefore organisations should seek to gather better data.

2.3.26. The overall impression – of a low number of meetings held in Welsh – is of concern. In sensitive situations such as meetings regarding well-being – particularly social care assessments and meetings – for a large number of Welsh speakers holding the meeting in Welsh will make them more comfortable and more able to express their feelings and needs. Facilitating the use of Welsh in meetings can make a real difference to the outcomes for the individuals concerned.

2.3.27. The standards require the individuals concerned to be asked whether they wish to use Welsh at the meeting, and then the organisation must act on that basis. However – because being able to use the Welsh language can be central to individuals' well-being – the standards do not prevent organisations from holding meetings in Welsh by default if they know that the individuals are Welsh speakers. Naturally, there may well be a need to recruit and train more Welsh speaking staff to enable this.

2.4 Promoting Welsh language services

2.4.1. The standards require organisations to promote their Welsh language services. There are a number of specific requirements for doing so for each service, and there is also an overall responsibility on organisations to promote all Welsh language services.

2.4.2. Every opportunity must be taken to make sure that service users are aware of the Welsh language services available. It is important to emphasise to users that the situation has improved, and that their experiences are likely to be better than in the past.

2.4.3. As with the design of Welsh language services, this was an issue discussed in the 2018-19 assurance report and subsequent improvement workshops.

Promotion of specific services

2.4.4. As we verified services in 2019-20, we looked at a number of criteria to see if organisations were promoting their Welsh language services.

Verification surveys – promotion of services

Booklets, leaflets etc – English version stating that the document is also available in Welsh	7%
Forms – English version stating that the document is also available in Welsh	19%
Press releases – English version stating that the document is also available in Welsh	22%
Self-service machines – default language is Welsh or bilingual	25%
English correspondence – response containing statement welcoming Welsh correspondence	31%
Receptions – all reception staff who spoke Welsh wearing a badge indicating this?	36%
Welsh correspondence – response containing statement welcoming Welsh correspondence	41%
Telephone calls – voicemail message advising that a message can be left in Welsh	43%
Job advertisements – application form with space to note preferred language of assessment	47%
Receptions – a sign stating that the use of Welsh is welcome	51%
Job advertisements – a statement welcoming Welsh language applications	58%
Telephone calls – an active offer of a Welsh language service at the start of the call	67%
Websites – splash page or similar offering Welsh proactively?	69%
Self service machines – an active offer of a Welsh language service	75%
Webpages – a 'Cymraeg/Welsh' button on the English version	91%

2.4.5. It appears that only a rather low percentage of organisations are taking simple steps to notify people of the availability of a Welsh language service – including a statement in an email signature and on materials, for example, or issuing a Iaith Gwaith badge to reception staff.

2.4.6.   On websites, a language switch button is a common feature and is therefore a clear method of informing people that the page is available in Welsh. Two-thirds of organisations also provide an active offer on their websites, by using, for example, a pop-up or splash page.

2.4.7.   A similar percentage of organisations use an automated message at the start of telephone calls to provide an active offer of language choice to callers.

2.4.8.   As well as recruiting Welsh speaking officers to job centres across Wales, the Department for Work and Pensions has taken steps to try to increase the number of people using the Welsh language. This was done across Wales. For example, a poster was designed promoting the Welsh language service and put in a prominent place in all the jobcentres across Wales. Different measures were also taken in individual jobcentres. For example, in Abergavenny, a note was placed in the diary of all Universal Credit claimants contacting that office to highlight the Welsh language service available.

2.4.9.   North Wales Police state on the pages introducing community policing teams whether the officers speak Welsh, are learning Welsh, or only speak a little Welsh, so that people can telephone a Welsh speaking officer if they wish. The force has also developed 'Siarad Cymraeg' and 'Dysgu Cymraeg' Velcro badges for Police Officer and Community Support Officers' uniforms, allowing the public to quickly identify staff's language skills when they are on duty, and to contribute to the organisation's bilingual image.

2.4.10.   Carmarthenshire County Council has actively promoted childcare settings, noting on the family information webpages which centres offer Welsh language provision and referring to the provision in a booklet to promote being bilingual in the county.

Comprehensive campaigns

2.4.11.   While there are commendable examples of promoting services, on the whole there are very few significant publicity campaigns for organisations' Welsh language services.

2.4.12.   Carmarthenshire County Council has continued with its campaign 'Pa bynnag ffordd / Learning the Language...', creating a video showing members of staff providing a service in Welsh, but that is the only campaign of its kind that we are aware of at the moment. Ceredigion County Council is developing projects and campaigns such as 'You're welcome to use the Welsh language'; and 'Your Council, Your Language, Your Choice'.

2.4.13.   The National Lottery Community Fund has developed a language charter that explains simply what the standards mean for customers and staff. The charter posters are displayed in the reception area of the Fund's offices in Wales, as well as on the website.

2.4.14.   South Wales Police has developed its external communications strategy in order to use the web, social media and local and national events such as the Urdd Eisteddfod to:

- o Increase public awareness of the standards
- o Inform the public that all South Wales Police services are available in Welsh
- o Reassure the public that they will not get an inferior service if they use the services of South Wales Police through the medium of Welsh
- o Let the public know where they can get further information and guidance.

2.4.15. We saw further examples of further education colleges targeting students from Welsh-medium schools in order to ensure that they were aware of the college's Welsh-medium provision.

2.4.16. Many organisations reported that they occasionally used social media to highlight their Welsh language services, with several organisations stating that they were taking advantage of Welsh language events such as St David's Day, and the Shwmae Sumae day to do so.

2.4.17. A good example of an organisation using social media to raise awareness is Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales's @IaithAmgueddfa Twitter account. This account provides a behind-the-scenes glimpse of various aspects of the Museum's Welsh language work, such as bilingual design, translation, learning Welsh and celebrating learners' achievements with the #dysgwyrdisglair hashtag. This is an inventive way of providing service users with assurance regarding the organisation's Welsh language services, as well as sharing good practice with more organisations.

Rights Day

2.4.18. The Commissioner held a Rights Day for the first time on 4 December 2019. A dedicated brand was created for the day, using the #maegenihawl hashtag. A resource pack was provided for organisations, which included designs for posters, biros, email signatures, and social media images; a list of social media messages, a table with simple wording for describing rights, a quotation from the Commissioner for press releases, and promotional videos and gifs.

2.4.19. Our intention was for organisations to be able to use resources and branding consistently, but to adapt the messages to their own audience. A good number of organisations took part in the day, with the hashtag trending in Cardiff and many organisations having a good deal of engagement with their messages. We intend to build on the success of the day in future years, but, naturally, organisations should promote their Welsh language services continuously throughout the year.

2.5   Evidence of take up of services

2.5.1.   The standards do not require data to be gathered on the use of services, but we encourage organisations to do this as a way of measuring whether services are meeting the needs of Welsh speakers, and whether efforts to promote the services are working.

2.5.2.   Where there is clear data available, this can be used to plan improvement over time. For example, Dŵr Cymru has launched a campaign during 2019-20 to increase the number of customers who use its Welsh language services to 25,000 by 2025.

2.5.3.   Organisations do not routinely measure the use of their Welsh language services. The data gathered by some organisations appears to be lower than would be expected if all customers able to speak Welsh did so when dealing with the organisation.

2.5.4.   However, there are some encouraging examples of increases in use. Some organisations reported that they had seen a significant increase in the use of the Welsh language, but that they did not have data. Others had gathered data that confirmed this trend. For example:

- o   Following the publication of new e-book resources on the Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales website, they saw a 31% increase in the number of visits to the Welsh language education section of their website
- o   South Wales Police has seen an increase of over 10% in the number of Welsh language calls received at their 101 call centre as a result of protecting 25 posts as having Welsh language skills as essential. The organisation is considering increasing the number of staff with Welsh language skills in order to meet increasing demand
- o   The use of several of the DVLA's Welsh language online services has continued to increase, for example the Vehicle Licensing service has increased by 14%, Personal Registration Numbers has increased by 41%, and Vehicle Management increased by 344%. The DVLA has also seen a 35% increase in Welsh language calls compared to the previous year – although the number of English language calls has decreased in the same period.

2.5.5.   Some organisations have noticed trends that can provide other organisations with ways to plan their provision so that it meets the needs of the public. For example, two organisations that process grant applications indicated that verbal use of Welsh during processes is now much more common, while written use is lower than verbal use. This may be because more people, including external consultants, are involved in written applications, while verbal contact tends to be on a one-to-one basis.

3 Compliance arrangements

I find it difficult to believe that the head of any organisation can be satisfied with a situation where their organisation is failing to comply with basic statutory requirements.

Organisations should not await the results of monitoring work or an investigation before ensuring that they comply with these legal requirements.

Compliance should not be a box-ticking exercise. Welsh speakers – the organisation's customers – should be central. Service users need to be reassured that the organisation's processes are adequate. Users' experiences need to be understood – through verification of services and listening to people. There is a need to respond positively to people's complaints and concerns.

The standards require arrangements to oversee compliance. Organisations can choose whatever methods – verification, internal reporting, risk, audit, action plans and so on – that are most appropriate for them, but arrangements must be put in place. And those arrangements should be underpinned by the whole of the organisation's governance authority – leaders need to make it clear, through processes and culture, that meeting the requirements is a priority.

Not having an officer, manager or specialist unit working specifically on improving the organisation's Welsh language provision creates a risk of failing to promote the Welsh language in accordance with the Measure.

It was good to see that organisations had established satisfactory arrangements for translation, and that the costs had been absorbed into the routine costs of the organisation. Innovation in automatisation of work, and facilitating bilingual drafting, could generate savings to enable investment in other aspects of Welsh language provision.

The Commissioner's opinion

"I have seen a change in the planning that takes place here in terms of the Welsh language, compared with the period before the standards were introduced. It led to the creation of a task and finish group and a member of staff taking action – this has been very beneficial."

Staff member in discussion group

"The way in which we operate with regard to the Welsh language is completely ad-hoc – it's pure luck if someone speaks Welsh and makes things happen. There's no forward planning to ensure that things are embedded in policies and systems."

Staff member in discussion group

3.1 Internal monitoring

3.1.1. The Welsh language standards require organisations to publish arrangements for overseeing their compliance. It is important that organisations have arrangements in place to ensure that they know the level of compliance within the organisation, and to identify any shortfalls in order to address them.

3.1.2. Some organisations, but by no means all, had proactive arrangements to establish how they were performing. Several organisations reported that they took action when any failure became apparent, but did not proactively seek to establish compliance levels.

Direct verification

3.1.3. We found that many organisations have arrangements in place to verify services directly. For example:

- o Conwy CBC uses Welsh speaking members of the Council's staff to verify email, telephone and reception services
- o The Isle of Anglesey County Council uses an internal team of staff to undertake spot checks of services
- o The BBC commissions an external company to conduct an audit, and sometimes also uses the BBC's internal audit team for audits
- o South Wales Fire and Rescue Service conducts spot checks for the main public facing services, such as the main telephone number and the website
- o In Dyfed Powys Police, members of the Iaith ar Waith (Language in Action) group are given the task of being mystery shoppers and reporting back to the group, with the language officers addressing any problems that emerge. An external audit is conducted every 6 months to verify compliance.

3.1.4. Some organisations have specific arrangements for some services. For example, the editors of the Swansea University website receive a daily report when pages are modified, so that the editors can ensure the quality of the changes, and begin a dialogue with the relevant departments about the importance of bilingualism when the same changes have not been made to the Welsh versions.

Internal accountability

3.1.5. Other organisations place the emphasis on self-evaluation and internal reporting. For example:

- o Blaenau Gwent CBC recently undertook an internal audit of compliance, in which all heads of service were required to report on implementing the standards. Responsibility for the efficient implementation of the standards has been delegated to staff across all directorates and departments, and therefore the audit was an opportunity for the Corporate Leadership Team to be assured of compliance. The audit found 'reasonable assurance'
- o The Isle of Anglesey County Council has created a scoring template for Heads of Service to review their compliance with the standards. The Chief

Executive and the Welsh language officer have held one-to-one meetings with each Head of Service for the third consecutive year. The findings were discussed, comparing this year's scores with the previous year. During this process, there was an opportunity to identify any further support needed by the individual services

o Estyn operates self-assessment and peer-led assessment processes which include discussion with colleagues regarding compliance, and preparation of an analysis for discussion in a Welsh language working group, where the standards applicable to each team are shown on a screen and the lead member of staff explains how the team has implemented the standards – the organisation states that the process has created ownership

o Cardiff Met University uses a 1-5 grading system for self-monitoring, and compares the results with the findings of mystery shopper surveys. The University has changed from using a traffic lights system because 1-5 grading is a more effective method of tracking progress between monitoring periods.

3.1.6. In their preparations for the implementation of the standards, health boards undertook assessments to assess the level of compliance and identify risks of failure, drawing up action plans to address any identified shortfalls. Some organisations (such as Betsi Cadwaladr UHB and Hywel Dda UHB) had done this well before the first imposition day, so that there was sufficient time to make improvements in order to comply from the imposition day onwards.

