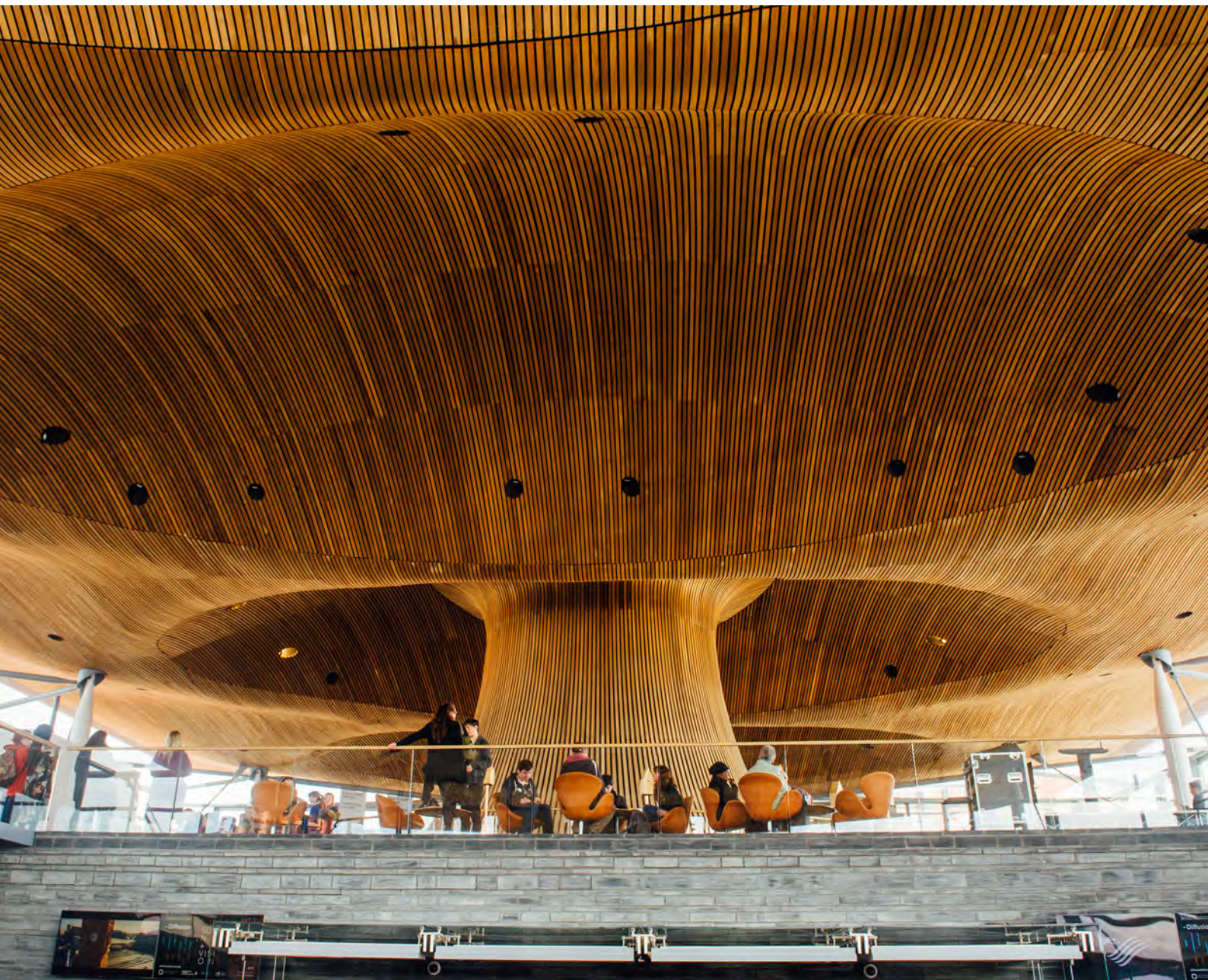


# Official Language Scheme: Annual Report 2019-20

June 2020



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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 Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1SN

 0300 200 6565

 [Contact@senedd.wales](mailto:Contact@senedd.wales)

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# Official Language Scheme: Annual Report 2019-20

June 2020

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## Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Report on the Official Languages Scheme on behalf of the Senedd Commission.

This year, we concentrated on language planning. A Welsh language skills survey was conducted, and its results were analysed. Heads of Service are using those results to inform capacity planning work across teams and to review their service language plans.

We have also been innovative with the Senedd and Elections Act (2020) by introducing voting for 16-year-old citizens, and of course changing the name of the institution. On 6 May 2020, the National Assembly for Wales became the Welsh Parliament or Senedd Cymru, commonly known as the Senedd. This change came into force after the end of the reporting period; however, it would be remiss of me not to refer to this historic change. The Senedd today is a very different institution to the original National Assembly established in 1999. By now it has full law-making powers and the ability to vary taxes. The new name will reflect its constitutional status as a national parliament.

