



**PWYLLGOR DIWYLLIANT, POBL A DATBLYGU SEFYDLIADOL  
PEOPLE, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

<b>DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:</b>	19 May 2026
<b>TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	Adroddiad Blynyddol y Gymraeg / Welsh Language Annual Report
<b>CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:</b>	Alwena Hughes Moakes, Director of Communications & Engagement
<b>SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Enfys Williams, Welsh Language Services Manager

<b>Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas) Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)</b>
Ar Gyfer Penderfyniad/For Decision

**ADRODDIAD SCAA  
SBAR REPORT**

**Sefyllfa / Situation**

The Welsh Government is committed to strengthening the provision of Welsh language services to the people of Wales.

Part of how the Welsh Government achieves its commitment is by upholding public sector organisations in Wales to a set of Welsh Language Standards.

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB) received its Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 on 30 November 2018. The compliance notice states the standards within the Welsh Language Standards (No. 7) 2018 Regulations that the Health Board must comply with and by when.

This paper focuses on Standard 120 in particular, the requirement to produce an annual report on how the organisation is progressing towards achieving compliance with the Standards.

The Health Board is also required to report its progress against the Welsh Government’s Strategic Framework for Welsh Language, Mwy na Geiriau / More than just words.

Recognising the need for annual reporting, including against Hywel Dda’s own Welsh language ambitions, this year’s report combines all three reporting requirements into a consolidated paper.

**Cefndir / Background**

The Welsh Language Standards are a set of statutory requirements relevant to public bodies, including Health Boards. They identify Hywel Dda’s responsibility to operate and provide excellent bilingual services. Under the Standards, Welsh should not be treated less favourably than English.

The Standards outline how everyone who works at the Health Board has a shared responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Standards and line managers are responsible

for the compliance of their teams. They protect the rights of all individuals - staff as well as patients and our communities.

The Standards enables an environment where working through the medium of Welsh becomes the norm, and that the language is given equal status to English. It ensures that our Welsh speaking population can access services in their language of choice. The Standards form part of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, launched in July 2017, that defines the Welsh Government's long-term vision to reach a target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. To fulfil this vision, the strategy aims to increase the use of the Welsh language and create favourable conditions for the language within all aspects of public life, which in turn will lead to an increase in the overall number of Welsh speakers.

Forming part of the overall Compliance Notice, the Welsh Language Commissioner imposed specific Record Keeping Standards and Standards that deal with Supplementary Matters, one of which being the production of a Welsh Language Annual Report.

The Standard reads as follows:

*Standard 120 – Standards which deal with Supplementary Matters*

*(1) You must produce a report (an “annual report”), in Welsh, in relation to each financial year, which deals with the way in which you have complied with the standards with which you were under a duty to comply during that year.*

*(2) The annual report must include the following information (where relevant, to the extent you are under a duty to comply with the standards referred to):*

*(a) the number of complaints that you received during the year in question which related to compliance with the standards with which you were under a duty to comply (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 115);*

*(b) the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 116);*

*(c) the number (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 117) of new and vacant posts that you advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where— (i) Welsh language skills were essential; (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post; (iii) Welsh language skills were desirable; or (iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary.*

*(3) You must publish the annual report no later than 6 months following the end of the financial year to which the report relates.*

*(4) You must ensure that a current copy of your annual report is available on your website.*

### **Mwy na Geiriau / More than just words**

The Mwy na Geiriau / More than just words plan 2022-27 was launched by the Minister for Health and Social Services at the National Eisteddfod in August 2022. The ambitious five-year plan was developed by an expert group, following an independent evaluation of the first Mwy na Geiriau / More than just words five-year plan. Research showed that, for many Welsh speakers, being able to access services in their own language made a significant positive difference to their overall experience and, in many cases, their health and well-being outcomes.

It also demonstrated that people often found it difficult to access the services they need and were reluctant to ask when Welsh language services were not offered. At the core of the strategy is the principle of the Active Offer, which places a responsibility on health and social care providers to offer services in Welsh, rather than on the patient or service user to have to request them.