3.1.7. The requirement to comply with Welsh language standards is now included by NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership independent auditors when they conduct audits. During the year 5 NHS Wales bodies were subject to an audit. In one case, this led an organisation to include the most significant shortcomings in the organisation's general risk register, ensuring that the issue was elevated in line with the organisation's procedures.
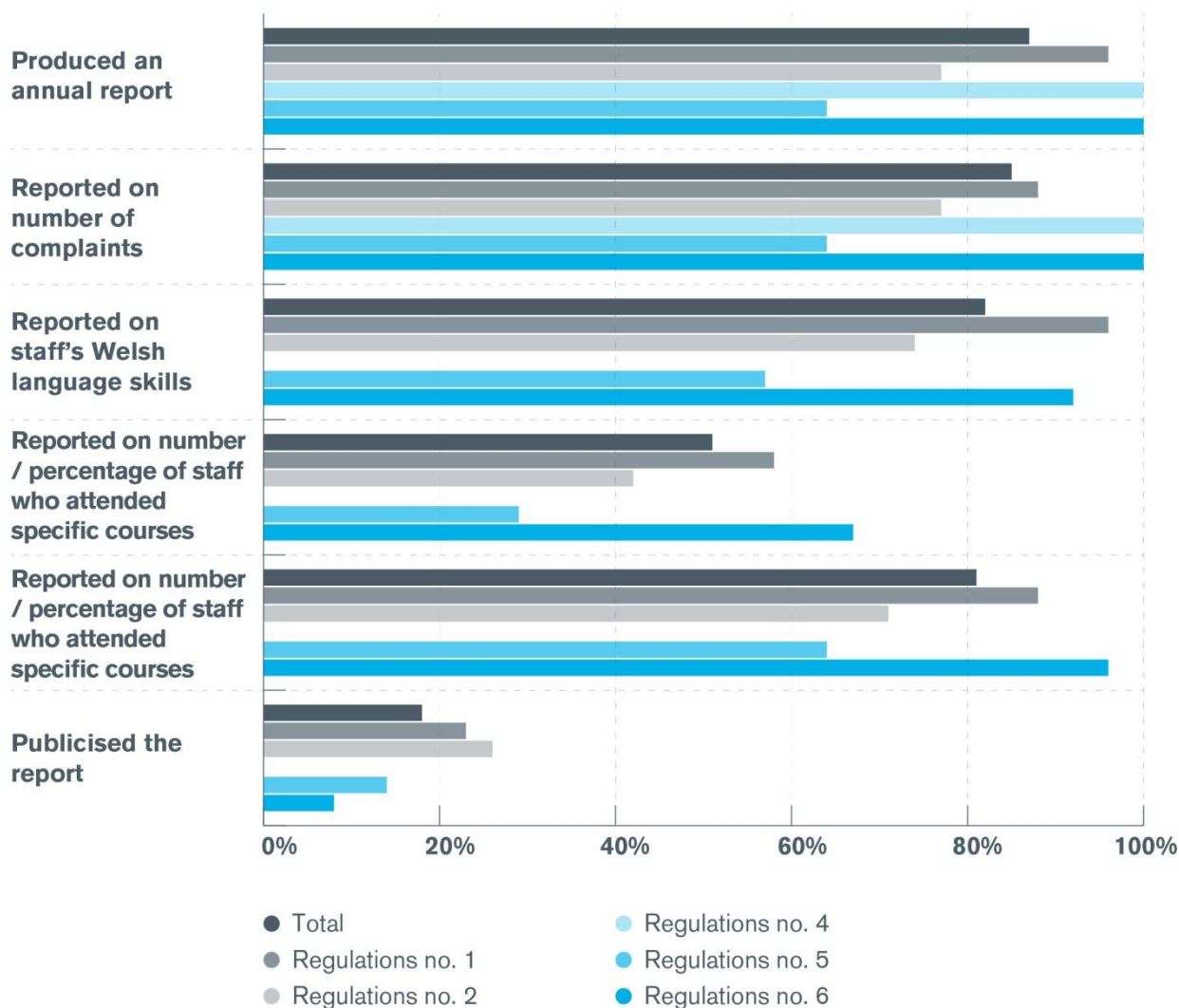
3.2 Public accountability

3.2.1. Organisations are required to publish Welsh language standards annual reports, reporting on how they complied during the year, and including specific data. The annual report provides an opportunity for organisations to demonstrate what arrangements they have in place to ensure compliance, and to provide public assurance.

3.2.2. Organisations are also required to publish a number of supporting documents. These are the documents which provide an opportunity for organisations to inform users of their Welsh language provision, and to provide assurance that they have adequate arrangements to keep track of compliance, to promote the use of their provision, and to deal robustly with any complaints.

Publication of annual reports

3.2.3. We checked whether organisations had produced and published Welsh language standards annual report, and whether the reports contained all the required statistics.

	Total	No. 1 regulations	No. 2 regulations	No. 4 regulations	No. 5 regulations	No. 6 regulations
Produced an annual report	87%	96%	77%	100%	64%	100%
Reported on the number of complaints	85%	88%	77%	100%	64%	100%
Reported on staff Welsh language skills	82%	96%	74%	-	57%	92%
Reported on the number / percentage of staff who attended specific courses	51%	58%	42%	-	29%	67%
Reported on the category of new / vacant posts	81%	88%	71%	-	64%	96%
Publicised the report	18%	23%	26%	0%	14%	8%

Produced an annual report

Reported on number of complaints

Reported on staff's Welsh language skills

Reported on number / percentage of staff who attended specific courses

Reported on number / percentage of staff who attended specific courses

Publicised the report

Legend:
- ● Total
- ● Regulations no. 1
- ● Regulations no. 2
- ● Regulations no. 4
- ● Regulations no. 5
- ● Regulations no. 6

3.2.4. The failure of some organisations to publish an annual report suggests a failure to oversee compliance with the standards, and this creates a risk of a lack of transparency and public accountability.

3.2.5. The problem appears to be limited to no. 2 and no. 5 regulations organisations, and those organisations that have not published a report tend to be smaller with a limited impact on people's ability to use Welsh. A few organisations did not publish a report on their website as required, but instead submitted it to the Commissioner.

3.2.6. Almost all of the organisations that had published a report had reported on the number of complaints they received. In many cases, the organisations did not report complaints according to category of standards as required by the standards, but instead gave an overall figure.

3.2.7. Almost all of the organisations that had published a report had reported on the number of Welsh-speaking staff, and on how new and vacant posts were categorised too. (The operational standards have not been imposed on the majority of no. 4 regulations organisations so we have not included data for these organisations).

3.2.8. The lower percentages who have reported on the number of staff who attended health and safety, induction etc courses in Welsh raise the question of the level of consideration given by organisations to the requirements of the standards. Some organisations who reported have done so only partially.

3.2.9. Our monitoring work suggested that the majority of organisations had not actively publicised the report beyond publication on the website. In addition to failing to comply with a specific requirement, this also means that organisations are missing an opportunity to promote their Welsh language provision to the public.

3.2.10. In addition to the details above that must be included, organisations can also use the reports to report on the actions that have been taken in terms of compliance and promoting the Welsh language. Reports varied greatly in terms of quality, with some going into useful detail in identifying numerous activities to ensure compliance and promoting the Welsh language more generally, while others contained only basic figures and comments.

Publication of supplementary documents

3.2.11. We checked whether no. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 regulations organisations had published the required supplementary documents.

	Total	No. 1 regulations	No. 2 regulations	No. 4 regulations	No. 5 regulations	No. 6 regulations
Published a record of standards imposed on the organisation	90%	100%	77%	100%	85%	96%
Published an explanation of how it intends to comply	66%	65%	65%	83%	77%	58%
Published overseeing, promoting and facilitating arrangements	48%	46%	52%	0%	38%	63%
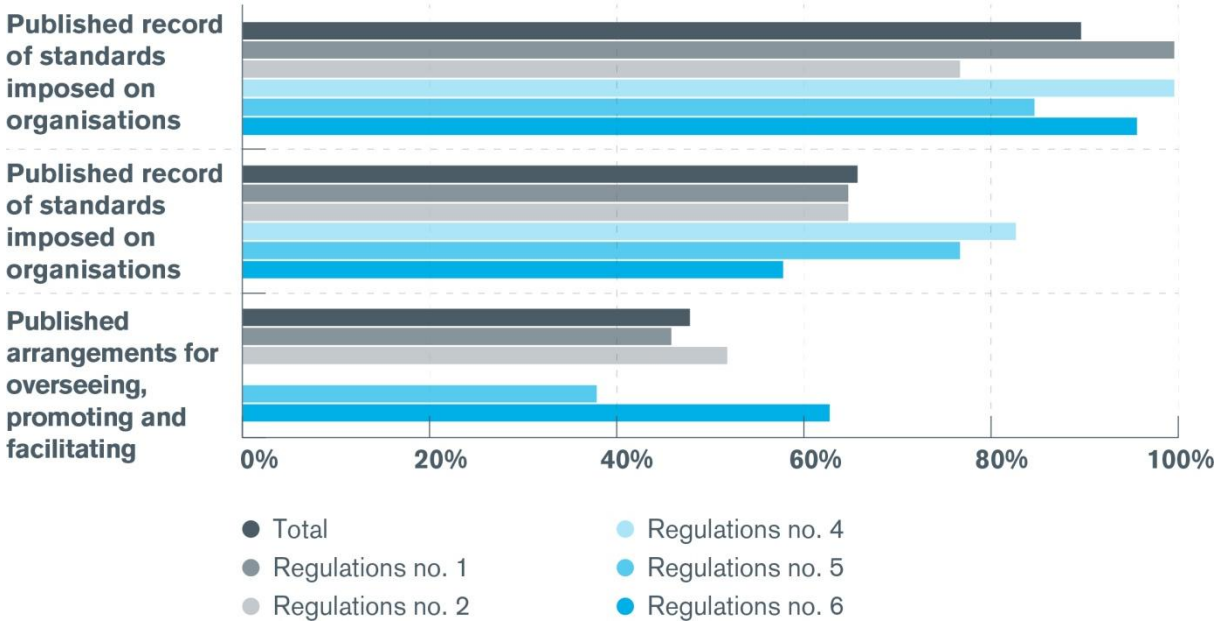
3.2.12. Publishing a record of the standards applicable to the organisation is simply a matter of publishing the compliance notice on the organisation's website, and so although 86% of the organisations verified have done so, the fact that 10% of organisations have not done so raises questions about the arrangements of those organisations.

3.2.13. A third of organisations do not let service users know how intend to comply, and over half have not outlined their oversight and promotion arrangements. The fact that they ignore this requirement is a concern in itself, but more seriously, this failing raises the suspicion that the organisations do not have arrangements in place.

3.2.14. In some cases, the documents published outlining the organisation's arrangements demonstrated that the organisation had seriously considered:

o The requirements of the standards
o The gap between the way in which it previously operated and how action needs to be taken in order to comply
o The action that needs to be taken in order to comply, the timetable and who is responsible.

3.2.15. Some of the most effective documents were in the form of an action plan for complying with each standard or each group of standards. Others focused on more strategic challenges that the organisation had to overcome, for example ensuring more Welsh speaking staff. Others did little more than describe the requirements of the standards, without demonstrating how the organisation would operate differently in order to ensure that Welsh language provision was available.

3.3   Acting on complaints and users' experiences
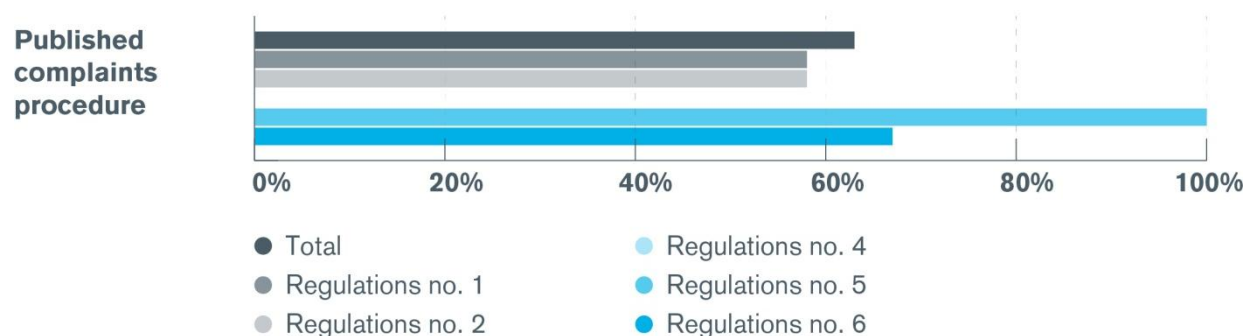
3.3.1.   The standards require organisations to publish a complaints procedure, setting out what the organisation's arrangements are for dealing with complaints regarding compliance with the standards. Organisations must also keep a record of complaints relating to the Welsh language. Complaints are an important means of learning about what is going wrong, and are an opportunity to correct any failings. Effective local complaints handling arrangements can also mean that service users are comfortable with this rather than making a complaint to the Commissioner, which may lead to an investigation.