Evidently this report will allude to the current Covid.19 pandemic, movement restrictions were put in place at the end of the reporting period. Once again, we have been in the vanguard in terms of our use of technology to deliver exemplary bilingual services. At the time of writing, Senedd Cymru was already amongst the first legislatures in the world to hold fully bilingual virtual meetings, with many other public and private bodies requesting advice and guidance from us and learning from our experience.

We will certainly be using our experience during this unprecedented time to learn how we can further incorporate technology in our bilingual service provision.

Looking ahead, we will be concentrating over the next few months on the preparations for the Sixth Senedd. Between now and the end of the Fifth Senedd, we will begin the work of reviewing the current Official Languages Scheme and prepare for the introduction of a new Scheme for the Sixth Senedd.

Finally, I wish to thank my predecessor, Siân Gwenllïan MS for her leadership and vision during her period as Commissioner. I look forward to building on the firm foundations she laid in order to achieve our ambition to be a truly bilingual institution.

Rhun ap Iorwerth MS

Commissioner with responsibility for Official Languages



haffi'r

shop







# **OUR PERFORMANCE**

## Our Performance

### Our ambition and commitment

"Our ambition is to be a truly bilingual institution where Members of the Senedd, the public and the 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 Senedd Commission's commitment to bilingualism provides a firm foundation from which to achieve this ambition. Our values, our strategies and the services that we provide reflect the equal status of our two official languages.

We are an institution that operates on the basis of our values, and those values reflect a commitment to achieving diversity across the institution and to valuing and encouraging diversity within our workforce. We value all our staff members, regardless of their degree of bilingualism, for both the commitment they bring to the Assembly and their professional and parliamentary expertise. The principles of our dignity and respect policy are at the heart of everything that we do. We expect all staff members to be committed to providing outstanding parliamentary support and services to Members, their support staff and the public in both of our official languages.

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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

Our work over the past year has focused primarily on the language skills survey, reviewing and updating service area language plans, and capacity planning. The main objective of this work was to enhance our understanding of staff members' language skills, and to assist us in ensuring that the necessary language skills were located within the appropriate teams. This is an approach that will make working bilingually a natural part of everyday life. The results of this work can be seen across the institution, with teams thinking differently about skills and sharing expertise. This work is particularly important if we are to realise our ambition of being a truly bilingual institution leading the way in Wales and beyond. During the course of the year, the Chief Executive and Clerk, acting on behalf of the Senedd Commission, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Welsh Language Commissioner. Due to our unique status under the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012, the Senedd Commission is not subject to the Welsh Language Standards and is not accountable to the Welsh Language Commissioner. However, the Official Languages Scheme states that our service standards compare favourably with those Standards, and notes that the Senedd Commission would not wish to fall below the spirit of the Language Commissioner's Standards in any way. The Memorandum strengthens the relationship between the two institutions, which allows us to exchange ideas and share best practice. Officials from both institutions meet periodically, and the first meeting was held in March 2020.

## Feedback from Members and their support staff

The task of providing bespoke services to Members and their support staff, thereby allowing them to work effectively in their language of choice, is pivotal. In order to carry out this task, it is essential that we understand the Members' individual needs, and that we ensure that the services provided are bespoke and are available **by default**. We use any feedback that we receive to plan and prioritise resources in order to maintain the highest possible standards.

The feedback received from Members and their support staff regarding our provision has been generally positive. While no official survey was undertaken, we explored opportunities throughout the year to discuss our services with Members and their staff. Integrated team members serving each committee have regular discussions with Members, taking appropriate action to change processes, tailor provision and improve procedures. When the membership of a committee changes, the integrated team revisits the provision and ensures that it is adapted appropriately. The executive group for Member Support Staff meets regularly. These group meetings provide an opportunity to gather feedback from party Chiefs of Staff, and also to share messages regarding new services. The Contact Buddy system remains in operation. The Contact Buddies gather feedback from Members as and when they come into contact with them.

## Sharing expertise

Once again this year, a number of external organisations have met with us to discuss the Official Languages Scheme. These include:

- The Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru
- The Austrian Parliament
- The House of Lords
- Wales Millennium Centre
- Velindre University NHS Trust
- Hafren Dyfrdwy (Severn Dee) Water Company

Among the topics discussed were recruitment, the language skills matrix, language planning, the Language Skills Team and our use of technology.

The Language Skills Team has taken part in several training sessions and has shared good practice with the National Centre for Learning Welsh, including



the annual conference. The Tutor Manager is a member of the Centre's Advisory Board. We continue to assist with the piloting of new Work Welsh (Cymraeg Gwaith) courses as required. We will continue to nurture relationships in order to share best practice and learn from others.

