

# Official Language Scheme: Annual Report 2018-19


July 2019



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 **National Assembly for Wales**  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

 **0300 200 6565**

 **[Contact@assembly.wales](mailto:Contact@assembly.wales)**

.....  
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# **Official Language Scheme:** Annual Report 2018-19

July 2019

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# Contents

<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Our performance.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Our ambition and commitment .....	10
Service Standards .....	11
Feedback from Assembly Members and their support staff.....	11
Sharing expertise.....	11
Workforce planning and language hubs .....	12
Statistical information.....	14
Recruitment .....	15
Assembly Business.....	16
Assembly proceedings.....	18
Committees .....	18
<b>Themes for the duration of the Scheme .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Theme 1: Recruitment .....	23
Theme 2: Language skills .....	26
Theme 3: Language Planning .....	29
Theme 4: Assembly proceedings .....	30
Theme 5: Developing the bilingual ethos of the organisation .....	33
<b>Monitoring and Compliance.....</b>	<b>36</b>
Informal complaints .....	36
Formal complaint .....	38
Positive feedback.....	42



A photograph of a glass display case containing a sign. The sign has text in Welsh and English. The background is a wooden slatted wall with a diagonal beam of light. A horizontal metal rod is visible across the sign.

Croeso  
i'r Senedd  
—  
Welcome  
to the  
Senedd



## Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the second Annual Report of the Assembly Commission's Official Languages Scheme for the fifth Assembly. Last year's annual report described much of the preparatory work and planning for further improvements, and this year's report shows the progress made to date on our long-term objectives.

In presenting the Annual Report for the first time as Assembly Commissioner, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Adam Price AM, my predecessor, for his work in ensuring that the Official Languages Scheme for the fifth Assembly is embedded in the organisation and that we continue towards realising our ambition of being a truly bilingual organisation. This year, much of our work has focused on the language skills levels and the ethos of our organisation, which will continue throughout the life of this Scheme.

The report also shows the results of the work done in transforming the way we set language skills levels when determining job requirements. The way we consider language skills is now more refined giving us the opportunity to celebrate and recognise skills at all levels. In due course, this will change the ethos of our organisation as we see increasing opportunities for everyone to use their skills whatever they may be.

Looking to the future, we will continue to work on the themes identified in the Scheme, and I look forward to seeing the vision realised in the ensuing years.

Siân Gwenllïan

Assembly Commissioner with responsibility for official languages







# OUR PERFORMANCE



## Our ambition and commitment

Our ambition is to be a truly bilingual organisation where Assembly Members, the public and staff can choose to work or communicate naturally using either or both of the official languages, where the use of both languages is actively encouraged and facilitated, and where our exemplary bilingual services are continually being expanded and improved.

The Assembly Commission's commitment to bilingualism provides a firm foundation from which to achieve this ambition, and the services we provide, our strategies and values, reflect the equal status of our two official languages. The Commission has committed to ensure diversity across the organisation and we value the diversity of our workforce.

Over the past year, the Assembly Commission has selected and implemented a new set of organisational values. Those values reflect our position as an organisation that values all staff members, with the principles of our dignity and respect policy at the heart of everything we do. Commission staff were involved in selecting the values, which everyone is expected to adhere to in their day-to-day work.

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### OUR VALUES

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#### RESPECT

We are inclusive, kind, and value each other's contributions in delivering excellent services



#### PASSION

We are purposeful in our support of democracy and pull together to make a difference for the people of Wales



#### PRIDE

We embrace innovation and celebrate our achievements together as a team

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## WE ARE ONE TEAM

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## Service Standards

Much of our work over the past year has focused on implementing the results of last year's preparatory work on recruitment. The main aim of the work was to increase basic levels of Welsh across the organisation and to build on our existing bilingual ethos. The results of this work can be seen across the organisation, and we are confident that we have moved a step closer to realising our ambition to be a truly bilingual organisation.

## Feedback from Assembly Members and their support staff

It is vital that we understand the needs of Assembly Members and their support staff in order to ensure that we provide bespoke services that enable them to work effectively in their language of choice. Last year, we received positive feedback regarding the provision of bilingual services which enable Assembly Members and their support staff to work in their language of choice. That feedback was used to prioritise resources and plan our work in order to maintain those high standards again this year.

In addition to seeking formal feedback, we also gather information informally. Members of the integrated teams serving each committee have regular discussions with Members, taking appropriate actions to change processes, tailor provision and improve procedures. The executive group for Assembly Member support staff also meets regularly and is a means of gathering feedback from group Chiefs of Staff. Each Assembly Member has been assigned a Contact Buddy from within the Translation and Reporting Service. The Contact Buddies gather feedback from Assembly Members whenever they come into contact with them.

## Sharing expertise

Several organisations from Wales and beyond have contacted us to discuss our innovative work and to seek advice and support over the past year. We were very proud to welcome two overseas delegations during the year.

A delegation of senior officials from the Norwegian Sami Parliament visited us whilst visiting Wales to learn more about Welsh in the workplace and working bilingually. The visitors were interested in our recruitment system and our approach to identifying language skills levels for posts. They were also very interested in the concept of courtesy level Welsh.

