

Item: 04

Title: Spotlight: Welsh language

Gweithredu / Action required -	Any comments welcome, if Board wishes to feedback.
Amseru / Timing	Routine
Argymhelliad / Recommendation	To note, for information only.
Risg / Risk	Any risks relating to our failure to comply to our duties have already been reported to our Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.
Cyllid / Finance	N/A
Amcan Cynllun Corfforaethol / Corporate Plan Objective	Llais Compliance Notice – 1/4/2024 Annual Plan: Growing and improving as an organisation Strategic Equality Plan: Our People, Our Culture and Our Services (2,3&4)
Cydraddoldeb / Equality	Any major policy or process changes as part of the work relating to the Welsh Language Standards will have their own Integrated Impact Assessment. Encouragement to use the Welsh language continues through both networks under the Head of EDI & Wellbeing's responsibility.
Cyfathrebu / Communications	Please tick one of the following boxes if this activity will have an impact on: Internal: our people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External: our customers/partners/stakeholders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External: our organisation's reputation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cymeradwyaeth / Approval/Clearance	Ben Eaton
Trafodaethau/ Penderfyniadau Blaenorol / Previous discussions/decisions	The Welsh Language Action Plan has been approved and signed-off by both Tîm Arwain and Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (December 2024)

Awdur/ Cyflwyno / Author/presenting	Charysse Harper & Roxanne Treacy/Ben Eaton
Dyddiad / Date	22 January 2025
Cefndir / Background	
<p>Llais is committed to promoting and supporting the Welsh language across all areas of its work and within health and social care services.</p> <p>This commitment is guided by its responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, as detailed in the Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner’s Office, which came into effect on 1st April 2024.</p> <p>The notice sets the standards Llais must meet to ensure its services are accessible in Welsh and that the language is actively encouraged.</p> <p>Beyond meeting these compliance requirements, Llais seeks to champion the Welsh language within health and social care services, ensuring that people across Wales can access care and support in their language of choice.</p> <p>This paper highlights our progress, key initiatives, and opportunities to further promote the use of Welsh both within Llais and in partnership with health and social care providers.</p>	
Manylion / Detail	
Accessing health and social care services in Welsh	
<p>Since April 2024, we have been actively engaging with Welsh-speaking communities to listen to their experiences of accessing health and social care services in Welsh. We have done through community engagement events such as Llais Local, regional for a and also national events, including the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society Show and the National Eisteddfod, reaching over 1,500 people.</p> <p>These opportunities have reinforced what we are consistently hearing through our engagement and from partner organisations: the importance of bilingual services in health and social care and the personal affect it</p>	

has on people when they are not able to access services in the language of choice.

Between July and September 2024, Llais collaborated with the “Mwy na Geiriau” programme to explore how well health and social care services support the use of Welsh in day-to-day interactions. This work included 2 key activities:

1. **Panel discussion at the National Eisteddfod**

On the Welsh Government stand, Llais’ Chair, Professor Medwin Hughes, represented the views we’ve gathered, joining a discussion alongside prominent figures such as Elin Wyn, Chair of the More than Words Advisory Board, and Efa Gruffudd Jones, Welsh Language Commissioner.

The panel addressed challenges and developments in using Welsh within health and social care, with a strong focus on practical solutions for the sector.

2. **Public survey on Welsh in health and social care**

A survey launched after the panel discussion allowed people to share their views on using Welsh in health and social care. Responses highlighted the critical role of bilingual services for practical communication and emotional wellbeing.

Feedback consistently showed that people feel happier, more involved, and respected when they can communicate in their language of choice. However, Welsh language service provision remains inconsistent, creating gaps in patient care and experiences. People told us in their own words the affect this has:

"I suffer from depression and find it difficult to communicate my feelings when not using the language I was brought up to speak"

“People with dementia can get very isolated in hospital when people don't speak the same language - they don't understand what they are being told and can't ask what they need to know.”

Building on these insights, Llais is preparing to publish a position statement to highlight the impact of limited Welsh language provision on

patient care. This will be accompanied by a press release, representations to Welsh Government, Health Boards, and Local Authorities, and we hope to raise awareness via a possible related news piece with ITV Wales.