## Workforce planning and language hubs

The Welsh Parliament has two internal languages of administration–Welsh and English. In accordance with the recruitment system established two years ago, language skills are considered each time a vacancy arises, or a new post is introduced. A member of the Official Languages Team is involved in the process of authorising any job advertisement, in order to ensure that the language skills that have been designated per post are in alignment with the language plan of the Service in question, or to advise on any changes to the identified skill levels.

As has been noted in the past, this work has naturally led to the development of hubs across the institution, with team members working primarily through one of the official languages. This is achieved by specifying various language skills requirements for different roles within teams. This can create an ethos that encourages and assists learners to improve their language skills through daily use with colleagues and customers. This year, the Policy and Legislation Committee Service ensured that the team that supports the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee works mainly through the medium of Welsh.

In addition to the work of ensuring that key staff members have the appropriate skills to support committee Chairs in their language of choice, this evolution of the work of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee will ensure that any participants in proceedings feel comfortable doing so in their official language of choice.

## Statistical information

The statistical information gathered helps us to prioritise our thematic work over the duration of the Scheme, and to measure the success of any new work or ideas. Comparisons conducted over a three-year period show developing trends, and this will be valuable in relation to the task of planning for the Sixth Senedd. This year, we have included data collected as part of the language skills survey in order to demonstrate our staff members' range of skills.

## Recruitment

This year for the first time, we may review data covering a full 12-month period of recruitment. When drawing comparisons, it is important to note that the statistics for last year relate to the period from 16 July 2019 (the implementation date of the new recruitment system) to 31 March 2020 (the end of the reporting period). In the previous year, a 'Welsh essential' requirement was attached to 35 per cent of the posts advertised. The statistics provided below are a means of monitoring our recruitment methods, ensuring that they are fit for purpose, and that they will lead to the changes in the language skills pattern of the institution envisaged when the system was introduced in 2019.

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

External

	Posts advertised	Courtesy Level	Combination of skills	Levels 1-5
2018-19	54	35		19
2019-20	49	28	3	18



## Internal

	Posts advertised	Courtesy Level	Combination of skills	Levels 1-5
2018-19	18	11		7
2019-20	22	16	1	18

## Total

	Posts advertised	Courtesy Level	Combination of skills	Levels 1-5
2018-19	72	46		26
2019-20	71	44	4	23

## Percentages

	Courtesy level posts	Combination of skills	Posts at levels 1-5
2018-19	64%		36%
2019-20	62%	6%	32%

## Senedd Business

These statistics outline how business is tabled. The figures below do not include details relating to motions and amendments tabled by the Welsh Government as they are routinely tabled bilingually.

Table 2: Percentage of business tabled in Welsh per item

Year	Oral Question	Written Question	Motions	Amendments	Statements of Opinion	Topical Questions
2017-18	13%	7%	2%	7%	2%	10%
2018-19	11%	10%	3%	14%	5%	15%
2019-20	8%	8%	4%	4%	0%	9%

Table 3: Documents laid

Year	Number of documents laid	Number of documents not laid bilingually	Percentage
2017-18	431	109	25%
2018-19	1187	310	26%
2019-20	808	141	17.5%

All Commission documents are laid bilingually. Documents are prepared bilingually before being laid. Once again this year, the Welsh Government laid the highest number of documents, whether explanatory memoranda or documents relating to subordinate legislation, including documents laid on behalf of other bodies. Upon receipt of any monolingual document, the

Table Office checks whether a bilingual version is available. The issue of whether a document complies with the exemptions set out in the Standing Orders is a matter for those tabling the document, rather than for the Table Office. The Senedd expects organisations and bodies that are subject to Language Standards or Language Schemes to comply with those requirements when laying documents. Bodies that are not subject to Language Standards or Schemes are asked to act in the spirit of our Official Languages Scheme, respecting the right of Members of the Senedd to work in their language of choice.

The Welsh Government's practice of tabling English-only documents, particularly in cases where those documents relate to legislation that will be subject to scrutiny by Members of the Senedd, runs counter to the spirit of the Official Languages Scheme. In order for Members to be able to prepare for proceedings, and to be able to scrutinise those documents effectively, the documents need to be available bilingually. Since the publication of our annual report last year, the Welsh Government stated its intention to introduce a new system for prioritising the translation of documents relating to subordinate legislation. There is evidence (see data above) that this system has led to some improvement in the tabling of bilingual documentation. We will monitor the situation over the coming year, and we hope to see a further improvement by the end of the Fifth Senedd.