We were also very pleased to welcome a delegation of Finnish language tutors, who were again interested in our methods of supporting staff to learn Welsh in the workplace. They also met members of the Language Skills Team to exchange ideas and discuss teaching methods.

As well as visits from overseas, several Welsh organisations have contacted us for advice. This year, most of our work on sharing expertise has focused on our recruitment system and the language skills matrix. Sessions were delivered to a wide range of people, including the Welsh Government, Cardiff University, Swansea Council and Public Health Wales. The Director of Engagement was also elected to the TUC Wales General Council as member with responsibility for Welsh language issues. The Language Skills Team has taken part in several training sessions and shared good practice with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and is helping the Centre to pilot new courses on Welsh in the Workplace. We will continue to build relationships in order to share best practice and learn from others.

We wish to ensure that the Welsh language is a central part of the organisation's internal administration, and to further develop this principle. The National Assembly for Wales is not subject to the Welsh language standards and is not accountable to the Welsh Language Commissioner. However, in accordance with our commitment to ensure that our service standards do not fall below the spirit of those standards, we are considering ways of ensuring closer collaboration between ourselves and the Welsh Language Commissioner. In doing so, our aim is to learn from others and share best practice.

## Workforce planning and language hubs

The National Assembly for Wales has two internal languages of administration – English and Welsh. Our service area language plans are continuously reviewed, and are considered to be live documents. Language skills are considered each time a post is created or becomes vacant. Our intention is to ensure that we respond proactively to the language requirements of all our customers as we work towards achieving our ambition to be a truly bilingual organisation. In doing so, language hubs have developed naturally across the organisation with team members working mainly through the medium of Welsh both orally and in writing on a daily basis. Using Welsh as the language of internal administration allows us to provide good quality bilingual services directly to customers in Welsh and English. The hubs are a group of fluent Welsh speakers or combination of fluent Welsh speakers and learners. They have been created through a



combination of recruiting staff with specific language skills and current staff members developing their skills. We currently have several examples of hubs across the organisation including the following teams:

- Llywydd's private office,
- Outreach Service,
- Citizen Engagement,
- Education and Youth Engagement,
- Outreach Education Officers,
- Public Information
- Customer Relations
- Visitor Engagement
- European and Constitutional Affairs within the Research Service.

The majority of the Leadership Team are Welsh speakers or learners, and the advertisement for the post of Director of Communications and Engagement requires level 3 Welsh language skills.

A number of meetings are held bilingually either due to the language skills of the participants or with the use of simultaneous interpretation including:

- the Assembly Commission
- the Leadership Team
- All Staff meetings
- various steering groups and task forces

Other examples of working in Welsh on a day to day basis without the need for simultaneous translation include:

- the Chief Executive and two of the Directors converse in Welsh amongst themselves, with their personal assistants and with bilingual staff across all service areas
- Welsh speaking Heads of Service conduct meetings with their staff where the default language is no longer English.
- Answers to Oral Questions to the Assembly Commission are prepared in Welsh where drafting officials and the clearance chain facilitates this.
- briefings, speeches and e-mails for the Llywydd, Chief Executive and others are drafted in Welsh on a regular basis
- internal meetings default to Welsh when attendees are bilingual
- formal and informal human resources meetings and processes
- internal finance communications, procedures and processes
- the Assembly Commission's Legal Services

We will also continue to use the integrated teams approach to ensure that key staff have the appropriate skills in order to provide full support to committee chairs in their language of choice. This in turn will create a bilingual environment, and will encourage Assembly Members and others taking part in proceedings to use their language of choice.

## Statistical information

Last year, a new section was added to the annual report in response to feedback from Assembly Members and stakeholders. We will use the information gathered to prioritise our work on the themes for the duration of this Scheme. Figures for both this year and last year have been provided in the tables below in order to enable comparisons to be easily made.



## Recruitment

This year's recruitment statistics cover the period from 16 July 2018 (the implementation date for the new recruitment system) to 31 March 2019 (the end of the reporting period).

Last year, there was a 'Welsh essential' requirement attached to 35 per cent of the posts advertised. The picture is very different this year. Over the coming years, the statistics below will offer a means of monitoring how the new recruitment system is being implemented and will show the changes in the organisation's language skills pattern.

**Table 1: Number of posts advertised as requiring courtesy level Welsh, or with a higher language skills requirement.**

	Posts advertised	Courtesy Level	Levels 1 - 5
External	54	35	19
Internal	18	11	7
Total	72	46	26

Percentage of posts advertised at courtesy level Welsh – **64%**

Percentage of posts advertised with language skills requirements at level 1 to 5 – **36%**

## Assembly Business

These statistics outline the way in which business is tabled.

In our annual report last year, we made a commitment to look at ways of supporting Members and their staff to ensure that they understand the systems and are confident using their language of choice when tabling business. We decided to combine these elements in a training session provided by a member of the Table Office Team and a member of the Official Languages Team.