The Health Board's own Welsh Language and Culture Discovery process was completed and presented in June 2024. The forward-looking plan was developed within the Health Board following engagement with staff, our population and various stakeholders.

### Asesiad / Assessment

The Welsh Language Annual Report 2025/26 provides an insight into how the Health Board has implemented and promoted the Welsh Language Standards, implemented the actions within Mwy na Geiriau / More than just words. It also contains information on how the Health Board is delivering against its own ambitions, following the development of the Discovery report in 2024.

The report also contains details of the various projects and opportunities presented in order to enhance Welsh language provision across the Health Board, to offer assurance that the Health Board is making steps towards compliance and the vision moving forward into the new reporting year.

The report describes the steps taken to comply with the following group of Standards:

- **Service Delivery Standards;** how we deal with correspondence, telephone calls, meetings, events and external communication channels.
- **Policy Making Standards;** indicate what standards should be considered in policy development and ensure that we give full consideration to how developing and / or implementing specific policies will affect the availability and accessibility of Welsh-medium services.
- **Operational Standards;** how we operate internally including working bilingually, the Welsh language service that you can expect to get in the organisation and advice on compliance.

As per the requirements of Standard 120, the report also includes information and statistics covering the number of complaints received, employee Welsh language skill recorded data, and categorised language skill criteria of new and vacant posts advertised over the past year.

### Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- **ENDORSE** the report as a reflection of the activity and progress made to enhance and embed the Welsh language and culture at Hywel Dda.

### **Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)**

#### **Objectives: (must be completed)**

Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	3.10 Seek assurances that there is the appropriate culture and arrangements to allow HDdUHB to discharge its statutory and mandatory responsibilities with regard to Welsh language provision (workforce & patient related).
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol:	n/a

Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	6. Person-Centred
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	1. Leadership 4. Learning, improvement and research
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	All Strategic Objectives are applicable
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	1 Workforce Stabilisation
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: <a href="#">Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022</a>	2. Develop a skilled and flexible workforce to meet the changing needs of the modern NHS

<b>Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:</b>	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	Welsh Language Standards (No. 7) Regulations 2018 Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
Rhestr Termau: Glossary of Terms:	Included within the body of the report
Partion / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Pobl a Datblygu Sefydliadol: Parties / Committees consulted prior to People, Organisational Development & Culture Committee:	Welsh Language & W&OD sub-group All Wales Welsh Language Officers

<b>Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)</b>	
<b>Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:</b>	HDdUHB staff time to support implementation of the Standards and in some instances to undertake internal training and translation costs. These costs are currently absolved within the Welsh Language Services Team budget and within directorates themselves.

<b>Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:</b>	Communication is at the heart of everything HDdUHB does, therefore treating service users and staff in the language of need is key to the organisation's culture and engagement. There is evidence that high employee engagement can deliver quality patient care.
<b>Gweithlu: Workforce:</b>	All staff have a role to play in implementing the statutory Welsh Language Standards.
<b>Risg: Risk:</b>	Compliance assessment will highlight risks which may apply to each Standard. However, these will be mitigated through a high level of awareness of the standards and a compliance assessment action plan which will be maintained as a 'live' document. This will reduce risks to the health board and provide a mechanism of addressing those risks on a priority basis.
<b>Cyfreithiol: Legal:</b>	Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 on 30 November 2018
<b>Enw Da: Reputational:</b>	HDdUHB has committed not only to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, but to embrace their spirit.
<b>Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Cydraddoldeb: Equality:</b>	The focus of language equality between the Welsh and English languages runs throughout the compliance notice.  HDdUHB's Equality Impact Assessment processes will ensure that compliance with the standards is assessed.