## Proceedings

Members of the Senedd may choose to contribute to Plenary proceedings and all official Senedd business in either language. Several factors influence the language choices of participants, and we are committed to supporting Members so that they may work in their language of choice at all times. Members of the Language Skills Team provide regular training for Members, the Tutors or Contact Buddies can also help them prepare to make contributions in Welsh.

All official business documents are available bilingually, and the interpretation service is available by default. Witnesses are briefed in advance regarding the bilingual nature of our business, and support is available at



committee meetings to enable witnesses to familiarise themselves with the interpretation equipment.

Table 4: Percentage of contributions in Welsh

Type of contribution	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2017-18	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2018-19	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2019-20
Plenary Proceedings	20%	18%	16%
Committee Proceedings	8%	7%	6%

There has been a decrease in the percentage of contributions made in Welsh in Plenary and Committee proceedings. However, over the past year, a number of Members of the Senedd have made contributions, or given media interviews in Welsh for the first time. It is important that we acknowledge the significant commitment and effort made by these Members to learn or to improve their skills to such an extent that they have become sufficiently confident to use the language in public. We must ensure that we continue to celebrate these achievements.

As part of our preparations for the Sixth Senedd, we will consider our provision for supporting Members of the Senedd to prepare for and take part in proceedings, and we will consider any lessons learned from conducting and facilitating virtual meetings bilingually. Further to our correspondence some time ago with the BBC regarding the use of Welsh contributions and subtitling, we will consider if more can be done to encourage broadcasters to use contributions by Members of the Senedd in both languages.

## Committees

By the same token, enhancing the capacity of Members of the Senedd to prepare for taking part in Committee meetings is essential. All papers prepared by the Senedd Commission are available bilingually. When calling for evidence in relation to their inquiries, committee teams emphasise the need for evidence to be submitted bilingually, and in accordance with any statutory requirements imposed on bodies that engage with us. We acknowledge that it is not always possible for individuals or voluntary organisations to provide bilingual material. Any monolingual evidence submitted is published in the language in which it is submitted. Each committee makes its own arrangements for Member briefings, including timings and format. These decisions are based on the needs and wishes of committee members. The integrated teams engage in ongoing discussions with committee members to ensure that they are content with the arrangements relating to briefing papers. Naturally, these arrangements are reviewed when the membership of a committee changes.

Table 5: Papers published by Senedd committees in Welsh only

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Papers drafted internally	0	0	0
Responses submitted to consultations	13	51	*1
Secretary of State for Wales and UK Government	0	0	0
Welsh Government	0	0	0
Individual Members	0	0	0
External individuals or organisations	9	21	22

\* Data on responses to consultations is no longer retained due to a change in the way we publish responses.

Table 6: Papers published by Senedd committees in English only

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Papers drafted internally	40 <sup>**</sup>	96 <sup>**</sup>	13
Responses submitted to consultations	438	628	*
Secretary of State for Wales and UK Government	23	52	13
Welsh Government	174	263	218
Individual Members	3	3	5
External individuals or organisations	659	727	804

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<sup>\*\*</sup> Direct responses to correspondence received in English. In accordance with the Scheme, any written responses to correspondence from individuals or organisations are drafted and published in the language of choice of the recipient of our correspondence.



Table 7: Papers published bilingually by Senedd committees

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Papers drafted internally	1172	781	864
Responses submitted to consultations	218	131	*
Secretary of State for Wales and UK Government	8	7	4
Welsh Government	580	993	898
Individual Members	6	11	4
External individuals or organisations	337	361	243

## Language Skills

This year, we undertook a survey relating to the Welsh language skills of Senedd Commission staff. WE aim to conduct one survey per Senedd until it is possible to update the HR and Payroll system in a way that allows it to collate this information and provide annual reports automatically. The survey was completed by 398 staff members, equating to 90 per cent of the 444 working staff members who were eligible to respond. The information was gathered through a simple online survey, and staff members were asked to self-assess. The Official Languages Team was available to provide support for anyone who was uncertain about their skill level, and the intention is to develop further resources in the coming year to support the staff in the self-assessment process.

Table 8 – Results of the survey

Level	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
0	32	38	49	64
Courtesy	84	92	79	81
1	53	54	40	39
2	27	19	31	32
3	19	25	27	31
4	47	60	50	63
5	136	110	122	88

The results were also split into 3 groups, in order to provide an indication of the percentages of staff at different levels. The following groups were used:

- Level 0/courtesy (staff with basic skills)
- Level 1-3 (learners)
- Level 4/5 (fluent)

The results are very encouraging, with 46 per cent of respondents indicating that they have some Welsh language skills, and 42 per cent indicating that they are fluent. Only 11 per cent of the staff indicated that they felt that they had no Welsh language skills at all. The reasons for indicating an absence of any skills can be attributed to a number of factors - we will use the Performance Review and Development system to ensure that all staff members are confident in their skills. Line managers use their regular meetings to discuss individuals' training needs and to encourage them to be confident in using the skills that they have. Over the coming year, we will

explore the existing provision for regaining confidence in the use of language skills, and we will plan for similar provision in the Sixth Senedd.