The training aimed to provide an introduction to the software for tabling business, and a language improvement session to give Assembly Members and support staff the confidence to use more Welsh when tabling business. The figures below do not include details of proposals and amendments submitted by the Welsh Government as they are always tabled bilingually.

**Table 2: Percentage of business tabled in Welsh per item**

Year	OAQ	WAQ	Motions	Amendments	Statement of Opinion	Topical Question
2017-18	13%	7%	2%	7%	2%	10%
2018-19	11%	10%	3%	14%	5%	15%

**Table 3: Documents laid**

Year	Number of documents laid	Number of documents not laid bilingually	Percentage of documents not laid bilingually
2017-18	431	109	25%
2018-19	1187	310	26%

All Assembly Commission documents are laid bilingually by default. Documents are drafted bilingually before being laid. This year, there was one exception where an independent report for the Standards of Conduct Committee was laid in English only.

The statistics show clearly a significant increase in the number of documents laid, . This increase can be attributed to work on Brexit, with the majority of these documents being laid bilingually including documents laid by the Welsh Government.

Unfortunately, there is a slight increase in the percentage of documents not laid bilingually. Once again this year, the vast majority of those documents were explanatory memoranda or documents relating to secondary legislation laid by the Welsh Government.. When non-bilingual documents are tabled, the Table Office will check whether a bilingual version is available, or whether the documents comply with the exemptions set out in Standing Orders.

Organisations and bodies subject to language standards or language schemes are expected to comply with those requirements. Where those standards do not apply, or where bodies are not subject to language standards or schemes, they are asked to act in the spirit of the Official Languages Scheme, respecting the right of Assembly Members to use their language of choice. The way that documents relating to subordinate legislation are tabled does not align with the spirit of the Scheme. Assembly Members are unable to prepare for proceedings in their language of choice without having access to such documents bilingually.

In line with the commitment in our annual report last year, the Commissioner with responsibility for Official Languages wrote to the Business Committee to seek guidance on this matter. Officials were asked to discuss matters further, and a meeting was held between Assembly Commission and Welsh Government officials. Government officials have committed to look further at possible ways of prioritising translation work in order to ensure that a higher percentage of the documents tabled by Welsh Government are bilingual, with the aim of increasing the percentage annually.



## Assembly proceedings

We have made a firm commitment to support Assembly Members to work in their official language of choice. We will monitor the statistics below with the aim of increasing the percentage of contributions in Welsh. Bespoke training is provided for Assembly Members by the Language Skills Team to help them prepare when making speeches or contributions in Welsh. Integrated team members have ongoing discussions with Chairs to ensure that they receive the support they need to fulfil this vital role and to support the bilingual nature of our proceedings.

**Table 4: Percentage of contributions in Welsh**

Type of contribution	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2017-18	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2018-19
Plenary Proceedings	20%	18%
Committee Proceedings	8%	7%

## Committees

Ensuring that Assembly Members can prepare for Committee proceedings by simultaneously providing documents for meetings in both languages is an important element of our commitment to facilitating bilingual working. Committee teams emphasise the need to provide submissions bilingually when requesting evidence from outside bodies, and require them to comply with the relevant requirements in terms of standards or language schemes.

However, we recognise that it is not always possible for individuals or voluntary organisations to provide bilingual material. In addition, each committee's arrangements for the provision of briefing papers are unique and based on the needs and wishes of committee members. Members may choose to receive a fully translated briefing paper, or a paper with only the questions translated. Integrated teams have regular discussions with committee members to ensure that they are happy with the arrangements for committee papers.

**Table 5: Papers published by Assembly committees**

	Welsh only		English only		Bilingual	
	2017-18	2018-19	2017-18	2018-19	2017-18	2018-19
Papers drafted internally	0	0	40*	96*	1172	781
Responses submitted to consultations	13	51	438	628	218	131
Secretary of State for Wales and UK Government	0	0	23	52	8	7
Welsh Government	0	0	174	263	580	993
Individual Members	0	0	3	3	6	11
External individuals or organisations	9	21	659	727	337	361

\* Direct responses to correspondence received in English. In accordance with the Scheme, any written responses to correspondence from individuals or organisations will be drafted and published in the recipient's preferred language.













## Theme 1: Recruitment

In July 2017, a working group on recruitment was established in partnership with our trade unions. The aim of the working group was to prepare to implement the objectives of this theme by July 2018.

A year after forming the working group, the work was completed and significant changes were made to the way all Assembly Commission vacancies are advertised. The new system, which was introduced in mid-July 2018, has transformed our approach to defining the necessary language skills for posts. The specific criteria for each post include language requirements for the role. The working group agreed a language skills matrix, which included speaking, listening, reading and writing skills across five levels, as well as a definition for courtesy level Welsh.