3.3.2.   In addition to dealing with complaints as the standards require, organisations can proactively seek feedback from service users about their experiences – both positive and negative – of the organisation's Welsh language provision. This can be a method of overseeing compliance, and will improve the organisation's understanding of its performance.

Publishing a complaints procedure and records of complaints

3.3.3.   Almost 40% of the organisations verified had not published a complaints procedure.

	Total	No. 1 regulations	No. 2 regulations	No. 4 regulations	No. 5 regulations	No. 6 regulations
Published a complaints procedure	63%	58%	58%	0%	100%	67%

3.3.4.   A number of the complaints procedures did not refer to every aspect required by the standard, such as staff training. In many cases, organisations simply stated that they would deal with complaints about compliance in accordance with their corporate complaints procedures. Dealing with complaints about the Welsh language in a way that is consistent with other complaints can be an appropriate and effective approach, but in the cases seen, the corporate procedures contained little or no specific information about the Welsh language. Therefore the organisations did not give specific assurances that they dealt effectively with complaints about the Welsh language.

3.3.5. As noted in 3.2.3 uwchben, almost all the organisations that had published a report had reported on the number of complaints they had received (87% of organisations had produced an annual report, and 85% had reported on the number of complaints).

3.3.6. Analysis of the figures published per organisation showed that a fairly low percentage of organisations had received complaints, with the majority of those having received a low number of complaints:

o This was particularly so among organisations in regulations no. 2 (16% had received complaints), 4 (0%), and 5 (7%); 4 was the highest number of complaints for any organisation to receive, with the majority having received between 1 and 3

o 42% of no. 6 regulations organisations had received complaints, and these included 3 organisations that had received between 6 and 11 complaints

o No. 1 regulations organisations were most likely to have received complaints locally, with 64% of the organisations reporting having had at least one complaint. 32% had between 1 and 5 complaints, 20% had between 6 and 10 complaints, and 3 organisations had received more than that.

Acting on complaints and investigations

3.3.7. We know that several organisations ensure that the head of the organisation is aware of complaints. For example:

o In the Fire and Rescue Services complaints are monitored and handled by the Professional and Service Standards Department. Complaints and letters of appreciation are reported annually to the Fire and Rescue Authority

o At Aberystwyth University, a quarterly complaints report is submitted to the Governance and Compliance Committee, which then goes on to the Senior Management Team and the Council, ensuring that the reporting of complaints regarding the Welsh language is embedded in the University's main governance flow.

3.3.8. During 2019-20 we focussed on ensuring that organisations are implementing enforcement actions that the Commissioner has imposed following investigations. Organisations are required to update us on the achievement of enforcement action. Where enforcement action is not being undertaken, we take steps to ensure that this does happen. The Commissioner has a number of powers that can be used in such a situation, for example conducting an investigation or applying to a County Court for an order.

3.3.9. Of the enforcement actions we monitored between June 2019 and March 2020, 103 had been carried out. Organisations have been given an extension to undertake a further 13 enforcement actions, and we will ensure that these actions are also completed by the revised required date.

3.3.10. The Commissioner's investigations have led directly to an improvement in the performance of organisations. For example:

o The Commissioner conducted an investigation which determined that the Welsh Government had failed to publish an explanatory memorandum in Welsh for secondary legislation relating to the Welsh language. In line with the enforcement action to "take steps to ensure that they assess whether Explanatory Memoranda need to be published in Welsh taking into account the subject matter of the document and the anticipated audience and their expectations", the organisation is in the process of putting in place rigorous arrangements. The arrangements include an audit of all statutory instruments submitted in a calendar year, setting up a process for prioritising memoranda, and a full assessment of the word count with the aim of increasing the number of memoranda that are published bilingually in future

o The Commissioner undertook an investigation into the telephone services of Natural Resources Wales. The investigation made it clear that it is not acceptable to provide a Welsh language service by calling the customer back, and enforcement action was imposed requiring the organisation to development arrangements – either through the use of staff who are able to provide a service in Welsh, or through the use of technology – in order to deal with Welsh-language calls in their entirety in Welsh, without a break in the Welsh language service. As a result of the investigation, the organisation has introduced a new telephone call system which invites callers to press 1 for a Welsh language service and 2 for an English language service. Following this, those who choose a Welsh language service are transferred directly to a Welsh speaker.

3.3.11. We also heard in feedback meetings about organisations changing their arrangements in response to complaints made directly to them or from the Commissioner's investigations (and in some cases subsequent enforcement action). For example:

o Following an investigation into a complaint regarding correspondence, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC has developed a decision tree to establish what correspondence needs to be sent in Welsh by services across the Council

o Following various complaints, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales has changed design guidance to ensure that the Welsh language is more prominent than English; and has ensured that it is possible to speak Welsh in the café that is run by a third party, although it does not come under the standards and the contract existed prior to the standards; and has also changed the staffing structure of facilitators and issued guidance to staff

o Natural Resources Wales has responded to complaints by providing tailored training for a specific member of staff; changing a self service machine; and changing staffing arrangements at a centre

o Glyndŵr University reviewed its arrangements for advertising posts following an investigation by the Commissioner, and our verification work this year has shown improvements.

Seeking user feedback

3.3.12. We heard about some organisations actively asking users about their experiences of the organisation's Welsh language provision. For example:

o Following external engagement or training events, Estyn includes questions in questionnaires enabling it to assess whether the event met the Welsh language requirements of participants

o Coleg y Cymoedd operates a general quality monitoring programme through 'quality weeks', a series of weeks where the College conducts self-inspection exercises on various themes. The College evaluates learners' responses regarding opportunities to learn about Wales and its culture and to use the Welsh language, through questions during the quality weeks and responses to Learner Surveys held twice a year.

Seeking user feedback

3.4   Leadership and expertise

3.4.1.   In the 2018-19 assurance report, Rights in Use, the importance of two main roles was highlighted – a strategic lead at the highest levels within the organisation, and an expert who offers support and co-ordinates the organisation's work at an operational level. There is no requirement for organisations to implement this, but our analysis is that organisations that have officers who effectively carry out these roles perform better in terms of compliance with the duties.

Strategic leadership

3.4.2.   Based on our discussions this year our impression was that most organisations have a high level individual with responsibility for the Welsh language. This individual was usually responsible for chairing a group with an oversight of compliance, or providing accountability in another way, and acting as line manager (directly or indirectly) for the Welsh language officer or manager. There was variation in how much involvement this person had with the work from day to day – in some cases, the responsibility for day to day operations had been given entirely to the specific officer or manager, with the person at the higher level only taking action when intervention was required.

3.4.3.   In the health sector, the directors responsible for the Welsh language work in different areas from each other (e.g. public health, workforce, governance, etc). As they do not perform the same day-to-day functions, they have decided to meet as a group occasionally. Similarly, the Directors of Workforce and Organisational Development in each health organisation have begun to work more closely together and meet to discuss issues at a strategic level.

3.4.4.   Ensuring effective strategic leadership is particularly important for organisations with headquarters outside Wales. Some no. 5 regulations organisations told us that it is difficult to get leaders at the organisation's main offices in London to provide support and resources as they do not have an adequate understanding of the situation. That contrasts with the position of Ofcom, where a director who is part of the Senior Management Team is responsible for considering the Welsh language at a strategic level, and the day-to-day responsibility lies with the Director for Wales and the Senior Welsh Language Adviser. This arrangement means that appropriate support is given at SMT level, ensuring that the Chief Executive and Chair are aware of relevant issues.

Operational expertise

3.4.5.   Most organisations have an officer or manager who is responsible for the Welsh language on a day-to-day basis. In a good number of organisations, this is a full-time role, and sometimes forms part of a team. Overall we see that this leads to improved compliance as it allows a greater resource for identifying and resolving problems, working with departments across the organisation to ensure compliance. In some organisations, responsibility for the Welsh language is in addition to the officer's main responsibility, meaning that not so much time is spent on developing the provision.

3.4.6.   A number of organisations have established an internal network of Welsh language co-ordinators or champions. They have various responsibilities, including offering support to colleagues in their teams on the use of the Welsh language, raising awareness of the requirements with colleagues, and reporting back on performance and any issues. For example, the Welsh Government operates a network of language co-ordinators, with representatives from across the organisation, to provide assurance that the standards are being followed in the delivery of services through the various Groups within the Government. The network allows for the sharing of key messages on compliance within the Groups, a first point of contact for colleagues for advice on compliance, and provides assurance on compliance within the organisation. North Wales Police held a workshop for all Champions, with an address by the Deputy Chief Constable, to thank them for their work and agree on activities to promote bilingual workplaces over the subsequent period.

3.4.7.   In the summer of 2019 the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales published a communications guide for all UK Government departments. The guide provided methods for ensuring that departments adhere to, or exceed, the requirements of their Welsh language schemes when communicating in Wales, including when consulting, holding events, designing campaigns and using social media.

Internal groups and forums

3.4.8.   We found that a number of organisations had formed different groups within the organisation to discuss the implementation of Welsh language provision. In some organisations, these are forums of various staff that meet in order to update each other and share practice across the organisation. In other organisations, the groups exist in order to provide accountability or to plan work. For example:

o   Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and Natural Resources Wales have groups that include representation from different departments, locations and levels within the organisation. The groups meet in order to monitor implementation of the standards and the work of promoting the Welsh language

o   Within the Arts Council of Wales, as well as ensuring compliance, the group's role includes "driving the organisation to be innovative in ensuring

Welsh language provision from the organisations it funds" and "being innovative in promoting services". It is chaired by a Council Member rather than a member of staff

- o In Gwent Police, there is a 'Welsh language meeting' which takes an overview of compliance internally. The members include an inspector, a senior detective inspector, and managers at various levels. The meeting sets out specific plans for departments and then uses RAG status to check performance and compliance. Matters requiring attention are then filtered up to higher level committees
- o Cardiff Met University has established a Use of Welsh committee at a senior management level, which monitors progress on Welsh language standards. It meets 3 times a year and receives reports from the Welsh Language Unit, and presents an annual report to a Strategic Planning Committee and to the Board of Governors
- o Aberystwyth University has a Welsh Language Executive Group made up of representatives from key departments. This Group provides updates on the achievement of an operational plan in relation to the Welsh language and reports to the Senior Management Team and the University Council.

3.4.9. The status of these groups within the organisations is varied. Some of them are a formal and acknowledged part of the organisation's governance structure, with clear arrangements for reporting upwards from the group to other forums. Organisations may consider whether they would benefit from adopting the group as a formal part of the organisation's governance. This can provide greater assurance that the group's decisions are being implemented.

3.5 Translation

3.5.1. The standards do not require organisations to arrange their translation work in any particular way. As a result, translation arrangements vary according to the business needs of organisations. The majority of organisations were satisfied that their arrangements were appropriate for their requirements.

3.5.2. Although a number of organisations were investing significantly in their translation services, it appeared that the costs had been accepted as a routine part of the costs of providing services. There was some evidence that organisations were developing their translation services in order to operate more efficiently.

Managing translation work

3.5.3. Some organisations have an in-house translation unit that does all the translation work for the organisation. Others have in-house translators who do most of the work, but with arrangements to outsource work over and above what the in-house translators are able to do.

3.5.4. Others use external translators for all translation work. In many cases, these organisations noted that there would not be enough work for an in-house translator, or that the workload of an in-house translator would be inconsistent – too much work on some occasions, and not enough at other times.

3.5.5. In several organisations, the language officer was responsible for managing the translation workload, and this meant that they had an overview of what material was produced in Welsh. Organisations stated that this enables prioritisation of work and avoidance of duplication.

3.5.6. Some organisations with translation units themselves undertake translation work for other organisations through a service level agreement.

3.5.7. A number of organisations stressed that they had developed relationships over time with their external translators, who were therefore familiar with the organisation's tone of voice and specialist terminology, and who were able to work flexibly with them.

3.5.8. A few organisations identified problems with working arrangements and managing contracts with external providers.

Making translation more efficient

3.5.9. Some discussions held during the imposition of standards on health organisations suggested that the organisations had not considered ways of reducing translation work, for example using translation memory software or machine translation, creating templates and stock translations etc. This meant that estimates of compliance costs were too high.

3.5.10. An investigation was conducted into a case where a council had published information in English only on social media accounts, as the council did not have the capacity to translate messages quickly in order to be able to post on a timely basis. As a result of the complaint and the investigation, the Council

conducted a pilot using Microsoft Translator translation software to enable the rapid translation of messages. An enforcement action was imposed requiring the council "to ensure that it has appropriate arrangements in place for the translation of information that needs to be published urgently on social media."