Table 9 – Results as a percentage

Level	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Average
4-5	46%	43%	43%	38%	42%
1-3	25%	25%	25%	26%	25%
Courtesy	21%	23%	20%	20%	21%
0	8%	10%	12%	16%	11%









# **THEMES FOR THE OPERATIONAL DURATION OF THE SCHEME**







## Themes for the operational duration of the Scheme

### Theme 1: Recruitment

The recruitment system is now well established, and this year, the statistical information will include full-year data for the first time. It is evident from the results of this year's language skills survey that Senedd Commission staff have begun to familiarise themselves with the descriptors used in the language skills matrix. Language skills are also considered an integral part of the process of confirming all posts advertised. The process of confirming a post includes checking the level designated for the role against the language plan of the Service in question, and then considering whether that level remains appropriate, or whether it needs to be changed.

During the past year, the Human Resources Team has procured a new online recruitment system. A member of the Official Languages Team participated as a member of the procurement and selection group. Work is now being carried out to adapt the system to meet the unique requirements of the Senedd. As part of the roll-out of the online system, we will review our methods of assessing language skills to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. This will involve reconsidering the content and timing of the Courtesy-level Welsh assessment, and considering whether standardised methods can be developed or used when assessing language skills at levels 1-3, including online methods. We will consult the Leadership Team, the Executive Board, Commission staff and the Trade Unions before rolling out any changes.

## Welsh language skills matrix

### Courtesy

- pronounce Welsh names, answer the telephone, greet people or make introductions bilingually;
- understand and use proactively familiar, everyday, expressions; and
- understand very short texts where people are giving basic information about themselves or others in correspondence, on forms or to interpret content using the technology available

## Welsh language skills matrix

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Listening	Understand familiar everyday expressions if people speak slowly and clearly.	Understand sentences or instructions when people speak slowly on familiar job-related matters.	Understand most job-related routine and non-routine discussions and instructions.	Understand discussions and instructions even on unfamiliar topics.	Understand all spoken Welsh, including complex discussions.
Speaking	Able to interact using everyday expressions, ask and answer basic questions on familiar topics.	Able to hold a conversation with someone else on familiar job-related matters.	Able to hold an extended conversation with a fluent speaker on most job-related routine and non-routine matters.	Able to speak and engage in discussion at length, confidently and without prompting.	Able to speak at length about complex issues, present arguments and lead discussions even on unfamiliar topics.
Reading	Understand very short, basic text.	Understand routine text and the gist of non-routine text on familiar job-related matters.	Understand most job-related routine and non-routine text when standard language is used.	Understand correspondence, newspaper articles and reports aimed at fluent Welsh speakers.	Understand all types of texts.
Writing	Able to pass on a simple message, make simple requests or fill in simple forms with basic information.	Able to write short texts on familiar job-related matters.	Able to write job-related routine and non-routine text.	Able to write different types of texts in styles that are appropriate to the reader in mind.	Able to write fluently, correctly and precisely, adapting style according to the audience.

## Theme 2: Language Skills

The Language Skills Team has continued to produce robust work over the past year, and the team is continually seeking innovative and flexible ways of delivering training. Members and their support staff, as well as Commission staff, may receive language skills training. This includes refresher training for those who wish to improve their written Welsh or regain confidence in using their written skills in the workplace.

Once again this year, several learners attended residential courses at Nant Gwrtheyrn, a venue which delivers courses for the National Centre for Learning Welsh, funded by the Welsh Government. A record number of Senedd Commission learners have registered for the WJEC's Welsh second language examinations this year, with 16 learners sitting examinations at Entry, Foundation and Intermediate levels. This uptake demonstrates the team's success in attracting learners and ensuring that they make consistent progress. It is not mandatory for our learners to sit examinations. We celebrate the success of all learners by providing regular feedback to their line managers, so that the progress that they make can be recorded in individual performance development reviews.

The Language Skills Team has developed the kind of informal learning provision that is essential in ensuring that staff members who are learning Welsh are able to practice their language skills. Over the year, several activities were held for learners, including quizzes, bingo sessions, a session on the national anthem, a walking tour, coffee mornings and an afternoon tea event. When learners are encouraged to use their skills in situations outside the classroom environment, their confidence increases. In turn, this creates an ethos that makes everyone feel comfortable using Welsh, whatever their skill levels.