# Hywel Dda University Health Board Welsh Language Annual Report 2025/26



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Hywel Dda  
University Health Board

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## Vision for 2026/27

*Building on our Welsh language and Culture Discovery process and the passion within the Health Board, we will deliver a Welsh Language plan that supports our ambitions to enhance our Welsh language and culture across the health board and engages and inspires our staff, patients, and broader communities. We will work to support an increase in the number of Welsh speakers at all levels within the health board and seek to achieve the KPIs outlined within the Bilingual Skills policy, Cymraeg 2050, and More than Just Words while also striving to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.*

# 1. Introduction

This Welsh Language Annual Report focuses on the work undertaken by Hywel Dda University Health Board during 2025-26.

During this time, our health board has strived to achieve the delivery of its goals for developing and enhancing the Welsh Language. Despite continued service pressures across our health and care system, our staff continue to demonstrate their dedication and commitment to ensuring that our patients receive care in their language of choice, and that a bilingual service is provided wherever possible.

During the past year, the Executive Director and Independent Member responsible for developing the Welsh language, supported by the Welsh Language Services team, have led and secured further progress in evolving work internal to Hywel Dda, as well as building on partnerships with other organisations to promote the language across the health board's three counties. As champions for the Welsh language, the Executive Director and Independent Member are responsible for ensuring the Welsh language is given a prominent status and that the language and Welsh culture is interwoven throughout decision making processes at board level. Our Chief Executive Officer, Phil Kloer along with the Chair, Neil Wooding and other Executive Directors have demonstrated their commitment to develop their Welsh language skills and have enrolled onto the Welsh Language Confidence Building programme. By embracing the Welsh language, our leadership team is setting a clear example of promoting inclusivity, encouraging staff participation and reinforcing cultural awareness to the communities we serve.

On 1 April 2025, Rhodri Evans became the Board's Welsh language champion, providing support in promoting the language within the health board, encouraging colleagues to give it a go to use their Welsh every day, and providing valuable guidance and support to the Welsh Language Services team.

The People, Organisational, Development and Culture Committee (PODCC) receives regular updates regarding progress made against the Welsh Language Standards, and offers advice, monitoring, and calls for evidence of improvement made by individual departments within the health board.

The Standards have been a set agenda item for discussion for many teams across the health board, with the central team and managers regularly relaying key messages to staff about the importance of supporting the use of Welsh in our workplace. The Welsh Language Services team has continued to promote the Standards across the health board using various platforms such as Viva Engage and by creating new materials that are shared online and offline. Digitally accessible materials have continued to be utilised and are readily available for staff to access and share.

The All-Wales Welsh Language Officer Forum, led by Welsh Government, which includes representation from all health boards and trusts across Wales, has continued its role in supporting and developing a programme of promoting the Welsh language across the organisation. The health board is represented at this group by the Welsh Language Services Manager.

Welsh language awareness sessions have continued to be offered virtually, with occasional face-to-face sessions. The sessions include Welsh language awareness taster sessions for staff health board wide, which are highlighted during the health board's new starter corporate induction programme. These awareness sessions are an opportunity to advise and discuss the delivery of the Standards, and share information about the support available, to ensure all departments operate bilingually.

We have continued to support staff with their Welsh learning. We have further developed the programme for our Welsh learners to include new opportunities to use their Welsh, more aftercare support following the completion of a course, and the introduction of a new Health and Care Speaking Support Scheme.

The Speaking Support Scheme, known as Cynllun Siarad, is jointly offered by the National Centre for Learning Welsh and Swansea University with the aim of pairing health professionals who are learning Welsh with colleagues who are confident speakers. The aim of the scheme is to facilitate speaking practice in an informal and supportive environment. We're very pleased to be able to offer this support to our Welsh learners in Hywel Dda and look forward to seeing the progress made throughout the year to come. Being able to engage with staff meaningfully means we can make a real difference to embed and promote the Welsh Language across the organisation – building the confidence of our staff as Welsh speakers, learners, and supporters.

This year provided an exciting opportunity for members of the Welsh Language Services' team to be part of the health board's Enabling Quality Improvement in Practice (EQIIP) programme by joining a working group with the aim of improving communication for the waiting patient at Glangwili Emergency Department (A&E). Being part of the group offered valuable insight into system-wide challenges, while also empowering members to test innovative solutions, share best practice and drive measurable improvements. The experience not only strengthened teamwork but also reinforced and shared commitment to continuous improvement and delivering safer, more effective care for patients. It was refreshing to see the Welsh language embedded in all decision-making processes throughout the project.