3.5.11. A few organisations reported that they had invested in technology to facilitate translation, for example Dyfed Powys Police has established a service level agreement and introduced translation memory software to deliver the work more efficiently.

3.5.12. Coleg y Cymoedd has introduced a proofreading service and mentoring scheme for staff, to encourage staff to have a go at drafting their work in Welsh.

3.5.13. Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales's translation unit offers a range of services, for example simultaneous drafting, editing, checking colleagues' work, proofreading, online vocabulary, and advising on bilingual content and design. The translators understand the need to be creative and to communicate naturally with the public. They draft bilingually rather than translate where possible, with greater emphasis on creating text that does not read as a translation. They strive to include vernacular references and quote from original Welsh sources rather than translating English quotes. This was a major part of the St Fagan's refurbishment project.

3.5.14. An investigation was conducted into a case where a council had not proofread consultation documents translated by a third party prior to publication by the council. This meant the publication of documents containing errors. The following enforcement action has been imposed: "The Council must develop a proofreading process and associated guidance, and actively raise awareness of the process and guidance amongst relevant officers." Following the implementation of the enforcement action, the Council provided revised documentation as evidence that the action had been undertaken.

3.6 Outsourcing and third party platforms

3.6.1. Organisations must continue to comply with the standards when services are provided by third parties on behalf of organisations. It is for organisations to decide which arrangement to establish with any third party carrying out activities on their behalf. The Commissioner's advice document, Contracting out Public Service Contracts: Welsh Language Considerations, deals with this.

3.6.2. Two investigations were conducted into a council that focussed specifically on services provided on its behalf by a third party, a company providing leisure services. In one case, a member of the public had received automated messages in English only acknowledging an enquiry, and an enforcement action was imposed on the Council to conduct a review of all automated messages sent by its leisure services, and to check periodically that these messages were sent in accordance with the requirements of the standard. In another case, a member of the public received an English only service when telephoning a leisure centre, and also received a call back from a non-Welsh speaking member of staff. Enforcement actions have been imposed on the council to conduct a review of the provider's arrangements in answering telephone calls made to the leisure centres they run via an arrangement with the council, and to act on the findings of the review by introducing a policy and procedure in order to comply. These cases make it clear that the Commissioner's expectation is that organisations take responsibility for ensuring that services offered on their behalf comply with the standards.

3.6.3. An investigation was conducted following a complaint about English only correspondence regarding the calculation of council tax. The council explained that the third party software that produces the statements was unable to produce bilingual statements, and that the system produces and sends the letters automatically without the knowledge of the Council's officers. The software had been in place for a number of years and the Council had tried to work with the company to try and resolve the issue. As a result of the investigation the Council has prepared a detailed action plan to show what action it will take, including establishing the language choice of claimants, recording a service call with the system provider, and updating Welsh parameters within the system.

3.6.4. An investigation was carried out into another council in relation to failures on a website run by the company that operates library and leisure services on behalf of the council. Enforcement action has been imposed on the council to monitor the service and provide training for the company's staff. Following the investigation the Commissioner took the enforcement action of addressing the failure by corresponding with local authorities to educate them and raise awareness of the need to comply in this situation.

3.6.5. On the whole, it did not appear that a large number of new services were being outsourced, compared with past periods.

Procurement

3.6.6. A large number of organisations stated that they had revisited their contracts to ensure that they included standard conditions requiring suppliers to comply with the relevant standards. A number stated that they had modified their procurement arrangements following the session held by the Welsh Language Commissioner some years ago. Organisations also noted that specific questions about the standards that are relevant to a contract will be included in the tendering process.

3.6.7. For example, the Welsh Government standard procurement templates ensure that the standards are a key consideration when contracting third party services. Guidance has been developed for staff on compliance with requirements during consultation exercises, contracting services, grant funding and research commissioning.

3.6.8. A number of organisations noted that developing a relationship with the in-house procurement department had been one of the language officer's most important tasks over recent years, and that standard guidance and requirements had been amended to reflect the requirements of the standards.

3.6.9. Organisations appear to have had mixed experiences in procuring work from third party providers, particularly in technology. For example:

   o Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales said that it had formed good relationships with the private sector, leading, for example, to the publication of the first Welsh-language virtual tour on Google Expedition, a virtual tour of the National Coal Museum, Big Pit. One of their other contractors had stated that working on a bilingual English / Welsh project had prepared them for the European market

   o The National Library of Wales stated in its annual report that: "a challenge arises in developing websites and any digital resources bilingually, especially if it means working with external companies. External companies do not plan and develop apps in a manner that transfers easily to being bilingual."

   o In some cases, Ofcom Wales is responsible for the procurement of services such as videos for Ofcom centrally to ensure that the companies that are used are able to deliver the work in Welsh as well as in English

   o Audit Wales has decided to start undertaking an internal audit of town and community councils from 2021-22 onwards, rather than using an external company. Improving Welsh language provision was one factor in this decision.

GOV.UK

3.6.10. A number of organisations, including those implementing standards as well as UK Government departments and organisations, provide some services on the UK Government's main online platform, GOV.UK.

3.6.11. The situation regarding publishing Welsh language content on GOV.UK has improved after the Commissioner's approval of the Cabinet Office's Welsh language scheme in April 2019. Among other commitments, the scheme makes clear the responsibilities of Government departments and GDS in ensuring that content and services are available in Welsh on the Government's website.

3.6.12. There is now a considerable amount of information and services available in Welsh on GOV.UK. For example, during 2019-20, following discussions with the Commissioner, DBS basic checks were made available in Welsh, and a passport application form is available in Welsh (achieved a year earlier than the target date). As noted in section 2.5, there has been an encouraging increase in the use of a number of UK Government department online services.

3.6.13. Discussions are still underway between the Commissioner and the Government Digital Service regarding offering a number of further services in Welsh continuing with other services. We are also in discussion as to how Welsh language services can be made more visible on the website.

3.6.14. During the past year, HMRC has carried out significant research into consumer behaviour, leading to illuminating results on how to improve Welsh speaking customers' online experiences. This work will feed into GOV.UK and other organisations.

4 Workforce capacity

The results of my monitoring work show that organisations need to have more Welsh speaking staff in key roles. This is crucial if Welsh speakers are to be able to rely on the services they are entitled to receive.

Organisations need to do more to recruit Welsh-speaking staff. An assessment must be carried out every time a job is advertised. With many organisations failing to offer services in line with the standards, I want organisations to take a long-term view in relation to how they ensure a workforce that facilitates the use of Welsh.

Progress has been made in assessing skills, and there is a need to continue with this until the skills of 100% of the workforce are assessed annually. I would like to see consistency in the assessment method so that better tracking is possible over time and as staff move between organisations.

It is also encouraging to see organisations having developed their skills improvement provision, working with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to manage provision and target training in a way that will have a greater impact.

I have heard examples of organisations struggling to find suitable Welsh speaking staff. But I have also come across organisations thinking outside the box when advertising posts, targeting applicants imaginatively and adjusting job requirements to ensure more Welsh speakers apply.

A number of activities are undertaken in order to make the Welsh language more visible within organisations, and to give colleagues the opportunity to use the language. However, I have not seen a purposeful shift towards the significant use of Welsh as an internal operational language. This is something which I would like to see developing over the next few years.

There is huge potential for learning, improving and using Welsh at work to give people more confidence in their skills. By building confidence in the work context, people can become more confident to use the language in the community and at home too.

The Commissioner's opinion

"They need to look at how they recruit in order to appoint Welsh speakers to posts."

Member of the public in discussion group

"There has been a significant increase in how many people want to develop their language skills – at level 3 and want to strengthen them to level 4 or whatever. More staff are keen to develop skills... and there are a lot more opportunities too."

Staff member in discussion group

4.1   Setting Welsh language skills requirements when recruiting

4.1.1.   Organisations must carry out an assessment of the need for Welsh language skills for all new and vacant posts that they advertise, in order to consider whether Welsh language skills are needed to carry out the job. It must be noted whether Welsh language skills are essential, desirable, need to be learnt after appointment, or not required for the post, and this should be stated when advertising the post (unless skills are not required).

4.1.2.   Organisations must keep a record of the assessments they carry out. The standards do not detail the nature of the records or what they should contain. The numbers of posts assessed must be reported in the annual report.

4.1.3.   With the inadequate availability of services in some organisations, the recruitment of staff with Welsh language skills is one of the most effective means of increasing the Welsh language capacity of organisations to ensure that they have sufficient staff to comply with the requirements.

Records and statistics

4.1.4.   The verification of organisations' annual reports showed that 81% of organisations reported on job categories in terms of the need for Welsh language skills. (Most of the other organisations had not published a report at all.)

	Total	No. 1 regulations	No. 2 regulations	No. 5 regulations	No. 6 regulations
Reported on the category of new / vacant posts	81%	88%	71%	64%	96%

Reported on category of new / vacant posts

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

- Total
- Regulations no. 1
- Regulations no. 2
- Regulations no. 5
- Regulations no. 6
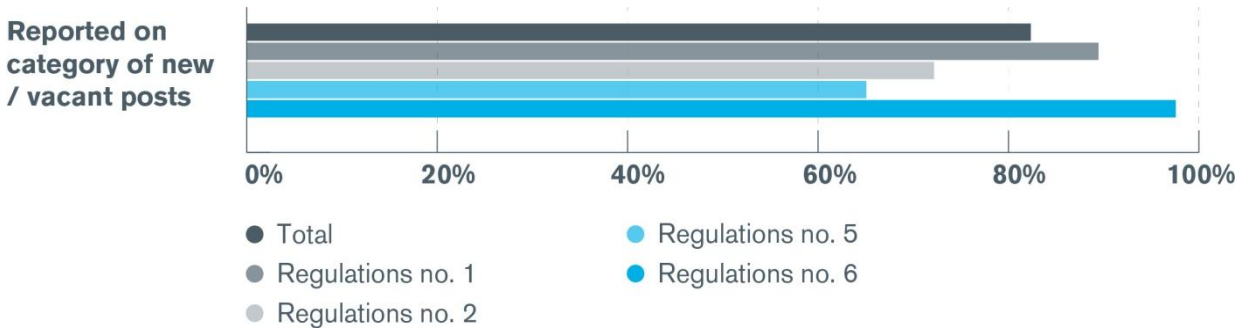
4.1.5. On the basis of the data published by each organisations that had reported, the percentage for each category was as follows:[7]
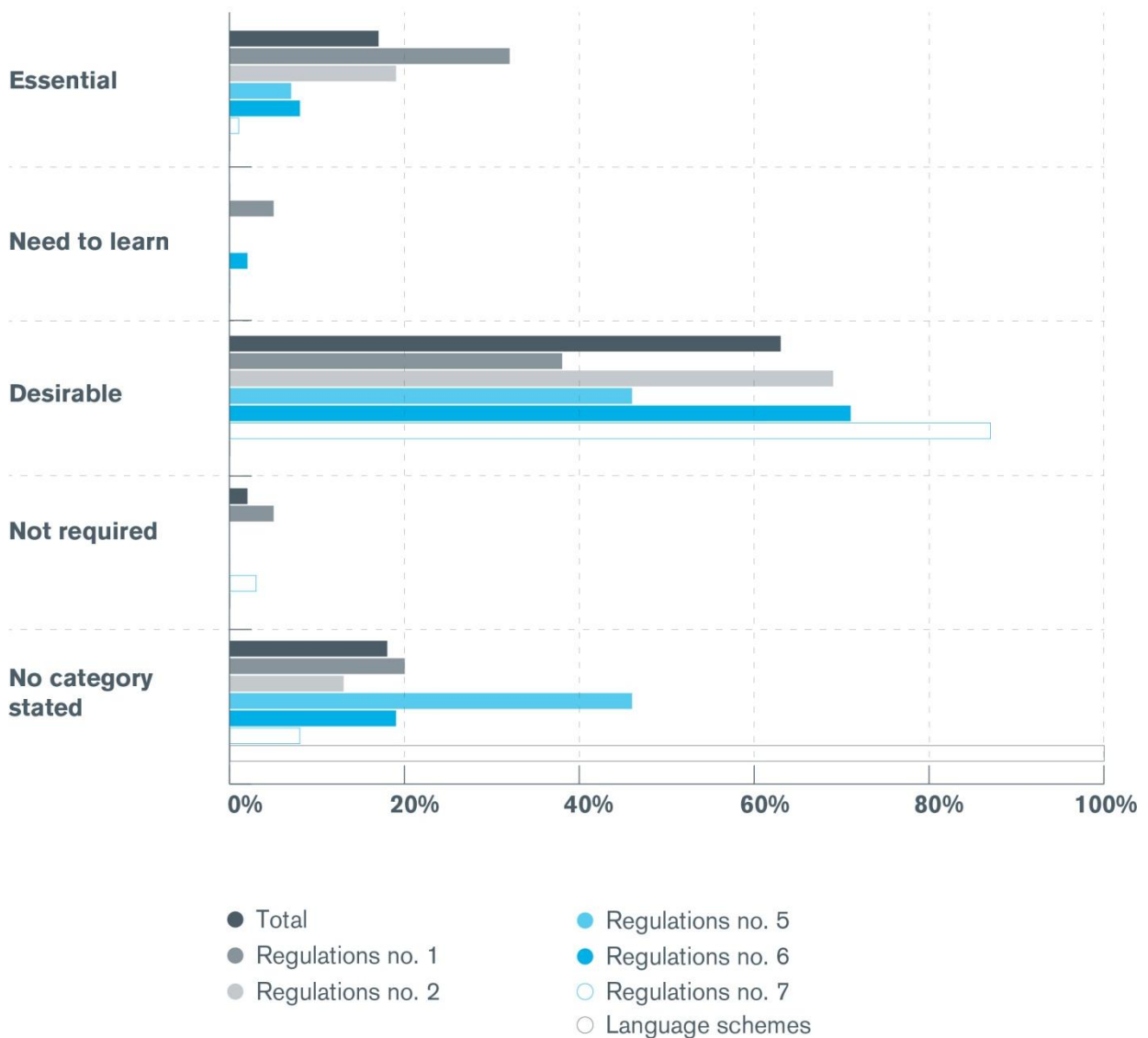
	Total	No. 1 regulations	No. 2 regulations	No. 5 regulations	No. 6 regulations
Essential	18%	20%	24%	19%	12%
Need to learn	3%	0%	2%	29%	2%
Desirable	54%	46%	36%	53%	73%
Not required	26%	33%	39%	0%	14%