Since February, the Language Skills Team has been piloting "the Welsh level checker" developed by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The checker assesses individuals' skill levels in relation to speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is a particularly handy tool in the context of helping an individual



who has learned Welsh at school, or in previous roles, to understand their level and to register for the appropriate lessons with the team. To assist Commission staff, the team has also mapped the levels of the Welsh courses in relation to our language skills matrix. This gives our learners an indication of the level that they should be aiming for, and it helps them set realistic targets during their Performance Development Review.

In response to the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Language Skills Team has utilised technology to continue to provide training. Learners have attended their usual lessons online, and the tutors have adapted their provision to ensure that everyone receives appropriate and bespoke training. For those staff members who are unable to participate in online lessons, the team has developed printable resources and signposted learners to resources that can be used on their mobile phones. We have also encouraged our mentors to continue holding regular online meetings, where possible, so that the learners can continue to practise their Welsh.

During the coming year, we will consider our provision for staff returning to work after a period of residential training, and our provision aimed at regaining confidence. The team will also evaluate the provision delivered during the Covid-19 period in order to learn lessons regarding what works well in the context of remote learning. It will be possible to use any bespoke resources that are developed to consider the development of remote provision for the Sixth Senedd.

## Case study – Apprenticeship Scheme

This year, it was decided that the language skills level requirement for our apprenticeships would be Courtesy level. As part of the recruitment process, an open day for prospective apprentices was held. The nature of the day reflected the bilingual ethos of the institution, and a member of the Language Skills Team gave a presentation to explain the Courtesy level Welsh assessment and a taster session. There was also an opportunity for prospective apprentices to undertake the Courtesy assessment during the day.

Following the recruitment process, 4 apprentices were appointed and as part of our training provision, they were registered for Welsh lessons. All 4 apprentices receive weekly lessons. They enjoy the opportunity to regain their confidence in terms of the skills they gained during formal education and to improve those skills as part of their formal apprenticeship.

Quote Asad Afzal (Apprentice):

*Since starting Welsh lessons here at the Senedd, I feel I have made good progress. If someone had told me a year ago that I would be working for the Senedd, attending regular Welsh lessons, and enjoying them I would not have believed them. Mae dysgu Cymraeg yn hwyl!*



## Theme 3: Language Planning

The actions taken since the introduction of the Official Languages Scheme for the Fifth Assembly in 2017 have inevitably led to changes in the bilingual capacity of the institution. Language planning is an essential part of the recruitment system, and the provision of language skills training means that skill levels across the institution are constantly changing. We committed to conducting a survey on the language skills of Senedd Commission staff in order to understand more about these changes, and to ensure that we could see positive results emerging from the work that had been undertaken to increase the level of basic Welsh language skills across the institution. It is also important that we are aware of the skill levels of all of our staff members to ensure that we optimise those skills.

The information was gathered via an online form, and the exercise was conducted on a service-by-service basis, with the Heads of Service distributing a link to the survey in the first instance. Both the service Co-ordinators and the Official Languages Team were available to offer advice and assistance during the review period, and to encourage colleagues to respond. Each service was granted a period of around a month to respond. The response was very positive, with 90 per cent of eligible staff providing details of their skills. The Official Languages Team has analysed the data and has provided detailed reports to all Heads of Service, so that they can use the information when reviewing their service area language plans. The information helps Heads of Service to understand the nature of the teams within their Services and contributes to their capacity and business continuity planning.

During the past year, all Heads of Service have reviewed and updated their Language plans in order to incorporate the information gleaned from the language skills survey. Each plan is distinct, reflecting the diverse nature and work of services. The plans also set out any arrangements that have been made between services in terms of the sharing and provision of bilingual capacity bilingual services.

In accordance with the targets set for the duration of this Scheme, our Bilingual Skills Strategy was reviewed this year. As part of the review, we considered how the progress and investment of our learners was recognised, the work of the Language Skills Team and the contribution of line managers. As the Language Skills Team had introduced and modified the learner contract system, and as feedback had been provided to line managers, we determined that no strategy was required for this element. Indeed, the targets specified within the Scheme are challenging in themselves. In conjunction with the ongoing work on capacity planning and the language plans of individual services, they provide a robust strategy for bilingual skills across the Senedd. In accordance with our commitment not to fall below the spirit of the Welsh Language Standards imposed upon their client institutions by the Welsh Language Commissioner, this issue was discussed with their officials.



## Theme 4: Proceedings

Work on ensuring that Members are able to prepare for, and participate in, proceedings in their language of choice has continued this year. Members receive their briefing papers in line with their language of choice and the interpretation service is available by default. Learners also receive bespoke support to help them prepare to make contributions during proceedings. Should the membership of a committee change, the integrated team in question will ensure that arrangements are made to support Members in their language of choice.