The Welsh Language Services team has attended numerous conferences and public sector events during the past year such as the annual Primary Care Nursing Conference, careers events, and the Dyfodol Dwyieithog Annual Conference. The Welsh Language Services team also attended numerous conferences held by the Welsh Language Commissioner that included 'Technology and the Welsh Language', 'Empowering the Welsh Language through strong Governance', and the

'Use of Welsh in the Workplace' conference. These are great opportunities to engage with staff and stakeholders to promote the language and identify how individuals can support greater use of Welsh in our workplaces, services, and community.

There has been continued collaboration with colleagues in Workforce & Organisational Development to monitor progress with the implementation of the Standards and to discuss the implementation of the Bilingual Skills Policy. The Workforce & Organisational Development directorate has played a significant role in ensuring workforce related standards are implemented. They continue to update their own Welsh language Readiness Assessment Tool, to RAG score the Standards in terms of competency and delivery. This concept has been used and adapted whilst creating the newly improved Compliance Assessment Tool, which was introduced and adopted by all Directorates in November 2025 to measure compliance with the Standards. Work is ongoing with all directorates to address any failings and improve compliance. Welsh Language Services and WOD directorate continue to meet bi-monthly to monitor progress and discuss opportunities for improvement.

The continued collaboration with colleagues in Workforce & Organisational Development has enabled us to design and deliver Welsh language awareness sessions to the different teams within the Workforce team, helping colleagues better understand the importance of the Welsh language, its statutory duty, cultural context and their role in promoting its use.

Work continued to address areas of concern following the latest Mystery Shopper exercise. The Welsh Language Mystery Shopper scheme provides valuable insight into how consistently and effectively services are delivered through the medium of Welsh, as well as assessing overall compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Detailed feedback and a clear plan of action was provided following discussions with all services involved.

In December 2025, a Welsh Language Compliance Tool was distributed to all directorates to support a consistent and systematic approach to monitoring adherence to Welsh Language Standards. The tool was designed to enable services to self-assess performance against key compliance areas, identify risks or gaps, and capture examples of good practice. It also encouraged greater accountability at a local level by prompting directorates to consider how Welsh language requirements are embedded in day-to-day operations, planning, and service delivery. While not all directorates have completed the tool, work will continue with all areas to provide support and guidance to improve completion rates and strengthen overall compliance. The information gathered to date has provided a valuable baseline overview of organisational compliance, informed targeted follow-up from the Welsh Language Services team, and contributed to a more robust evidence base for reporting and continuous improvement.

Progress has been made over the past year in delivering the Safon 110 / Standard 110 Action Plan within the Speech and Language Therapy service, as outlined. The Safon 110 / Standard 110 Action Plan within Speech and Language Therapy has focused on strengthening the Welsh language skills of the workforce and ensuring consistent use of Welsh in documentation. Progress during the year has included targeted actions to support staff to develop and increase their confidence in using Welsh, alongside the introduction of structured audits of clinical documentation to assess compliance with the Standard. These measures have helped to identify gaps, inform tailored support and training, and promote continuous improvement. As a result, there is growing capacity within the service to provide care in Welsh, supporting patients' language needs and reinforcing the organisation's commitment to the Welsh Language Standards.

### **Looking forward to the year ahead**

Despite the operational challenges, during the past year we have continued to evolve the health board's activities to promote the Welsh language and our culture, both within the health board and our broader community. This provides a firm platform to continue our work for 2026-27. The self-assessment work that we carry out to assess where the organisation is against its legal requirements will continue throughout the year as we continue to try and maintain a bilingual service for our population.