- Total
- Regulations no. 1
- Regulations no. 2
- Regulations no. 5
- Regulations no. 6

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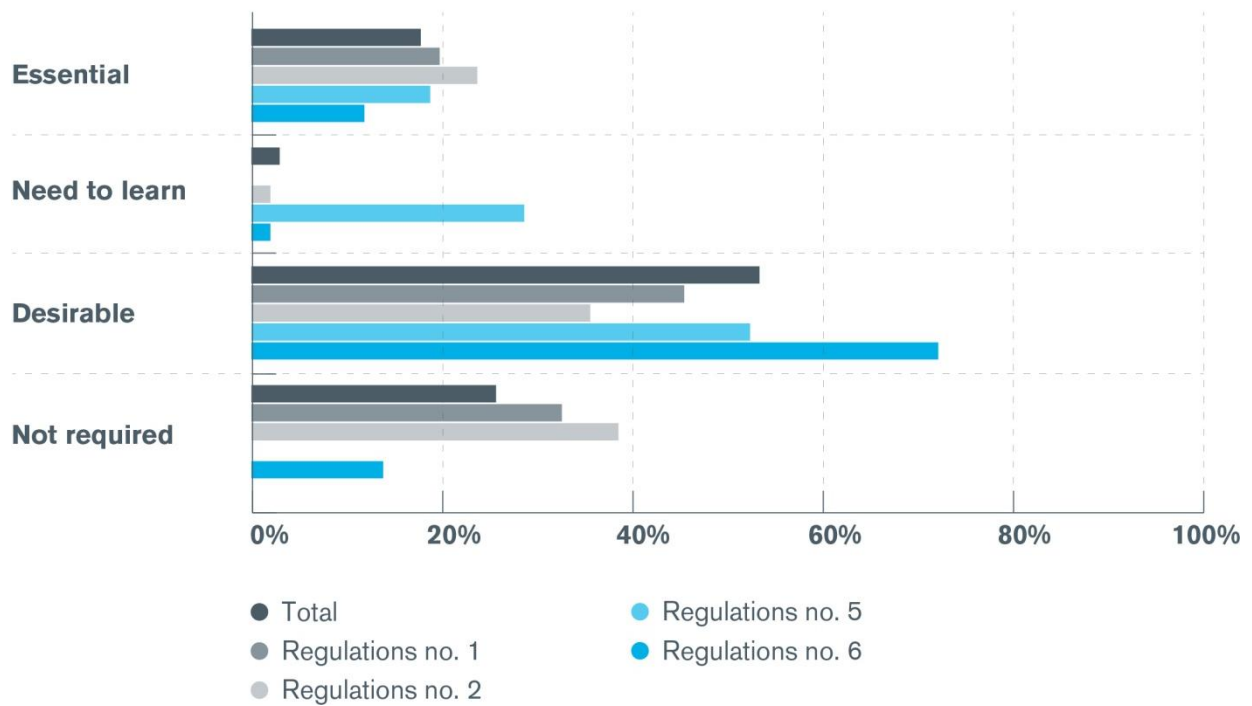
[7] Not including posts where level 1 and 2 skills were essential / desirable / needing to be learnt

4.1.6. The job advertisements of a sample of organisations were checked as part of the verification surveys, recording what the language category of the post was.

	Total	No. 1 regulations	No. 2 regulations	No. 5 regulations	No. 6 regulations	No. 7 regulations	Welsh language schemes
Essential	17%	32%	19%	7%	8%	1%	0%
Need to learn	0%	5%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Desirable	63%	38%	69%	46%	71%	87%	0%
Not required	2%	5%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
No category specified	18%	20%	13%	46%	19%	8%	100%

- Total
- Regulations no. 1
- Regulations no. 2
- Regulations no. 5
- Regulations no. 6
- Regulations no. 7
- Language schemes

4.1.7. Differences between the results in verification surveys and annual reports are to be expected, as our verification work takes place at a certain time during the year, and the recruitment patterns of organisations vary, however the same trends are observed. The high figure for posts where there was a need to learn Welsh in the annual reports of no. 5 regulations organisations reflects the requirement for staff to have basic Welsh language skills shortly after appointment.

4.1.8. When job advertisements were verified in 2014-15, 4% of posts indicated that Welsh language skills were essential. The increase from 4% to 17% during the period that the standards have been in operation demonstrates the impact of the standards.

4.1.9. During the process of imposing standards on health organisations, there have been some examples of organisations challenging duties on the grounds that they do not have sufficient capacity to provide a service in Welsh – but, at the same time, these figures suggest that a very low percentage of their advertised posts have Welsh language skills as essential.

4.1.10. We asked 14 organisations from no. 2, 5 and 6 regulations to share with us their Welsh language skills requirements assessment records for the first 6 months of 2019-20. Thirteen of the 14 organisations responded to the request. Eleven out of the 13 organisations provided a record of assessments for all new or vacant posts advertised during the period, with two further organisations providing a record for the majority. The most common method of keeping records of assessments was a list of posts and the outcome of the assessment (8 organisations). Two organisations provided a copy of the original assessments, with one organisation providing a copy of the job description and person specification.

4.1.11. Only the records of 4 organisations showed the rationale used in conducting the assessment (2 organisations provided a copy of the original assessment, and 2 recorded the assessments in tabular form). As the standards do not specify what the form and content of the assessments should be, this is not a failure to comply, but the Commissioner's view is that organisations' records should show the rationale for the decisions, so that they can be defended if they are challenged.

Welsh language skills requirements assessment process for posts

4.1.12. The majority of the organisations in our study stated that they had carried out an assessment for all new and vacant posts. Two organisations had not undertaken assessments as they had adopted a policy of stating that Welsh language skills were desirable for all jobs (a few organisations stated in meetings that they did this too). This is unacceptable – an assessment needs to be carried out for each post. Amongst the posts not assessed were a public engagement officer, a social and digital media marketing officer, and a nursery nurse. Individual assessments for each post could have identified these posts as key to providing important Welsh language services to the public.

4.1.13. In our meetings with organisations, we discussed how organisations ensured that an assessment had been carried out, and that this assessment was adequate. Practices included:

o Using an electronic human resources process or system to prompt officers to conduct an assessment and prevent advertising until this has taken place

- o Involving specialist or senior staff in the process of approving or completing assessments, for quality assurance and to make sure that the wider context has been considered
- o Providing guidance – such as guidelines, materials such as a flowchart, or training – for staff who carry out and scrutinise assessments.

Considerations in conducting assessments

4.1.14. In our study, only one organisation provided evidence that consideration was given to the four possible categories (essential, desirable, learning necessary, not required). Ten organisations used a selection of the categories, e.g. essential/desirable only.

4.1.15. Two organisations identified the necessary level of fluency for posts, but did not comply with the standards by specifying whether those skills are essential, desirable or that learning was necessary. This requirement must be complied with in the first instance (the necessary fluency can be described subsequently if desired).

4.1.16. A number of organisations told us in meetings that they had seen better appointment rates after including a meaningful, practical description of how the Welsh language will need to be used in post.

4.1.17. The factors considered by the 4 organisations that provided a record of the rationale for their decisions included:

- o Will the postholder be in contact with the public / internal staff who will want to use the Welsh language?
- o Is the post in a service likely to be important in the context of the Welsh language, e.g. front line services, education, social care, or human resources?
- o Does the postholder require Welsh language skills in order to achieve a specific objective in the corporate plan or the action plan for the Welsh language?
- o Do you need Welsh language skills to carry out the job in order to comply with Welsh standards in any way?
- o Is the post in a team or department currently lacking Welsh language skills?
- o Will the role have a high public profile, where the organisation will need to be represented?
- o Is the post in a team or department likely to receive communications or documentation through the medium of Welsh?

4.1.18. It was also evident from our meetings with organisations that the factors most often considered were the requirements of the role, for example in terms of contact with the public and stakeholders, and the current Welsh language capacity. Some organisations had actively ensured that long-term needs were taken into account when each individual assessment was undertaken. Methods for doing this included:

- o Identifying the minimum number of Welsh speakers necessary in each team or department in order to meet the requirements of the standards and to increase the use of the Welsh language.
- o Setting a long-term target for the percentage of Welsh speakers within an organisation
- o Some organisations have decided that all new members of staff should have basic Welsh language skills. This is appropriate to ensure that all staff are able to demonstrate basic courtesy to members of the public. The organisations that do this are committed to improving their Welsh-medium provision and are proactive in doing so. However, requiring staff to have Welsh language skills at a low fluency level, in itself, is not going to enable organisations to comply. Alongside this, there is a need to ensure that sufficient numbers of staff are fluent enough in Welsh in order to be able to engage with the public at length.

4.1.19. There were examples of organisations being creative in order to ensure that there were enough Welsh speakers applying. One method of doing this was to adjust other job requirements, for example by advertising for apprentices or trainees, rather than people with more experience or qualifications. Another approach was to recruit in a more targeted way – for example advertising locally, visiting schools, and sending leaflets to school-leavers.

4.2 Identifying the workforce's Welsh language skills

4.2.1. The standards require organisations to assess the Welsh language skills of their staff; to keep a record of the number of staff with Welsh language skills (and their skill level where known); and to publish the number of staff with Welsh language skills in the organisation's annual report.

4.2.2. Doing this is key to planning services and setting a baseline to increase capacity over time.

Carrying out assessments of staff's Welsh language skills

4.2.3. Looking at organisations' annual reports showed that 82% of organisations reported on the number of staff with Welsh language skills.

	Total	No. 1 regulations	No. 2 regulations	No. 5 regulations	No. 6 regulations
Reported on staff language skills	82%	96%	74%	57%	92%

Reported on staff's Welsh language skills

- Total
- Regulations no. 1
- Regulations no. 2
- Regulations no. 5
- Regulations no. 6
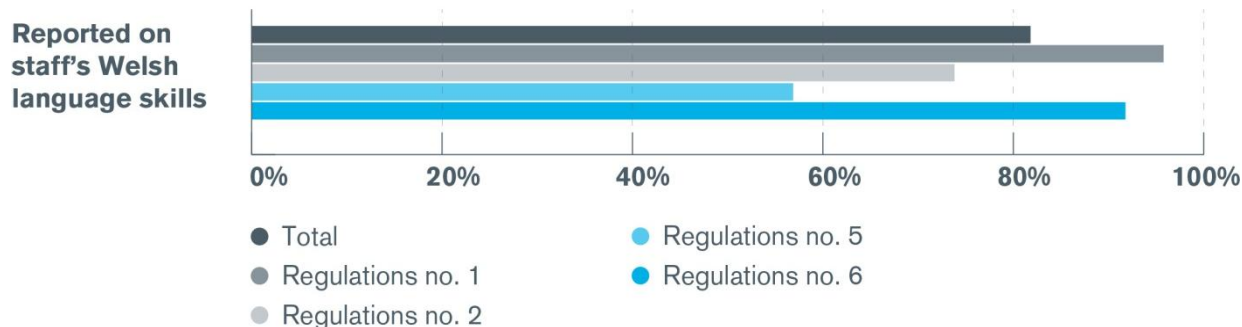
4.2.4. Most of the remaining organisations had not published a report at all, so it is not possible to know whether those organisations have conducted a skills assessment.

4.2.5. Practices in skills assessment were discussed at meetings with organisations. Some organisations had still not recorded data for all staff, but a number reported progress since last year. Some organisations noted that it is difficult to get staff who do not have regular access to the organisation's computer system to record, e.g. on-call firefighters, waste collectors. Some organisations' assessment systems still allowed staff not to answer the question of Welsh-language skills – something that could be resolved quite quickly.