This year, the Senedd Commission carried out innovative work on bilingualism and the use of technology during the Covid-19 pandemic. At a time when Members were unable to attend the Senedd in person, urgent action was required to ensure that they were able to continue the vital work of scrutinising legislation and holding the Welsh Government to account. The ICT Staff conducted research into the technology that was available to conduct bilingual online meetings involving large numbers of people. A decision was made to use Zoom software. On 1 April 2020, the first virtual meeting of the “Emergency Senedd” was held in a fully bilingual format. The Senedd has attracted considerable national and international acclaim for its innovation, and we are now advising numerous public bodies and local authorities the conduct of virtual meetings using interpretation.



Llywydd Elin Jones MS chairs a Zoom meeting



## Case study – Collecting evidence from Children and Young People

As part of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into children's rights in Wales, the Committee provided a 'Meeting in a Box' resource for teachers, youth workers, and youth activity leaders to use to facilitate a workshop session about children's rights to gather the views of children and young people. This bilingual resource pack, available both digitally and in hardcopy, aimed to empower children and young people to share their views on children's rights. Facilitators were able to record these through a short survey to share with the Committee what was learnt, to inform the wider inquiry. The aim of the resource was to hear from as diverse a range of Welsh children as possible and ensure we weren't only speaking with groups already familiar with children's rights.

Language was an essential part of ensuring that we were able to engage with a diverse range of children. Providing a bilingual resource pack, and using people familiar with the children enabled them to discuss the subject in the appropriate language and at an appropriate level for the individual groups.

The lesson plan and accompanying resources sought to deliver the session for up to 35 young people within an hour timeframe and was adaptable to suit different groups of participants. The tool was designed to be used in the participants' setting and included activities for all levels of understanding of children's rights, the Committee's work and the National Assembly. The results of the survey were collated into a bilingual summary document and published to the Committee's inquiry webpage. The results were considered by Committee Members as part of the evidence gathering process. Many of the findings, and direct quotes from the children, young people and facilitators, were used in the Committee's report to help highlight their views about children's rights in Wales.





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


### Awareness

During the course of the year, events were held to promote the use of Welsh, including Shwmae – Su'mae Day, Welsh Music Day, St Dwynwen's Day and St David's Day. As part of Shwmae week this year, Radio Cymru chose to broadcast a week of programmes celebrating the contribution of learners. During the course of the week, the Deputy Presiding Officer, Ann Jones MS, was interviewed by Shan Cothi on the Bore Cothi programme on Radio Cymru. The interview provided an opportunity to discuss her journey as a learner and the work-based provision available to her at the Senedd. The Official Languages Team continually seeks opportunities to collaborate with other teams. This year, there was an opportunity to work with the *Mindful* network, which is the staff mental health network. A collaborative drinks coaster was produced for St David's Day, based on the "Time to Talk" campaign. The coaster encouraged people to do "the little things" to help their colleagues speak Welsh. Bilingual sentences were developed for staff to use with their colleagues, and these were published on the St David's Day mats. The campaign was well received.

### Dydd Gŵyl Dewi St David's Day

Ar Ddydd Gŵyl Dewi, beth am gael seibiant byr i sgwrsio â chydweithiwr? Yng ngeiriau Dewi Sant, "Gwnewch y pethau bychain..."

On St David's Day, why not take time to talk to a colleague. In the words of St David, "Do the little things..."




Sut wyt ti?  
—  
How are you?

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Hoffet ti sgwrs dros baned?  
—  
Would you like a coffee and a chat?

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Hoffet ti fynd am dro?  
—  
Would you like to go for a walk?


**Dysgwyr**

**MINDFUL**

YTImSgiliaulaith@cynulliad.cymru | Mindful@assembly.wales

Work is ongoing to ensure that all new staff members (whether Senedd Commission staff or Member support staff) receive information about our bilingual ethos, the services that are provided, and what is expected of them. A member of the Official Languages Team joins a member of the Language Skills Team in providing an induction session for newcomers. This session includes information about the Scheme, our bilingual ethos, and a taster lesson provided by a tutor. Following the appointment of a new Director of Communications and Engagement, we have also started the process of updating and re-recording the language-awareness video shown to new Senedd Commission staff – this video will be launched imminently.

## Technology

This year, the Senedd Commission participated in Mozilla's *Common Voice* scheme, which aims to teach machines about people's speech patterns. This online platform crowdsources recordings of people speaking in different languages, including Welsh. The intention is to turn the recordings into a source for developing Welsh voice-to-text technology. During the course of the year, the Senedd Commission held several events with the aim of gathering recordings and encouraging people to engage with the project on an ongoing basis. A special awareness-raising day was during which Members, support staff and Commission Staff, including the Llywydd and the Chief Executive, made vocal contributions to the project. We are monitoring developments in the area of voice-to-text technology and the latest advances in the theory and application of the technology. We will maintain our relationship with Microsoft to ensure that we remain in the vanguard in this area.