Therefore every vacancy is advertised with either a courtesy level Welsh requirement or with specific Welsh language skills requirements as outlined in the skills matrix. Recruitment methods are slightly different for both:

- Any posts that have language skills requirements will use a combination of language skills levels from the matrix. Levels will be determined according to the requirements of the post, and the existing bilingual capacity of the team or service. Language skills are tested as part of the selection process, either as part of the interview, or as a separate assessment. Tests will be drawn up based on individual posts in order to reflect the day-to-day needs of the job.
- A courtesy level requirement is identified for any post with no specific language skills requirements. Courtesy level assessments are carried out as part of the selection process on the day of the interview, or the assessment centre. Once an individual has been assessed and has demonstrated that they have the appropriate skills to meet the courtesy level, they will receive a certificate. The certificate will be valid for two years, and there will be no further assessments during that period.



## Courtesy level Welsh assessments

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The assessment is divided into two parts, namely pronunciation and courtesy. The first part is about oral communication, with an emphasis on correct pronunciation of words and names, and responding to common phrases. The second part relates to written communication, with an emphasis on using the information and guidance available to understand or draft simple, repetitive text, and to deal politely and effectively with less straightforward text using the available services or technologies as appropriate.

If a candidate doesn't have the required skills to reach courtesy level at the time of the assessment, it won't prevent them from being appointed to the post. Successful applicants who do not achieve the required level will receive further training as part of their probationary period. The training can be tailored to the specific needs of any member of staff, and the timescale for reaching the required target will be agreed by the line manager, the member of staff and the tutor.

Resources have been developed for courtesy level Welsh posts including a video, audio files and scripts to reassure applicants and offer them support. All resources are available on our website. The Language Skills Team has developed a courtesy level Welsh language training module to support individuals and teams. There are regular opportunities for Assembly Commission staff to be trained and assessed and a large number of staff chose to be assessed before applying for posts.

**[http://www.assembly.wales/en/abthome/about\\_us-commission\\_assembly\\_administration/official\\_languages/Pages/recruitment.aspx](http://www.assembly.wales/en/abthome/about_us-commission_assembly_administration/official_languages/Pages/recruitment.aspx)**





This has had an impact on the ethos of the organisation in terms of encouraging and facilitating bilingual working and a willingness to offer bilingual services proactively and by default. We have also seen an increase in the number of people registering for Welsh lessons or language improvement training as more people come into contact with the Language Skills Team through assessments.

The introduction of language skills levels as well as courtesy level Welsh has led to a change in the pattern of language skills across the organisation. We were aware that Welsh learners were unlikely to apply for posts that were described as 'Welsh essential'. There are now many more opportunities for Welsh learners as the relevant skills levels are described for each post. We encourage all our staff to proactively use their language skills at all levels in order to see the bilingual ethos of the organisation flourish naturally.



## Theme 2: Language skills

Over the past year, we have formalised the way learners register for lessons by introducing a learning agreement. Each learner will receive an agreement, to be signed by the learner, line manager and tutor. The purpose of the agreement is to ensure that all three parties understand and acknowledge their role in the process.

The learner is required to agree to attend lessons regularly and to take advantage of further informal learning and review opportunities as appropriate. The line manager will agree to support the learner and to ensure that they are able to regularly attend lessons. The tutor will commit to understanding the individual's learning methods and learning needs and to provide regular feedback.

The Language Skills Team is currently trialling a system of providing feedback on a termly basis. A copy of the feedback will also be made available to the line manager. The feedback helps the learner to understand what progress they have made over the term, and also to plan their learning for the coming term. The line manager can also see the benefits of releasing staff for more learning opportunities and how the team's language skills may change as learners within the team make progress.

A slightly different agreement was piloted for Assembly Members, with the learner and tutor discussing and planning the individual's learning pathway in accordance with their personal wishes.

The Language Skills Team has continued to provide and develop bespoke training programs for Assembly Members and their staff, as well as Assembly Commission staff. During the past year, the team has piloted specific learning approaches for specific parts of the organisation. As part of the preparatory work for holding the National Eisteddfod on the Assembly estate in August 2018, tailored training was provided for the Welsh-speaking security officers. The training aimed to boost their confidence to use Welsh in their everyday work and to support their colleagues who were learning Welsh. The Language Skills Team is also working with Welsh learners on the Security Team not only to develop their skills but to ensure that they learn vocabulary and phrases appropriate to their everyday work. The same session is provided twice a week, to reflect the fact that security officers can't be released at the same time each week.







Over the past year, the Language Skills Team has also piloted alternative methods of learning with different groups of students at different levels. A successful system has been established since summer 2018, which offers learners the opportunity to receive intensive training over a period of one day or longer during the Assembly recess. Learners will continue to receive regular lessons of up to two hours per week during the Assembly term but will accelerate their learning by taking part in intensive sessions lasting up to two days at a time during recess. This approach enables them to make significant progress and has seen very positive results in learners' confidence and skills.

This year, 11 students took WJEC examinations in Welsh as a second language and were all successful. The number of learners taking examinations is expected to rise again in 2019-20. In addition to our in-house provision, several learners have also taken advantage of residential Welsh in the Workplace courses at the National Centre for Learning Welsh. We expect an increase in the number of learners making use of this provision to support their learning this year.