4.2.6. A number of organisations used the organisation's general human resources systems to record the level for each member of staff. A number of organisations also used software which means that a survey automatically appears on staff computers, or prevents access to the computer until the survey is completed. In other organisations, another method of gathering information was used, e.g. an online survey. A specific system for recording Welsh language skills is being developed for the use of all health sector organisations.

Basis of assessment of staff's Welsh language skills

4.2.7. The standards do not specify which method should be used to assess staff's Welsh language skills. The records were usually based on staff self-assessment rather than some form of verified test or tutor assessment.

4.2.8. The standards also do not specify how to measure or express the Welsh language skills of staff. This means that organisations use different ways of expressing staff fluency in Welsh. The most common models were:

   o ALTE levels (0-5 levels)
   o Another model using levels 0-5 or 1-5, but that does not fully correspond with ALTE
   o Learning Welsh curriculum levels (entry, intermediate, proficiency etc)
   o A classification created by the organisation (e.g. 'fluent / partial / beginner / no skills' or 'fluent / learner / non-Welsh speaking').

4.2.9. The Commissioner's code of practice for the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No. 1) 2015 was published in February 2020. The code of practice recommends that organisations use the CEFR levels. The CEFR levels can be matched to the ALTE levels and the Learning Welsh curriculum levels. If organisations were to use one of these models, it would be possible to have aggregated figures for all relevant organisations, and to compare the capacity of organisations with each other.

4.2.10. Although most organisations publish statistics on the language skills of their staff, because of differences in the ways in which they report, it is not possible to have a combined figure for all organisations, or to compare the capacity of different organisations with each other. These differences include the use of different levels, but also practices such as noting percentages without numbers, or the number of Welsh speakers without the total number of staff.

4.3 Improving staff's Welsh language skills

4.3.1. The standards require organisations to provide opportunities for staff to receive basic Welsh lessons, and in some cases to provide further opportunities to learn or improve Welsh language skills.

4.3.2. This can be an effective way of increasing the capacity of the workforce to provide Welsh language services, and of developing the use of Welsh within the organisation. Improving Welsh language skills at work can also lead to staff using it in the community or with their families.

4.3.3. With the Welsh language services of a number of organisations remaining inadequate, it is clear that not enough staff currently speak Welsh. It will not always be possible to recruit new staff, and therefore the potential within the existing workforce needs to be explored.

4.3.4. In improving staff skills, organisations will need to target provision to ensure maximum impact. That does not necessarily mean ensuring that a high percentage of an organisations' staff have low level skills. There is a need to ensure that a sufficient number staff have skills at a level of fluency that enables them to engage with the public. We would suggest that organisations:

o Target the roles where the need for Welsh speakers is greatest in order to comply with the requirements and ensure the well-being of Welsh speakers

o Target those staff who already have some Welsh language skills, targeting resources to improve their skills to get them to a level where they can provide services to the public.

Developments in the provision of Learning Welsh

4.3.5. A large number of organisations reported that their Welsh language learning provision for staff had improved by taking advantage of the Work Welsh programme from the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The improvements typically included increasing provision and being better able to tailor provision to the needs of the organisation. In many cases, organisations had a designated tutor working within the organisation.

4.3.6. Conwy CBC, for example, noted that the model had recently changed, meaning that the Council had more input into the provision and that it could be better planned. One tutor employed by the Centre for Learning Welsh is now working specifically with the Council and is effectively a member of the team. The Council has established a Welsh language learning room in the office which is used solely for that purpose and staff are able to access personal mentoring time alongside their lessons. The provision is planned in partnership with the Council, enabling staff to be targeted in specific areas in line with the Council's business needs. There is high demand for courses – 100 staff members on courses at levels ranging from entry to intermediate currently, and 15 staff members on language refresher courses.

4.3.7. There are other examples of organisations taking steps to make their learning provision and improving Welsh language skills more effective. For example:

- o Denbighshire County Council has put in place a contract system to ensure that staff registering for Welsh language training take full advantage of the course. The contract includes a fee for missing lessons, and a commitment to take an exam. A monthly meeting is held with the provider to monitor staff progress
- o Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC has established a Welsh language tutor post to organise and deliver Welsh learning sessions to all Council employees. Up to 31 March 2019, the in-house tutor had trained 455 members of staff at all levels
- o South Wales Police has appointed a full time Welsh language trainer, and has developed a methodology for courses at higher levels where half the learning takes place online and half in the classroom. This makes it easier to work around shift patterns
- o A number of education organisations have taken advantage of the further education and higher education Work Welsh programmes, designed to improve lecturers' skills. Gower College Swansea has reduced lecturers' teaching hours in order to release them to attend sessions, with 45 staff members attending lessons in 2019-20.

Improving the skills of Welsh speakers

4.3.8. Some organisations have decided to require all staff to have basic skills in Welsh, and to provide a skills improvement provision in order to support this, for example by providing basic Welsh lessons as part of the induction process, or requiring staff to complete the National Centre for Learning Welsh's 10-hour online welcome course. There is clear benefit in ensuring that a high percentage of members of staff have basic Welsh language skills.

4.3.9. However, that in itself is not enough to comply and provide Welsh language services – a sufficient number of staff need to have skills at a level that allows them to undertake their role and to engage with the public in Welsh.

4.3.10. During 2019-20 we became aware of a number of steps taken by organisations that are likely to create a rapid increase in the number of staff who are confident enough to provide services in Welsh, by targeting staff who already have Welsh language skills. For example:

- o Aberystwyth University has decided to focus on staff who are at intermediate/advanced levels for developing Welsh language skills as this is where they see the greatest potential for rapid skills development. Emphasis is also placed on continuity, with staff encouraged to continue developing their Welsh language skills as a long term commitment
- o A number of organisations have offered specific courses from external providers to raise staff confidence in their written Welsh and more specific skills such as using the Welsh language online and chairing meetings. Natural Resources Wales encourages staff to install apps for mutations and improving language skills on their phone to help them draft in Welsh
- o Estyn has established a shadowing scheme to increase the confidence of some inspectors to operate through the medium of Welsh. Inspections are high-pressure situations where there is a need for a high level of language

standard and detailed knowledge of terminology, and being able to think on your feet, so gaining experience is key. They start by shadowing or being designated verbal responsibilities only and then gradually expand experiences to include the written elements of the inspection.

4.3.11. Some of these initiatives relate specifically to the use of mentors to ensure that learners use their skills at work, not just in the classroom. For example:

- o Carmarthenshire County Council has established a 'mentoring framework' to help staff develop their language skills. Essentially, the aim of the framework is to match learners with mentors – during the last financial year, 38 learners were matched with 32 mentors.
- o For more than two years, a pilot scheme has been undertaken between Betsi Cadwaladr UHB and the Centre for Learning Welsh. The scheme means that a mentor works full time to support staff who have received Welsh language training, to ensure that they maintain their use of the Welsh language on their return to the workplace.

4.4 Using Welsh internally as a language of work

4.4.1. The standards require organisations to have in place a policy on the use of Welsh internally. The aim of the policy is to promote and facilitate greater use of the Welsh language by organisation staff in the course of their work.

4.4.2. A survey in 2017-18 by the Commissioner found that 15 of 26 organisations provided a copy of their policy. A quantitative survey of compliance with this requirement was not conducted in 2019-20; instead, we discussed the steps taken at meetings with the organisations.

4.4.3. We came across a number of examples of organisations indicating an overall impression of increased internal use of Welsh, particularly verbally, and a number of examples of efforts to increase internal use in a specific context. There were very few examples of significant, planned changes at an organisational level, but the Isle of Anglesey County Council's rolling programme, referred to in a previous report, continues.

4.4.4. It is not possible to say to what extent these examples are representative of the overall position, and it is essential that all organisations prepare a policy systematically embedding the Welsh language as a working language within organisations.

4.4.5. One organisation that reported an increase in the use of Welsh at work was Estyn. In its annual report, it stated that it was difficult to measure systematically or quantitatively, but that more internal correspondence was taking place in Welsh, and that more presentations were being prepared bilingually.

4.4.6. Other organisations noted that the Welsh language was more visible as more staff were wearing the Iaith Gwaith / Working Welsh logo, or displaying the logo or similar text on their email account, meaning that staff realised that their colleagues were Welsh speakers.

4.4.7. A number of organisations reported that specific domains had moved naturally towards an increased use of the Welsh language. Several organisations with offices in various locations reported that Welsh was the main language of their offices in the north and west, and several other organisations reported that teams with a higher percentage of Welsh speakers tended to work through the medium of Welsh.

4.4.8. Organisations also commented that flexible working meant that more staff spoke Welsh in the office. As staff are no longer sitting in teams, it is easier for Welsh speaking staff to come together. Swansea Council has decided to establish a 'new flexible area'. One part of this area is specifically designated for staff who wish to speak or practice Welsh with one another.

4.4.9. A number of organisations are making efforts to ensure that staff who are learning Welsh have the opportunity to use their skills and speak to fluent speakers:

- o North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has a Welsh language champions scheme, the "Mercher Marfer" (Practice Wednesday) campaign, and subgroups for learners and champions on Workplace Facebook. This year a new resource pack has been created for the Champions to use in the workplace with learners. The packs include A3 mats, flash cards, games and worksheets designed to help people who are learning Welsh. These resources have been sent to all fire stations and area offices. A 'Learner of the Year' / 'Commitment to the Welsh language' award is also being introduced.
- o Gwent Police has a Welsh learners' network that provides an opportunity to use and practice Welsh
- o North Wales Police has a Welsh language walking group which meets monthly on Sundays to enable Welsh speakers and staff who are learning Welsh to practice their Welsh language skills in their own time
- o South Wales Police has set up an additional 'Siop Siarad' ('Talk Shop') group in Cardiff that allows officers and staff in Cardiff to practice and improve their Welsh in an enjoyable and informal setting
- o Denbighshire County Council has held a staff eisteddfod in order to promote Welsh language culture.

4.4.10. Cardiff and Vale College has its own marketing campaign #SiaradDysguByw to promote its vision for growing opportunities to speak, learn and live in Welsh. As part of the campaign, it is running an innovative project to increase spoken Welsh on its campuses and to encourage a willingness to use the language amongst staff and students across the College. Designed for all levels from fluent speakers to those with no previous Welsh language skills, individuals taking part scan a personalised QR code at specific check points around the campuses when speaking Welsh and are entered into a monthly prize draw.

5 Promoting the Welsh language

Each organisation has an economic and social impact, which in turn can affect the Welsh language and its use. The standards require organisations to consider how they can use this power for the benefit of the Welsh language, in two significant ways – every organisation must consider their impact on the Welsh language when making policy decisions, and local authorities and national parks are required to prepare strategies for promoting the Welsh language.

I have the impression that organisations are slow to realise the scale and significance of the strategic responsibility that these requirements have placed upon them.

Arrangements are in place to assess the impact of policy decisions on the Welsh language, but the consideration is often superficial, and I have not seen any substantial evidence of organisations substantially changing their plans in order to benefit the Welsh language.

5-year strategies have huge potential to make local authorities promotion agencies for the Welsh language within their areas, coordinating and driving efforts in areas as diverse as education, economy, planning, youth, tourism, care and so on. The strategies have led to more strategic attention to the Welsh language by a number of organisations, but it is not clear how many new activities have been put in place as a direct result of the strategies, and it seems no significant new budgets and resources have been dedicated to implement them in most cases.

There is an opportunity on the horizon to change this, with a requirement for organisations to review and formulate new strategies in 2021 and 2022. Now is the time to start planning and measuring impact in order to ensure that the strategies have a real impact on the position of the Welsh language in the community during this decade.

The Commissioner's opinion

5.1 Assessing the effect of policy decisions

5.1.1. The policy making standards mean that organisations are expected to consider how all their activities and decisions can benefit the position of the Welsh language. Organisations must carry out an assessment for each policy they formulate or revise, in order to consider its effect on the Welsh language.

5.1.2. The Welsh language standards regulations define a policy decision as 'any decision made by a body about the exercise of its functions or about the conduct of its business or other undertaking'. For instance, it refers to decisions regarding the 'content of legislation'; 'the exercise of statutory powers'; ' the content of policy statements'; 'strategies or strategic plans'; 'internal structures'; 'the location of offices' and 'buildings', and 'recruitment and the use of volunteers'.

5.1.3. In carrying out the assessment, the organisation must:

o Identify the effects of a policy decision on opportunities to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.
o Identify whether those effects are positive or adverse
o Consider how the decision can be made or implemented in such a way to increase positive effects and decrease adverse effects.