As part of the Senedd Commission's new engagement strategy, several members of the Translation and Reporting Service, in conjunction with the Communications service have received training in subtitling skills. and software options are being explored., this will enhance the ability of these teams to produce high-quality short video clips in a timely manner.





## Case study – Bank of terms, stock phrases and email templates

The Parliamentary Venues and Visitor Services team deal with many similar e-mail enquiries on a daily basis. In accordance with the service language plan, the language skills across the team vary, and not all members of the team are confident in drafting Welsh or bilingual responses to e-mails without support. The team felt that it would be possible to use the language skills of the fluent Welsh speakers to support less confident colleagues. Therefore, a bank of terms, stock phrases and email templates to cover common communications with customers was developed in order to enable all members of the team to work quickly and effectively.

Customers receive a response to their enquiries in their language of choice through a combination of individual team members' language skills, technology and the terminology and sentence bank. The system also means that one member of the team can deal with an enquiry from beginning to end without the need to transfer to a colleague. This in turn provides a better service to the customer.

## Monitoring and Compliance

Any complaints or cases of non-compliance with the requirements of the Scheme are recorded by the Official Languages Team. Complaints regarding provision can be made via the complaints procedure or by contacting the Manager of the Official Languages Scheme directly. Members or their support staff can contact their Contact Buddies to provide feedback on our bilingual services. The Official Languages Co-ordinators are responsible for identifying and dealing with any breaches of the Scheme in the first instance, with the support of the Official Languages Team as required. Any actions taken, along with any lessons learned, are recorded so that they can be shared in this annual report.

On occasion during the year, we have failed to meet the high standards that we have set or failed to meet the expectations of those who have come into contact with us. A number of complaints were received this year, most of which were dealt with through the informal process, without the need to resort to consideration under the formal complaints process. Details of the complaints received are included below:

### Information on our website

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As was the case last year, some complaints were received about Welsh links that led the reader to English documents, or links that were broken. Each time this happens, we revisit our processes in order to incorporate more detailed pre-publication checks. The problem is discussed with the relevant teams, with the emphasis placed on the need to check that documents are accurate in both languages at all times. Training or assistance is offered as required.

### Telephone calls

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One complaint was received regarding the lack of Welsh speakers available to deal with a telephone call this year. Discussion with the team in question revealed that the usual officials were unavailable to deal with the specific call

as a result of a staffing issue. Arrangements have now been made to ensure that a Welsh speaker is always available to respond.

#### Regulations relating to the National Health Service

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One complaint was received about the fact that the Welsh Government had laid an English-only Explanatory Memorandum of regulations relating to the Welsh Language Standards. This issue was also raised in an Oral Question to the Commission. Our expectations in terms of compliance with the statutory requirements in the Welsh Language Standards, the Official Languages Scheme and the Standing Orders have been restated. It was noted, however, that the complainant had also submitted a complaint to the Welsh Government, and that the response to that complaint would clarify the reasons why a bilingual version had not been made available.

#### Issues relating to Members

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This year, for the first time, we received some complaints from members of the public relating to Members' failure to comply with the requirements of the Official Languages Scheme. In our response we noted that the Scheme does not cover how Members communicate with their constituent. However, any materials funded by the Commission or Remuneration Board must be produced bilingually. We also provided details of the support available to help Members communicate with their constituents in the language of their choice.

## Complaints received

Nature of the complaint	Response/Solution
Link to the Annual Report on the Official Languages Scheme on the Documents Laid list broken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fix the link and inform complainant;</li> <li>Check that all other links to the report work.</li> </ul>
Welsh versions of templates and documents for the new Performance and Development Review system not available at the same time as the English versions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upload Welsh versions;</li> <li>Inform complainant;</li> <li>Review the publication processes to avoid the same thing happening again.</li> </ul>
A member of the public unhappy with the support available for Members of the Senedd to respond to correspondence in the Language of choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss with the individual and explain the support available to Members;</li> <li>Explain to the individual that the scheme does not refer to Members' correspondence with their constituents;</li> <li>Contact the Member's team to confirm that they are aware of the support available for bilingual working.</li> </ul>
No bilingual staff member available to respond in Welsh to a telephone call.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the matter with the relevant team;</li> <li>Confirm the arrangements for responding to telephone calls from Welsh speaking callers;</li> <li>Ensure that the team is aware of the Process for dealing with telephone calls in Welsh.</li> </ul>
English documents appearing on the Welsh website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct the error and publish the Welsh version of the documents;</li> <li>Emphasise the need to check links when publishing to the website with the appropriate teams.</li> </ul>