The language refresher provision for fluent Welsh speakers continues to develop. The session on Welsh on the computer is popular amongst fluent speakers, learners and those with fewer Welsh language skills. This year, sessions have been provided for various groups within the Assembly: Assembly Commission staff, support staff, and some Assembly Members. The sessions are provided in group settings, or on a one to one basis, and are tailored as required. The purpose of the sessions is to give those who attend more confidence to use their written Welsh.

## Theme 3: Language Planning

Language planning is essential in order to ensure that we make the most of the new recruitment system, the new method of defining language skills and the provision of language skills training. As a result of introducing the new recruitment system, we expect the Welsh language skills of our workforce to increase over time.

Careful planning will be required in order to ensure that Welsh language skills – both written and spoken – are used and developed fully within teams across the Assembly Commission. Since the introduction of the new language skills matrix, the Official Languages Team has been piloting a number of approaches to recording language skills within the language schemes of individual services. Heads of service and team leaders work with each service's official languages co-ordinators to define the language skills levels required for each post within the service.

Due to the wide variety of work undertaken by the services across the organisation, each language scheme is different and tailored to the service in question. However, each scheme will identify the skills levels for jobs and individuals, and record any arrangements between services for the provision of bilingual services.

In order to ensure that individual services follow the same principles in terms of language planning, all schemes are validated at Director level. As well as ensuring consistency across services and directorates, this stage of the process also provides assurance to Executive Board members that the Welsh language schemes are appropriate and that services take thorough account of bilingual capacity when dealing with recruitment issues.



## Theme 4: Assembly proceedings

The work of the integrated teams is crucial to enable Members to participate in proceedings in their language of choice. The teams meet regularly with Members to discuss their needs and ensure that any feedback on services is fed back to the service in question. As committee membership changes, the integrated teams get to know the needs of new members and ensure that processes and timescales change to meet those needs. During the past year, we've seen examples of committees organising their business differently in order to ensure that Members are able to receive bilingual briefings when convenient for them, and committees adapting their bilingual provision in accordance with the wishes of new members.

As committee members and post holders change, the language skills team is also on hand to provide language improvement training and tailored support for Assembly Members who want to start learning or to improve their skills. This includes the provision of regular individual sessions and ad-hoc sessions for specific events or issues.

We have continued to support Assembly Members to design bilingual websites over the past year. Contact Buddies are a useful point of contact for Members wishing to get started, and the Official Languages Team has also assisted with practical arrangements for commissioning translations. We launched a new area on the Members' Intranet which offers advice and guidance to Assembly Members and their support staff on working bilingually. The Official Languages Team regularly gathers feedback on the type of issues that Assembly Members would like further support on, developing appropriate messages and materials if they are not already available.

## Case study – recruitment

Since the introduction of the new recruitment system, and further work on bilingual capacity planning across the organisation, some bilingual groups have been established.

Further consideration was given to the needs of Committee Chairs who are Welsh speakers or learners, and those needs are more clearly reflected in the language schemes for those services.

As members of staff move jobs, a few teams have also seen opportunities to strengthen their bilingual capacity in order to provide better bilingual services for Assembly Members and their support staff.