5.1.4. Organisations must keep a record of the steps they have taken to comply with the policy making standards. The standards do not detail the nature of the records or what they should contain. The Commissioner's code of practice for the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No. 1) 2015 was published in February 2020. The code of practice states that records may include:

o Copies of assessments undertaken by the body when considering the effects of a policy decision on the Welsh language;
o Copies of minutes of meetings held to discuss the effects of the policy decision on the Welsh language
o Copies of research terms of reference which show that the research needs to consider the effects of the policy decision on the Welsh language.

Conducting assessments of the impact of policy decisions on the Welsh language – general

5.1.5. We asked 12 organisations from no. 2, 5 and 6 regulations to share with us their records for the first 6 months of 2019-20. 11 of the 12 organisations responded to the request. The most common method of providing the records was to share a copy of each impact assessment form.

Assessments undertaken

5.1.6. The number of assessments carried out varied, with the majority providing 5 or fewer. Different organisations will operate in different ways in terms of overall policy decision making, which will then influence the number of decisions that require an assessment of the effects on the Welsh language. But given that the definition of a policy decision is so broad, in some cases we suspect that more decisions should be subject to Welsh language impact assessment. For example:

- o One organisation stated that 18 policy decisions had been made but only 3 had been subject to Welsh language impact assessment
- o 2 organisations stated that they had not made any policy decisions during the 6 months in question
- o One organisation stated that no formal record was kept for every policy decision. It was noted that a less formal assessment takes place in consultation with the language officer. In those cases where the organisation identifies a potential effect on the Welsh language, a full and formal assessment will be carried out. Up to the reporting period, there was no record of these informal assessments, however the organisation has now adopted a procedure of recording the informal assessment on the cover sheet of the policy paper. Where the organisation is confident that the decision is unlikely to have any impact on the Welsh language a formal impact assessment would not have been undertaken. This does not comply with the requirements
- o One organisation had undertaken a screening exercise for all board meeting papers. For each meeting, the exercise concluded that the papers were all concerned with matters that were exempt from the standards or related to issues that were not relevant to the objectives of the Welsh Language Measure. It is appropriate to screen for issues that are exempt from the requirements of the standards, but in the majority of cases, all policy decisions require an assessment.

Assessment methods

5.1.7. Of the 8 organisations that had provided copies of the impact assessments, 4 had a specific process and form for assessing the effect on the Welsh language. The 4 other organisations assessed the policy effect on the Welsh language as part of a wider impact assessment process. It makes sense to carry out all the required assessments at the same time, but organisations need to ensure that they meet all the specific requirements of the standards.

5.1.8. One organisation had included only one question about the effect of the policy on groups with protected equality characteristics under equality legislation, and had included the Welsh language within that. The Welsh language is not one of the protected characteristics and this approach did not ensure consideration of all the issues identified in the standards.

5.1.9. In our feedback meetings with organisations, a number of them mentioned that they are moving to integrated impact assessments, which include all the necessary elements of a Welsh language impact assessment, alongside any other assessments such as equality, privacy, and data protection.

5.1.10. Of the 8 organisations that had submitted copies of impact assessments, 7 contained specific questions that reflected the requirements of the standards. Examples of the type of questions seen are:

- Does the policy have an effect or is likely to have an effect on opportunities to use Welsh? Is the effect considered 'positive' or 'adverse' to the Welsh language?
- Can the policy be formulated to have a positive effect or increased positive effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language?
- Can the policy be formulated so that it has no adverse effect or has a decreased adverse effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language?
- Does the policy have an effect, or is it likely to have an effect, on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English?
- Can the policy be formulated to have a positive or more positive effect on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English?
- Can the policy be formulated so that it does not have an adverse or has a less adverse effect on treating Welsh no less favourably than the English language?

Quality of assessments

5.1.11. On the whole, the assessment forms we saw did not offer many suggestions regarding the factors that should be considered when carrying out the assessment, and there is a risk that this means that the person carrying out the assessment does not take into account all possible direct and indirect effects. But there were exceptions to this:

- There was one example (an university) where the form prompted the author of the assessment to consider specific issues such as staff skill levels, academic provision, and the effect on the organisation's frontline services
- There were examples where the assessment form encouraged the policy author to consider how the policy can provide opportunities to promote the Welsh language and improve outcomes for the Welsh language, referring to the objectives of the Welsh Government's strategy, Cymraeg 2050
- One organisation's impact assessment referred to Welsh language objectives within the organisation's Strategic Plan, requiring the author to set out how the policy would work towards achieving those objectives.

5.1.12. Another organisation's impact assessment included the organisation's targets for the Welsh language and required the author to set out how the policy would work towards achieving these targets.

5.1.13. The quality and range of assessments received varied considerably. A few examples were seen where the author had undertaken a meaningful assessment by considering a wide range of factors and submitting evidence to support his findings.

5.1.14. We also found examples of assessments that appeared to be very superficial, with the simple 'No' answer having been noted within the box that asked if the policy was likely to have an effect on the Welsh language. In addition, a series of general statements were seen being used more than once by some organisations. These examples did not provide assurance that the organisation has given real consideration to the various factors that can directly or indirectly affect opportunities to use the Welsh language and how the language will be treated.

5.1.15. Some organisations shared their arrangements for securing expert input into the assessment, e.g. in consultation with the organisation's language officer, and to ensure internal scrutiny of decisions. Flintshire County Council noted that it had included the local Menter Iaith in its Integrated Impact Assessment Stakeholder Group and that the Menter therefore had an automatic opportunity to contribute to all assessments.

5.1.16. Organisations should ensure that they have adequate arrangements for ensuring that assessments take place on the basis of a thorough understanding of the context in which the Welsh language is used, and that they are subject to effective scrutiny.

Impact assessments affecting Welsh medium education

5.1.17. An investigation was conducted following a complaint that a Council had not conducted an appropriate consultation before proposing to close a Welsh medium primary school, nor had it considered the effect of changing its policy on the Welsh language. The investigation noted that the assessment undertaken did not properly address the effects of the closure on the use of the Welsh language within the wider community, that there was a lack of robust and diverse evidence base, and that no consideration was given as to how action could be taken to mitigate the effect of the decision on the community. There were also shortcomings in the way the Council consulted on the decision.

5.1.18. The Commissioner publicised the report by issuing a press release, and 14 enforcement actions were imposed on the Council, including the requirement to:

o Adopt a robust process for conducting and recording considerations on any effects that a policy decision would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

- o Produce or revise guidance for staff responsible for carrying out impact assessments of policy decisions to ensure that the Council takes all possible factors into account in the context of the potential effect on the Welsh language
- o Amend processes for publication of consultation documents
- o Publicise the failure by publishing the report on its website.

5.1.19. After receiving correspondence from members of the public and pressure groups, the Commissioner published an advice document on how to give consideration to the Welsh language when local authorities review their transport policies for post-16 pupils to school or other places of learning. The aim of the document was to ensure that organisations complied with the policy making standards, and to minimise potential adverse effects on pupils' ability to receive Welsh-medium education. Organisations gave more thought to their decisions following receipt of the advice, but this should routinely happen, without members of the public and the Commissioner having to intervene.

5.1.20. In addition to producing advice, the Commissioner sent a survey to local authorities in order to gather information on their current transport provision arrangements, the number of learners attending post-16 education in the local area, current costs and any amendments that have been implemented or planned. The main conclusions of that survey are:

- o In terms of current arrangements, it is encouraging that the majority of authorities responding to the survey provided free transport to post-16 pupils, although provision was reliant on specific conditions
- o However, the inconsistency in either the distance travelled from home to the place of learning, or the grants offered by local authorities, means that access to Welsh medium education is not consistent in terms of accessibility from one area to another
- o Given that the majority of local authorities that responded to this survey provide free transport to post-16 pupils, it is encouraging that most of them do not currently have plans to revise their policies. However, at least two local authorities will be revising their transport policies over the next few years which will mean charging for transport to schools and other places of learning.

5.1.21. This work led to a pledge by the Welsh Government to undertake a review of post-16 learner travel. The Commissioner has sought to encourage the Government to broaden the review to take account of learner travel policies generally, in order to ensure that these policies support the Government's strategy to increase the numbers attending Welsh-medium education. The Commissioner wants to see compliance with the policy making standards contribute to ensuring that transport policies facilitate access to Welsh-medium education.

Promoting the Welsh language when exercising functions

5.1.22. A number of organisations actively promoted the Welsh language when carrying out their normal functions, sometimes as a result of a particular requirement set out in their remit by the Government, or a commitment in the organisation's constitution. For example:

- o Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales stated that the Welsh language was one of its criteria for decisions regarding exhibitions and events to be held. It also runs Welsh lessons for the community in Museum settings, in partnership with local providers, giving learners a safe space to learn Welsh, and to practice their Welsh in a specific context. Ar Lafar – a one day festival for 650 Welsh learners – was held in partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh
- o Cardiff Council has adopted a policy of giving Welsh names to new streets in the capital, with the intention of ensuring equal numbers of Welsh and English language street names over time, and to promote everyday use of Welsh by Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers alike
- o Estyn's Welsh-medium and bilingual education working group considers how to use Estyn's inspection functions in order to increase the use of Welsh. The Welsh language is considered as part of some of the organisation's standard areas of inspection, and guidance has been adapted to emphasise this
- o Although the standards do not relate to broadcasting, the BBC and S4C promote the Welsh language through their broadcasting and educational content, and also through related activities such as careers, skills and partnerships. For example, S4C's Iaith ar Daith series was a partnership with Say Something in Welsh, and led to more interest in learning Welsh; additionally, S4C has a number of ongoing initiatives to develop specialist skills in various broadcasting fields, in order to create employment opportunities through the medium of Welsh and to serve the needs of the economy.

5.2   Policy on awarding grants

5.2.1.   Organisations that award grants are required to have in place a policy requiring consideration of the Welsh language when awarding grants. The policy needs to ensure that similar consideration to policy making standards takes place – in other words, the organisation must consider how a grant decision can be made or implemented so that it has increased positive effects on the Welsh language, and decreased adverse effects.

5.2.2.   The Commissioner's view is that it is not sufficient just to have a policy – once a policy is in place, organisations need to ensure that they act in accordance with the policy. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that consideration is given to the Welsh language, and if no consideration has been given to the Welsh language, that policy is not in line with the intent of the standard.

5.2.3.   We searched for policies on awarding grants on the websites of relevant organisations, and found that a very low percentage of organisations had published a policy as required. Only 1 of the 12 organisations that were under a duty in the no. 2 regulations had published a policy, and none of the 23 relevant organisations in the no. 6 regulations.

5.2.4.   This was discussed in feedback meetings with no. 2 regulations organisations. A number of organisations are in the process of developing policies in order to comply after we had emphasised the need to do so.

5.2.5.   Some organisations that award grants as their main activity had meaningful arrangements for ensuring that those grants had positive effects on the Welsh language.

5.2.6.   The Arts Council of Wales annual report includes a thorough statistical analysis of participation in the arts through the medium of Welsh and by Welsh speakers, and there are a number of more qualitative reviews of the organisation's approach, for example to 'map out Welsh language arts activity' and 'to assess current Welsh language marketing across the arts sector in Wales'. Applicants are required to demonstrate consideration of the Welsh language when making grant applications, failure to do so may be a reason for non-funding, and requirements regarding services and marketing in Welsh will be included in grant conditions. The organisation also conducts projects to improve Welsh language provision in specific areas of the arts where it sees a lack of provision, and seeks to direct funding decisions to activities that will be effective in promoting the Welsh language, e.g. theatre productions for families

5.2.7.   The National Lottery Community Fund actively promotes the Welsh language through its grants. This includes large grants to bodies and organisations that promote the Welsh language (e.g. Young Farmers Clubs and refurbishment of the Urdd Centre at Llangrannog). The organisation saw a decline in the success rate of Welsh language applications as a result of changes to its funding arrangements, and so staff were instructed to spend more time supporting Welsh language applications. The organisation has worked in partnership with a number of organisations, including the mentrau iaith,

Merched y Wawr and Mudiad Meithrin in order to reach more Welsh-medium organisations.

5.2.8. Both organisations have worked with the Commissioner's Promotion and Facilitation team to offer training in order to increase the ability of grant recipients to work through the medium of Welsh.

5.3 Implementing 5-year strategies to promote the Welsh language

5.3.1. County councils and national park authorities must have in place a 5-year strategy to promote the use of the Welsh language in their area. The strategy must include a target for increasing or maintaining the percentage of Welsh speakers in the area by the end of the 5 year period, and a statement explaining how the organisation intends to meet the target.

5.3.2. The strategy is required to be reviewed 5 years after publication. Assuming that organisations have published their strategies in 2016 or 2017, they will need to be reviewed in 2021 or 2022. The assessment must include the number of Welsh speakers in the area, and their age, and a list of activities organised or funded by the organisation to promote the use of the Welsh language during the 5 years that the strategy has been in operation.

5.3.3. We asked 11 county councils and 3 national park authorities to answer a series of questions regarding their compliance with these standards. All 14 organisations responded to the request.