In addition, Llais has provided evidence to the UK Government's Welsh Affairs Committee on the importance of Welsh language provision when accessing cross-border services in England. This has allowed us to emphasise the unique challenges faced by Welsh speakers and to advocate for better access to bilingual services, even beyond Wales.

We are also working with the Mwy na Geiriau team to recruit more Welsh-speaking volunteers to support our ongoing efforts to capture the voices of Welsh speakers across Wales. Together, we aim to ensure that everyone can access the health and social care services they need in the language that feels most comfortable and natural to them.

Accessing Llais services in Welsh

Llais has responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011. Our Compliance Notice, issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner has been in effect since 1st April 2024, outlining the standards we must follow to meet our legal duties.

Our efforts were recognised by our representative from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office in a recent positive discussion about working in partnership to support our use of the Welsh language and our role in influencing health and social care services in their use of the Welsh language.

This recognition highlights the progress we've made while reinforcing the need to look beyond compliance to foster genuine inclusion of the Welsh language across the organisation.

To support this, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Programme Lead recently led a self-assessment, with teams evaluating their compliance against standards using a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status. No standards were marked as Red, with 19 of 121 identified as Amber.

These areas are being addressed through the Welsh Language Action Plan, with improvements expected as processes are embedded and guidance refined.

Key campaigns

We celebrated Diwrnod Shwmae in October 2024 with the launch of the “Dysgu Cymraeg gyda Llais” initiative, engaging nearly 60% of staff. This has laid the groundwork for further developments aligned with the Welsh Language Action Plan.

In November and December 2024, the Dyfnyddia dy Gymraeg (Use your Welsh) campaign encouraged people to contact us in Welsh and promote the use of the language within their communities.

Themes and challenges

Feedback from the self-assessment and organisational discussions identified key themes and challenges:

- **Inconsistency in responsibilities:** Some teams viewed standards like policy development (standard 69) and research commissioning (standards 75 & 76) as the sole responsibility of the National Team, though they require contributions from all regions.
- **Good practice sharing:** Teams expressed a need to review and share best practices across the organisation to better align with the standards.
- **Confidence barriers:** Staff highlighted challenges with specialist terminology (e.g., medical terms) and a lack of confidence in using Welsh in their roles.
- **Limited Welsh-speaking staff in some areas:** Some regions face challenges due to a shortage of Welsh-speaking staff, and reliance on external translation services can cause delays.

Grwp Gweithgor Iaith Gymraeg

The Internal Welsh Language Working Group (Grwp Gweithgor Iaith Gymraeg) has been pivotal in championing Welsh language use. The group aims to promote a “Welsh first” mindset and encourages collaboration to ensure the language is able to thrive within Llais.

This work is focusing on helping to build confidence among our people so that Welsh is seen as a natural part of daily operations.



Eich llais mewn iechyd | Your voice in health
a gofal cymdeithasol | and social care

Welsh language skills in Llais

A recent skills assessment highlighted a strong foundation for growth:

- **40%** of staff can speak and understand Welsh, **39%** can read Welsh, and **38%** can write Welsh (levels 1-5).
- Skills are strongest in the National Team and North Wales, though regions like Cwm Taf Morgannwg and Gwent currently have no Welsh-speaking staff.
- **10% of staff** are actively learning Welsh, and **44%** of non-Welsh-speaking staff expressed interest in improving their skills.

Looking ahead

We will continue to work with our partners to drive improvement in the design, development and delivery of health and social care services in the Welsh language.

Our internal work shows real enthusiasm and opportunities to expand Welsh language skills within Llais. By encouraging more learning opportunities, fostering a supportive environment, and embedding Welsh into all areas of our work, we can enhance inclusivity and better serve the diverse needs of people across Wales.

With continued efforts, we can consistently make Welsh a thriving and natural part of everything we do. This will help our work with staff, partners, and the public so we can support health and social care services in evolving their services to allow people to access services in the language of their choice.