### **Engaging with our community**

Recognising our role as a major employer and service provider in mid and West Wales, we continue to work with ARFOR (who support businesses in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion). Together with the health board's Future Workforce team, we attended careers events at four secondary schools across the counties to engage with children from years 7-12. Through conversations with pupils and teachers we were able to highlight the various opportunities that Hywel Dda offer to work through the medium of Welsh. Additionally, we advised that Hywel Dda encourages individuals to apply for roles through Welsh and are able to support individuals to hold interviews through Welsh.

We also attended a Gyrfa Cymru careers fair, again highlighting the different roles within the health board and the importance of using Welsh language skills in patient facing roles in particular.

The health board recently consulted with our communities on the Clinical Services Plan (CSP) with options for change in nine clinical healthcare services. The public consultation was an opportunity to engage with members of the public, partner organisations, and other stakeholders to provide feedback on proposed changes across these nine clinical healthcare services. As part of the Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIAs), the Welsh language was considered and included – these EqIAs will continue to be updated as part of the CSP implementation and mitigations will be identified as services evolve, to ensure that any service change has a minimal impact on service users and staff. The Welsh language, and how we protect and

promote service users' ability to use the Welsh language was a key theme received as part of the consultation – particularly in relation to changes that could impact stroke services. It was also a privilege to contribute and support our Welsh speaking community during the consultation events by ensuring people could share their views at events in their language of choice.

The Welsh Language team also played an integral part in the consultation process prior to the approval of the refreshed long-term strategy, 'A Healthier Mid and West Wales – Healthier Lives, Well Lived'. Shaped by engagement with nearly 3,000 people, including patients, carers, community groups, staff and partner organisations, the strategy reflects the feedback collected about what would help people to live healthier lives.

The Health Board also attended Pembrokeshire County Show. Events like this provide valuable opportunities to raise awareness of the Welsh Language Standards, promote our services, and engage directly with the public in Welsh and English. Our presence supports greater visibility of Welsh language provision within the organisation, encourage public feedback, and strengthen relationships with the communities we serve.

### **Establishing our calendar of activities**

Building on our calendar of events, we continued to promote Welsh celebrations including St David's Day, Diwrnod Shwmae, Welsh Music Day, and St Dwynwen's Day.

We continue to use various communication and marketing materials to support our colleagues to use their Welsh, including encouraging individuals who are new to Welsh to give it a go. For example, the use of audio clips, Welsh greeting infographics, and themed terminology for occasions such as Christmas, with the aim of enabling greater awareness of basic phrases and pronunciation.

This year the Welsh Language Commissioner's 'Defnyddia dy Gymraeg' (Use Your Welsh) two week campaign took place from 24 November – 5 December 2025; an initiative to encourage people to use the Welsh language in their day to day lives and to encourage people to use any Welsh that they have, whether they are fluent or not.

In celebration of the campaign, our Welsh Language Services held an information stand at each hospital site; a valuable opportunity to meet and engage with staff across the health board.

Staff had the opportunity to sign up to a learn Welsh course, to collect merchandise such as lanyards, badges and other useful learn Welsh materials, and most importantly an opportunity to practice their Welsh in a safe and supportive environment.

During the two week campaign particular emphasis was placed on the need to for staff to implement the active offer wherever possible. Welsh language services created information leaflets to raise awareness of the initiative and were at hand to discuss ideas and support staff to implement the active offer; to ensure that patients can receive their care in Welsh without having to ask for it. Inpatient board magnets, stickers and Cymraeg door hangers were distributed to aid staff.



A key focus of the campaign was on recruitment of staff, and in particular the need for more recruiting Managers to advertise Welsh Essential jobs. A short video was created to highlight the ease of the process from an appointing Manager's perspective with the aim of encouraging others to recruit Welsh speakers to their teams. View the video here: [Workforce.mp4](#)

In the video, Elena from the Future Workforce team talks of the ease of the process from advertising, to shortlisting and interviewing the abundance of Welsh speaking