Activities

5.3.4. Organisations reported that they had undertaken a number of activities in order to implement the strategies. A fairly significant number of activities related to education, and tied into the content of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. The types of activities identified included:

o Promoting opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language, particularly Welsh-medium education and childcare through the medium of Welsh
o Creating additional opportunities to use Welsh within schools, for example through the Siarter Iaith (Language Charter) in Gwynedd Council
o Increasing the county's capacity to offer Welsh-medium education, for example through opening or developing schools (each county will have a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan that will deal in detail with such steps)
o Holding events which create opportunities to use the Welsh language socially or which are specific to celebrating the Welsh language – most notably by supporting or funding activities organised by the local Menter Iaith
o Welsh for learners provision
o Raising the awareness of the organisation's staff of the need to engage with the public in Welsh, and to create opportunities to use Welsh internally
o Providing some of the organisation's services through the medium of Welsh through a partnership, e.g. working with the Urdd on an apprenticeship scheme to provide sports lessons.

5.3.5. Some of these activities are ones that organisations would have to do anyway, for example in order to comply with the standards or as a result of the requirement to have a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. National park authorities tended to refer to holding activities or projects in Welsh (e.g. walks and courses), or addressing the Welsh language within initiatives (e.g. work experience schemes and volunteering), but it was not clear whether those activities were happening as a direct result of the promotion strategy.

5.3.6. Some organisations mentioned activities that were not being undertaken by others. For example, Ceredigion County Council referred to:

o Addressing the Welsh language in a scheme for boosting the county's economy
o Street Naming and Numbering Policy encouraging the protection of native Welsh names, and ensures that all new streets have a Welsh name.

5.3.7. Gwynedd Council, in particular, had identified opportunities to collaborate with other organisations in the area, using the Welsh Language Sub-group of the Local Public Services Board to work with Bangor University and others on technology projects and the internal use of Welsh. Gwynedd Council also sought to influence the position of the Welsh language through the planning system, with the Welsh Language Unit within the Council examining language assessments submitted in planning applications. The Services Board Sub-group is also used to identify opportunities to develop the use of Welsh, and opportunities for residents to use the Welsh language, in cases of co-providing services.

Finance and resources

5.3.8. Organisations were asked what resources (e.g. finance, staff and facilities) have been allocated to implement the strategies. Organisations do not appear to have set aside any significant funding and resources to implement the promotion strategies. In many cases the officers responsible for the strategies are also responsible for other matters, e.g. compliance with the standards, and it is not clear how much of those officers' time is spent on implementing the strategies. In particular:

o 9 of the 14 organisations stated that no additional funding had been earmarked for the delivery of the promotion strategies.
o 2 of the organisations had decided to provide additional funding for the appointment of members of staff. One of the posts was a full-time Welsh Language Co-ordinator, the other one day a week – the purpose of these posts is not just to deliver the strategy
o One council reported that it had contributed £4,000 to the local Menter Iaith for holding specific events through the medium of Welsh. The Menter Iaith has appointed a Development Officer to co-ordinate the project
o Another council had provided additional funding for hosting the top-profile events of its 5-year strategy, but did not specify an amount.

5.3.9. A number of organisations referred to partnerships with local organisations involved in promoting the Welsh language, and that the external partners had targets themselves as part of the strategies. These partners mostly came together in a county language forum. A number also noted that staff time was a key resource for delivering the strategies, but did not specify how much staff time was spent on this.

Reporting and monitoring

5.3.10. The majority of organisations noted that they reported annually on the implementation of the strategy. The methods of doing so varied, with some reporting within the Welsh Language Standards Annual report, and others reporting specifically on the delivery of the strategy's action plan. In most cases, the annual report was received by the Cabinet or relevant Cabinet member. It is good that strategies are scrutinised by elected members on an annual basis, but there may be room to improve this and increase the frequency of internal monitoring, for example by ensuring that senior officers and managers within organisations provide accountability on a monthly or quarterly basis in relation to the implementation of the strategies.

5.3.11. The majority of organisations stated that they had established a county language forum, bringing together key partners, and that the forum received a regular update on the implementation of the strategy. These forums appeared to vary in how often they met and how effective the scrutiny was.

5.3.12. A few organisations had an in-house Welsh language implementation group, with membership being a combination of officers and elected members. These groups tended to meet quarterly to discuss the implementation of the strategy.

5.3.13. In responding to our question about the assessment of the strategies at the end of the 5 years, the majority of organisations mentioned their regular monitoring and reporting arrangements. It is therefore doubtful whether they have concrete plans in place for assessing their progress in 2022.

5.3.14. Ceredigion County Council was the only organisation to talk about plans to use the Census to analyse whether it has met the target in the strategy for the number of Welsh speakers in the area. One organisation commented on the use of Welsh language figures from the Annual Population Survey to measure progress against the target set.

5.3.15. We are now aware that Covid-19 will impact data collection and surveys – the Language Use Survey, for example, has been paused – so it's essential for organisations to understand what data is available and what measures they need to develop in order to comply with the requirement to assess progress.

5.3.16. All organisations need to start planning for assessing the success of the strategies in 2021 or 2022, with particular regard to being able to identify whether the targets have been achieved in terms of the number of Welsh speakers in the area.

Methodology

1.   Monitoring

The criteria of each survey and study were based on the requirements of a specific group of Welsh language standards.

Not every organisation was required to implement all of the standards that formed the basis of the surveys – the organisation may be implementing a language scheme, or standards hadn't been imposed on the organisation, the imposition day for the standards hadn't passed, or the organisation had challenged the duty to comply with the standards. The main aim is to report on service user experience. In instances where there is direct reference to compliance with standards, only those organisations that were required to comply have been included.

The results of each exercise have been analysed by one of the Commissioner's officers, who was responsible for identifying the findings. The results were verified by colleagues and were subject to internal challenge and debate.

Verification surveys

The verification work was carried out by the Commissioner's officers (with the exception of receptions, signs and self service machines, conducted by Cwmni Iaith on behalf of the Commissioner).

For each survey, criteria were formulated which were based on the requirements of the standards. Officers accessed the service and recorded to what extent their experience of using the service met those criteria.

The table below shows the services surveyed and the relevant standards. The numbers of the standards are given below as set out in the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015; the numbers are different in other regulations, but the requirements are the same.

Survey	Relevant standards	Method of accessing services	Frequency and period of verification
Correspondence	1, 6, 7	Email enquiries in Welsh and English to the organisation's main account	3 times, in the months of June, September and December 2019
Telephone calls	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 22	Calling the organisation's main number with a query	3 times, in the months of June, September and December 2019
Receptions	64, 66, 67, 68	Going to the organisation's main reception with query	Twice, in October and November 2019
Documents	40 (Documents for public use) 43 (Brochure, leaflet, pamphlet or card) 46 (Press releases) 50 (Forms)	Searching for an example of the documents on the organisation's website	3 Examples of the 3 document types were verified in December 2019
Corporate identity	83	Searching for an example of an organisation's logo on a website, social media and documents	3 examples were verified in December 2019
Websites	52, 53, 54, 55, 56	Checking the home page and other pages on the organisation's main website	30 webpages were checked in December 2019
Social media	58	Checking messages on the main Facebook and Twitter accounts for organisations	On Twitter and Facebook, 15 messages each were checked in December 2019
Self service machines	60	Using a self service machine in the organisation's main reception area	One machine was checked on both visits to the organisation's reception, in October and November 2019
Signage	61, 62, 63	Observing signs in the main reception area of an organisation	30 signs were checked on both visits to the organisation's reception, in October and November 2019
Posts	136, 136A, 137, 137A, 137B, 138, 139	Looking at job advertisements on the organisation's main website	Up to 30 job advertisements were checked, in December 2019

We verified the services of a random sample of a third of relevant organisations. A total of 48 organisations were part of the sample, and results for this sample are set out in the report unless otherwise stated. In addition, the services of all no. 1 regulations organisations were checked, but were not included in the overall results unless indicated. The organisations that were part of the sample are as follows:

Group of organisations	Specific organisations
No. 1 regulations	Snowdonia NPA; Blaenau Gwent CBC; Conwy CBC; Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC; Cardiff City Council; Ceredigion County Council; Carmarthenshire County Council; Flintshire County Council
No. 2 Regulations	Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum of Wales; Wales Millennium Centre; Equality and Human Rights Commission; Older People's Commissioner for Wales; The Welsh Local Government Association; The National Botanic Garden of Wales; Welsh National Opera; The Information Commissioner's Office; Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru; BBC
No. 4 regulations	–
No. 5 regulations	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority; Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner; Chief Constable of South Wales Police; Chief Constable of North Wales Police; Chief Constable of British Transport Police
No. 6 regulations	Adult Learning Wales; Cardiff and Vale College; Coleg Ceredigion; Merthyr Tydfil College; Grŵp Llandrillo Menai; Aberystwyth University; University of Wales Trinity Saint David; University of South Wales; Cardiff Metropolitan University
No. 7 regulations	Board of Community Health Councils in Wales; Powys THB; Swansea Bay UHB; Aneurin Bevan UHB; Betsi Cadwaladr UHB; Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB; Cardiff and Vale UHB; Hywel Dda UHB; Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust
Welsh language schemes	Animal and Plant Health Agency; Food Standards Agency; Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency; HM Courts and Tribunals Service; Ofgem; Wales Office; Ministry of Justice

Thematic studies

A series of written questions on the topics below were sent to the organisations identified.

Study	Organisations
Meetings relating to the well-being of individuals	Caerphilly CBC; Conwy CBC; Bridgend CBC; City and County of Swansea Council; Cardiff City Council; Vale of Glamorgan Council; Denbighshire County Council; Monmouthshire County Council; Powys County Council; Isle of Anglesey County Council; Carmarthenshire County Council
Implementing 5-year strategies to promote the Welsh language	Pembrokeshire Coast NPA; Brecon Beacons NPA; Snowdonia NPA; Blaenau Gwent CBC; Neath Port Talbot CBC; Merthyr Tydfil CBC; Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC; Wrexham CBC; Torfaen CBC; Gwynedd Council; Ceredigion County Council; Newport City Council; Pembrokeshire County Council; Flintshire County Council
Records of impact assessments of policy decisions	Wales Millennium Centre; Older People's Commissioner for Wales; The National Botanic Garden of Wales; The Information Commissioner's Office; the BBC; The Residential Property Tribunal for Wales; South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner; Chief Constable of North Wales Police; Adult Education Wales; Coleg Ceredigion; University of South Wales; Aberystwyth University
Records of recruitment skills assessments	Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum of Wales; Equality and Human Rights Commission; The Welsh Local Government Association; Welsh National Opera; Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru; The Education Workforce Council; North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority; Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner; Chief Constable of British Transport Police; Cardiff and Vale College; Merthyr Tydfil College; Grŵp Llandrillo Menai; University of Wales Trinity Saint David; Swansea University

Fixed duties

We verified whether all organisations in regulations no. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 had published documents that required publication, and the contents were assessed:

o A record of the standards they are under a duty to comply with (standards 155, 161, 167, 173 and 175)
o Complaints procedure (standards 156, 162 and 168)
o Oversight, promotion and facilitation arrangements (standards 157, 163 and 169)
o Annual report (standards 158, 164 and 170)
o An explanation of how the organisation intends to comply (standards 159, 165 and 171).

(Numbers as in no. 1 regulations, as explained above.)

2. **Public engagement**

Discussion groups

The Commissioner's officers led a structured discussion with the aim of encouraging attendees to share their experiences of the availability and quality of Welsh language services and the factors influencing their language choice. Some sessions had to be postponed in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis. The following sessions were held:

o Open to the public – Wrexham, 12/02/2020
o Community groups – Welsh Learner class, Cardigan, 05/03/2020
o Students – University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 04/02/2020; Cardiff University, 12/02/2020; Glyndŵr University, 25/02/2020
o Staff in organisations – Swansea University, 27/06/2019; Carmarthenshire County Council, 27/06/2019; Dyfed-Powys Police, 11/07/2019

3. **Contact with organisations**

Officers are in continuous engagement with organisations, responding to queries and dealing with issues relating to compliance. In addition, the report utilises information gathered in other engagement with organisations:

o Feedback meetings – during the autumn of 2019 individual meetings were held with around 80 organisations. The results of individual monitoring work in 2019-20 was shared with the organisations, and discussions were held on successful practices, challenges and developments in the provision of services based on the 2018-19 assurance report recommendations
o Workshops – during autumn 2019 we held 5 workshop sessions for organisations, discussing ways of promotion and better service design to increase the use of Welsh
o Imposition of standards – the first standards came into force for the no. 7 regulations organisations in 2019 after the compliance notices were issued at the end of November 2018 following a period of consultation. Further meetings have been held with organisations during the year as they prepare for the implementation of the standards and as part of the process of dealing with their challenges
o Investigation and enforcement – during 2019-20, 65 new investigations were opened, and 85 investigations were determined. The investigations are conducted in accordance with the Commissioner's Enforcement Policy.

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