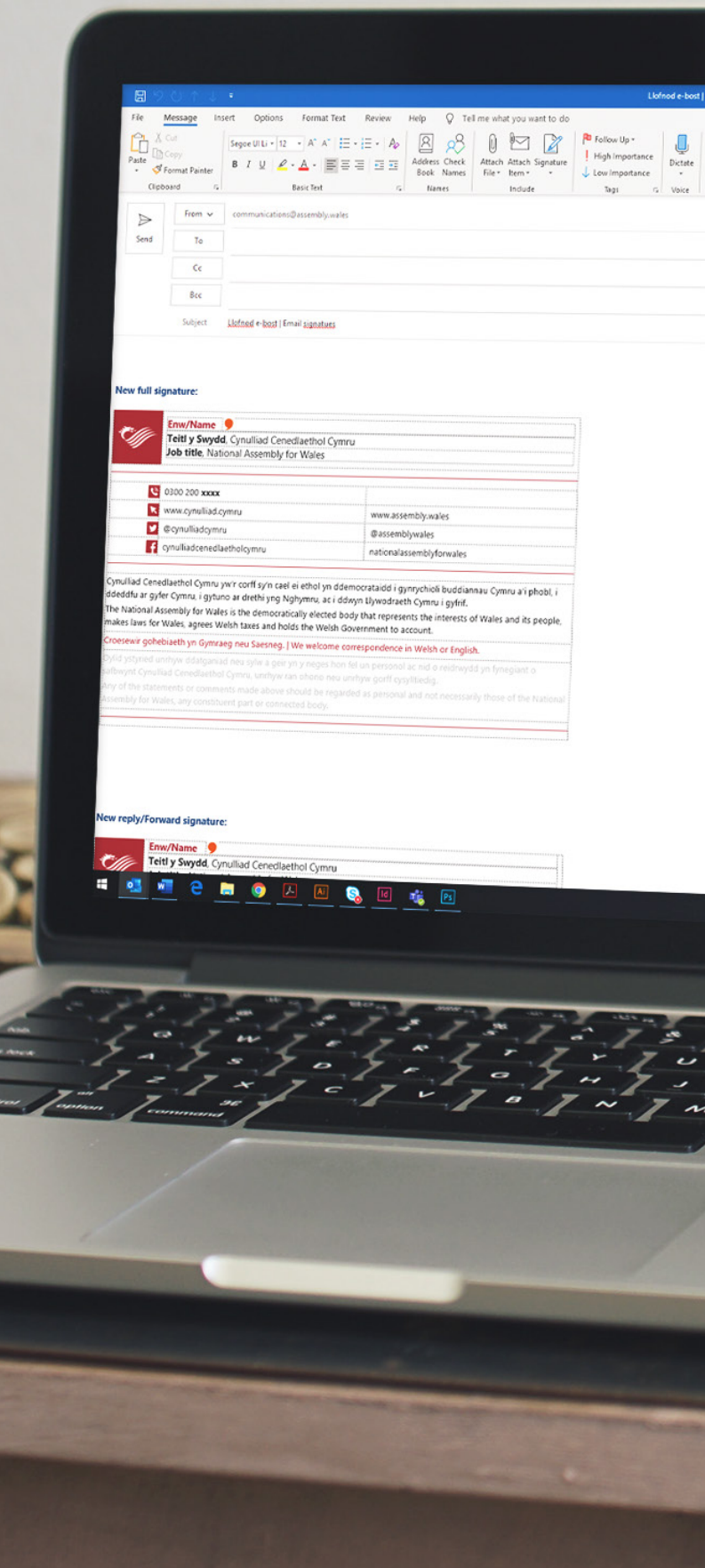
## Case study – autosignature

The automatic signatures used by Assembly Commission staff needed to be updated to reflect changes to the organisation's brand.

This was an opportunity to ensure consistency in the way people compose their signatures, and to include standard information about individuals. As part of the planning process, the design team decided that it would also be an opportunity for Welsh speakers and learners across the organisation to identify this without too many technical requirements. Therefore, automatic signatures were designed containing a 'Working Welsh' or 'Learner' icon. Also, to ensure further consistency, we decided to design a package of automated messages containing a full signature, a short signature for internal communications and an out of office message.

The message was designed in such a way that individuals who cannot speak Welsh can add dates and create bilingual messages independently.

The inclusion of the out of office message as part of the package means that we should see fewer examples of non-compliance with the requirements of the Official Languages Scheme as well.





## Theme 5: Developing the bilingual ethos of the organisation

### Identifying bilingual staff

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Our work on visually identifying bilingual staff has meant that most bilingual staff wear 'Working Welsh' lanyards or badges and a large number of learners wear 'Learner' lanyards or badges. This means it is much easier to identify members of staff who are able to provide bilingual services. In order to encourage as many of our staff as possible to use these methods, all Assembly Members, support staff or new staff members will be able to choose a 'Working Welsh', 'Learner', or plain lanyard when they are given a security pass for the building. We have also explored new ways of identifying Welsh speakers or learners by e-mail.

### Awareness

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Once again this year, the Official Languages Team has worked on maintaining Assembly Commission staff awareness of the requirements of the Official Languages Scheme. During each new member of staff's first weeks at the Assembly, they will watch a video and discuss the requirements of the Official Languages Scheme with their Official Languages Co-ordinator. In order to improve their understanding, a session on bilingual working is part of the corporate induction training day. During the year, we held a training session at a meeting of the Official Languages Co-ordinators Forum to ensure that members' details were up to date, and that they were providing the right information to new members of staff within their services.

The Official Languages Team continues to hold events throughout the year to promote the use of Welsh including Shwmae – Su'mae Day, Welsh Music Day, Santes Dwywnwen Day and St David's Day. These dates were used as an opportunity to encourage Welsh speakers and learners to use their language skills, whether orally or in writing, and to promote the services provided by the Language Skills Team.



## Case study – beer mats

As part of this year's Shwmae – Su'mae event, we took advantage of the resources provided by the national campaign online.

Copies of their beer mats were printed for learners to distribute in the staff restaurant. During that week, the staff restaurant manager noticed several tables where the mats were discussed and used to stimulate conversation and to try a few words of Welsh. He suggested that it would be an idea for us to develop a series of mats with the same aim, namely to trigger a conversation in Welsh, or to provide an opportunity for informal learning. Since then, the Official Languages Team has prepared mats on the theme of Christmas, St Dwynwen's Day, St David's Day and Welsh for your holiday. The team also prepared a special mat for the week of the Urdd Eisteddfod in Cardiff Bay.



## Technology

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There are a number of exciting language technology projects currently underway. The CorCenCC (National Corpus of Contemporary Welsh) project has been collecting Welsh text from websites, blogs etc and has used many elements of the Assembly's bilingual provision. The purpose of the project is to create an online, searchable database of contemporary Welsh. Users will be able to search the database for words and see examples of those words in context to see how Welsh speakers and learners use them in their everyday lives.