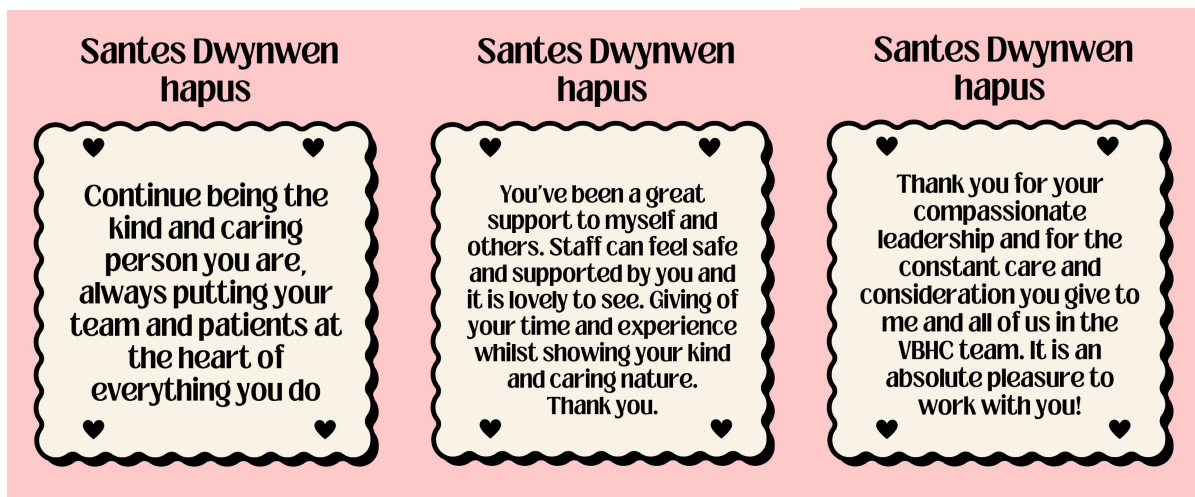
candidates. She also encourages others to consider bilingual skills and workforce planning in line with the Bilingual Skills Policy: -

1. Undertaking an audit of current skills.
2. Identifying current skills gap.
3. Developing a Welsh Language Skills Action Plan.

Our aim is to develop and cultivate our workforce to have a range of Welsh-medium skills.

We concluded the two week 'Use Your Welsh' campaign by celebrating our Welsh speaking Speech and Language Therapists. We're proud that almost 50% of our Speech and Language Therapists speak Welsh, helping us provide truly person-centred care across our health board. Our teams across the three counties collaborate every day, sharing skills and making sure Welsh speaking therapists are available where they're most needed. At our Cardigan Integrated Care Centre, eight out of nine therapists speak Welsh at level 3 and above, a statement to our commitment to offering care in the language that feels most natural to patients. An appreciative post was shared on the health board's social media platforms as well as Viva Engage.

To celebrate St Dwynwen's Day this year, we introduced a Kindness Award. This award was an opportunity to nominate a member of staff to thank them for their kindness or support. All nominated individuals received an electronic card as a token of appreciation. This was very much appreciated by staff, both recipients and nominators. This was shared within the health board, using Viva Engage as a platform for engaging with staff.



Following on from St Dwynwen's Day 2026 we celebrated Welsh Music Day and St David's Day. To celebrate Welsh Music Day we shared Welsh playlists with staff via the Viva Engage platform. Our hospital radio stations also broadcasted Welsh songs throughout the day for patients, staff and visitors at our main hospital sites. For St David's Day, staff were encouraged to 'do the little things' for our Welsh speaking

population again promoting the active offer and with specific emphasis on the use of iaith gwaith (Work Welsh) merchandise.

Staff were encouraged to wear their lanyards and badges and were reminded of the option to incorporate the orange Welsh logo on staff uniforms, especially when ordering new uniforms.



The overall aim of our programme of activities to celebrate events and campaigns is to raise awareness of the various opportunities available for staff within the workplace, to celebrate our history and culture, whilst also ensuring staff are aware of their obligation to ensure that a Welsh language service is available to our Welsh speaking population.