We also plan to take part in Mozilla's Common Voice scheme to help to teach machines how people speak. An online platform was created for collating recordings of people speaking in different languages, including Welsh. The intention is for this to be a valuable resource in turn to develop Welsh voice-to-text technology. This is an excellent opportunity for the Assembly to contribute to a project, which could eventually form the basis for creating voice-to-text technology for the Welsh language. We will be taking part in the campaign later this year by arranging a day for Assembly Members, their support staff and Assembly Commission staff to contribute their voices. The aim is to grow the database and to encourage contributors on the day to continue to take part every day in their spare time, or with their families and friends, to help the project gather as many voices as possible.

## Monitoring and Compliance

The Official Languages Team, through its monitoring work and with the support of the Official Languages Co-ordinators, records details of any complaints or failures to comply with the requirements of the Scheme. The Assembly Commission also prepares a monthly report setting out any positive feedback or complaints received from the public through our contact line or the usual methods of providing feedback when visiting the estate. The report sets out the broad details of any complaints and our response to them.

When dealing with complaints, the Official Languages Co-ordinators Forum discusses any complaints as necessary. In the event of failure to comply with the Scheme, the Co-ordinator is the first point of contact in ensuring that processes are modified and strengthened to avoid a similar situation in future. Lessons learned are also shared as necessary.

There have been instances during the year where we have failed to meet the high standards we set, or failed to reach the expectations of those who come into contact with us, whether they are Assembly Members, support staff or members of the public. Several complaints were received this year, most of which were dealt with informally, without the need for them to be considered under the formal complaints procedure. Details of the complaints are given below.

### Informal complaints

#### Information on our website

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As we saw last year, there have been occasions where we have failed to publish documents in accordance with the requirements of our Scheme.

The complaints received related mainly to business documents. Several complaints were received about sentences or fragments of English text appearing in the middle of agendas and other business documents. It was very frustrating for complainants who had to draw our attention to the same issue on a number of occasions. Following further investigation, we found that the problem was caused by a technical issue with the publishing software rather than any error by those publishing the documents.

There were some complaints about links to English documents, or broken links. We therefore reviewed our processes to make sure materials are checked thoroughly before publishing. On each occasion, the problem was discussed with



the relevant teams. Training or support was offered as required and we emphasised the need to check that documents are correct in both languages. This has resulted in fewer complaints about English text on Welsh pages and the appropriate links being used on the website, offering a much improved user experience.

## Correspondence

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Unfortunately, there have been several instances this year where the recipient's preferred language was not considered when sending or responding to correspondence. In most cases, members of staff contacted us to indicate that they had not received correspondence in their preferred language or bilingually. This offered the opportunity to resolve the issue fairly soon after the event.

However, we were recently contacted by a member of the public who noted his dissatisfaction with a response he had received to correspondence sent to us in Welsh. After investigating the feedback provided, we found that the situation had arisen due to an error made by a member of staff. The specific team is currently considering its processes to make sure that we take steps to prevent us from failing to comply with the scheme in this way again. After receiving this feedback, all our staff were immediately reminded of the need to consider the recipient's preferred language when responding to correspondence.

We also provided guidance on how to produce bilingual email messages and advice on the support available from the Translation and Reporting Service in terms of checking, proofreading or translating text. It is vital that we uphold the principle that everyone has the right to engage with us in their language of choice.

## Default language settings on computer equipment for new members of staff

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We received a complaint from the Chief of Staff of one of the political parties that the language preferences identified by applicants during the recruitment process were not being used when setting the successful candidate's default computer language settings. This meant that English was the default language for all, and that new members of staff had to request to change their interface language settings.

Having discussed the details with the Chief of Staff, we arranged support for the new member of staff, and any other members of staff, to change their default language settings.

We also made a commitment to change the arrangements for recording new starters' language preferences in terms of their computer equipment interface. The profile request form was changed to include details of the options available, to be completed jointly by the new member of staff and their line manager before they take up post. This means that new members of staff can now choose the language for their computer interface and email address before starting in post.

If a new starter wishes to change their preferences after starting their new job, this can be arranged accordingly.

## Formal complaint

Unfortunately, for the first time this year, we received a formal complaint about our corporate induction training provision for Assembly Member support staff.

The complaint was originally submitted in July 2018, and we set out to address the problem informally in the first instance, in line with the complaints policy.

A new member of support staff had expressed disappointment that he had received corporate induction training entirely through the medium of English, with little reference during the training to the Official Languages Scheme or the support available to Assembly Members and their staff to work bilingually. In our informal response to the complaint, we outlined a number of actions in order to improve the situation, including providing a session on the Official Languages Scheme and the support available for working bilingually and providing all course materials bilingually. We also made a commitment to record the language preferences of those receiving training in order to determine whether it should be delivered in Welsh, English or bilingually, depending on attendees' requirements.

A further complaint was submitted in January 2019, stating that the actions outlined in response to the original feedback had not all been taken. The complaint was dealt with in accordance with stage 2 of the complaints policy, and an officer was nominated to investigate it.

It was found that the complaint was valid and that there were shortcomings in the provision of corporate induction training. It was confirmed that this went completely against the statutory provisions of the Official Languages Scheme, and against the spirit of the unconditional offer which underpins the Official Languages Scheme. During the investigation, we found specific reasons for the



shortcomings identified, mainly relating to the way information had been passed on to a new member of staff.

Following the investigation, steps were taken to ensure better arrangements for the transfer of information between staff leaving and joining the team. It was also decided that Welsh and English sessions should be offered alternately. This means that new starters can register for a course in their language of choice without having to wait for too long. The Language Skills Team worked with the Professional Development Team to look at its processes and draw up desk guidelines for organising future training.

During the debate on the previous year's annual report, we committed to providing additional information about any complaints received. The table below details the nature of the complaint and the action taken.

**Table 6: Complaint and the action taken**

Nature of complaint	Action taken
An English-only response to a Welsh-medium enquiry for the catering team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate</li> <li>Discuss with team</li> <li>Establish processes and procedures for dealing with Welsh medium correspondence</li> </ul>
Lack of Welsh interface on laptop provided at cross-party group meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate</li> <li>Review the arrangements for the allocation of laptops</li> </ul>
English text on the Welsh side of the website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate</li> <li>Emphasise the need for members of staff to check text before publication to rectify any errors.</li> </ul>
English text on the Welsh side of the website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate</li> <li>Emphasise the need for members of staff to check text before publication to rectify any errors.</li> </ul>
English text on the Welsh side of the website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate</li> <li>Amend the systems for publishing Assembly business</li> <li>Emphasise the need for members of staff to check text before publication to rectify any errors.</li> <li>Provide details</li> </ul>
An English only response to an email from a member of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An apology and a commitment to investigate</li> <li>Investigate</li> <li>Review the processes of the team concerned</li> </ul>



Nature of complaint	Action taken
New staff computer equipment pre-set in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate</li> <li>Change the process of collecting information about computer equipment options</li> </ul>
Support staff induction training – lack of bilingual provision and content relating to the Official Languages Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate</li> <li>Respond to the complainant outlining actions taken and planned improvements</li> </ul>
Official Complaint – No action taken in response to complaint about support staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deal with the complaint in accordance with step 2 of the complaints policy</li> <li>Determining that the complaint is valid</li> <li>Initiate action to rectify the original complaint.</li> </ul>

## Positive feedback

The Assembly Commission also receives a great deal of positive feedback. We value all feedback, and examples of good practice are shared across the organisation.



We know from evidence that people used to self-select themselves out of applying from posts advertised as Welsh Essential. Since the introduction last year of descriptions on the different levels for reading, writing, speaking and listening, we have seen job adverts developed around the needs of the post. Designed and described to help ensure that individuals don't opt out, we are increasingly seeing Welsh learners gain success in securing these posts which is also a return on the language skills training investment by both the individual and the organisation.

**Craig Stephenson,**

Director of Engagement



When I applied for a post with a courtesy level Welsh requirement, I wasn't sure what to expect or what my skills level would be. I had not taken part in any training sessions with the Language Skills Team. However, the assessment only took 10 minutes and was as relaxed as possible. Achieving the required level in the assessment made me think differently about what courtesy level Welsh actually means. I believe that my experience of working in a bilingual environment meant that I had gained those skills without the need for any formal training.

**Georgina Owen,**

Chamber and Committee Service



Our time at the National Assembly for Wales was very informative. We were impressed by the work on recruitment and the bilingual ethos of the organisation. The flexible and bespoke approach to language learning, and the ideas for training resources are certainly something we hope to use here at the Sami Parliament of Norway.

**Lisa Monica Aslaksen,**

Senior HR Advisor, Sami Parliament of Norway





The Environment and Transport team worked with the Language Skills team to pilot a new team approach to courtesy level Welsh training. Being able to learn together and support each other was a valuable experience for all. All of the team have since gone on to receive further training or sign up for Welsh lessons.

**Kathryn Potter,**

Head of the Research Service

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Having returned to the Assembly after more than a decade, the ethos of the organisation has transformed. Working bilingually is now considered the norm, and providing exemplary bilingual services is a key part of our work.”

**Siwan Davies,**

Director of Assembly Business

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As a Welsh learner who applied for a post designated with level 2 Welsh language skills requirement, the fact that the skills that I’ve attained actually counted for something during the recruitment process was a great boost for me. The support provided on the day from the Language Skills Team and the Human Resources team was fantastic. It was the best recruitment process I’ve been through. Even if I hadn’t been offered the post, I would have still felt proud of myself for being successful in the skills level assessment.

**Jamie Matthews,**

Senior News and Communications Manager

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One of my support staff received intensive grammar refresher training from the Language Skills Team at the Assembly. The member of staff now has greater confidence when using Welsh at work, and when providing excellent bilingual services to my constituents.

**Rhun ap Iorwerth AM**

Assembly Member for Ynys Môn

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