### **Collaborating with Primary Care and Community Services**

Collaboration between the health board's Welsh Language Services team and the Primary Care and Community Services Academy has continued. The teams continued to hold Welsh Language awareness sessions for both health board primary care teams and independent contractors. This year we introduced Welsh language awareness sessions to Optometry cluster groups that initiated valuable discussions in terms of Welsh language provision and how we can support the services.

The Academy was established in March 2023 to develop and support the health board's multi-professional primary and community services workforce to deliver the best outcomes for patients, through:

- Access to education and training opportunities, including inter-professional learning opportunities.
- Workforce planning, development and sustainability programmes.
- Placement opportunities and work aimed at growing the number and range of trainers, mentors and supervisors.
- 'New to Primary Care' programmes that help induct, support and retain staff.
- Resources to develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce, working with the Welsh Language Services team.

As part of the first phase of the Academy's development, they ran a training, education and learning needs survey in the autumn of 2023. The survey was open to everyone working in primary care and community services - clinical and non-clinical, administrative and management. One of the key themes from the survey was the need for Welsh language support. This included awareness of opportunities to learn Welsh and support to understand the legal obligations to enable compliance with Welsh legislation. As a result, supporting the delivery of primary care services through the medium of Welsh has continued to be one of our key priorities over the past year.

The Primary Care Academy, along with the support from the Welsh Language Services team, have developed a programme to support health board staff working in primary care and the primary care independent contractor workforce to use, develop or learn Welsh language skills.

As part of this programme, we have created resource packs with practical ideas and information about training and learning resources to support staff and the primary care independent contractor workforce to comply with statutory requirements in relation to delivering primary care services through the medium of Welsh. These packs are continuously updated to ensure that they are fit for purpose with all the latest information on the Welsh Language Standards and Duties and courses available to staff.

[Welsh Language Standards](#): a resource pack for Hywel Dda University Health Board staff to support the delivery of primary care services through the medium of Welsh, to support compliance with the Welsh Language Standards (available in Welsh and in English).

[Welsh Language Duties](#): a resource pack for primary care independent contractors to support the delivery of primary care services through the medium of Welsh, to support compliance with the Welsh Language Duties (available in Welsh and in English).

## **Standard 110**

In February 2025, a five-year plan on how the organisation is progressing towards achieving Standard 110 - the required standard in being able to offer clinical consultations through the medium of Welsh – was presented to PODCC. The plan

aims to ensure that patients feel more comfortable discussing their health matters in their language of need, improving communication and positive patient outcomes. Current practices may not fully accommodate Welsh speaking patients, and there may be a need for staff training and a review of current resources and procedures.

In discussion with teams that fall within the seven priority groups of the Welsh Government's Strategic Framework, *Mwy na Geiriau / More than just words*, the work has started within an individual service initially - Speech and Language Therapy services. The initial plan has been developed so that it may be transferred easily to other services, once piloted and tested. It is a working document and is subject to change during the five years.

The plan covers the following six areas of work:

- **Baseline assessment of the current situation**  
Baseline audit of staff Welsh language skills; forms, letters and patient information available bilingually
- **Training and development**  
Implement a comprehensive Welsh language training plan for staff at all levels to improve staff Welsh language skills focusing on communication skills essential for effective patient interactions at all levels.
- **Recruitment and retention**  
Increase the recruitment of Welsh speaking staff, with an emphasis on explaining the level of Welsh language skills required for each post.
- **Welsh language resources**  
Provide and/or develop Welsh language resources from language glossaries to assessments, in order to support staff to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.
- **Patient awareness and engagement**  
Raise awareness among Welsh speaking patients about their right to receive services through the medium of Welsh
- **Monitoring and evaluation**  
Establish mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the plan, ensuring that Welsh language services are being provided effectively and that patient satisfaction is regularly assessed.

## 2. Vision for 2026/27

The health board has a clear vision for the development of Welsh language and culture, that links to a number of the health board's priorities for 2025-26. We continue to focus on understanding the Welsh language and cultural needs and aspirations of our communities – of staff, patients, service providers, and supporters.

*Building on our Welsh language and Culture Discovery process and the passion within the Health Board, we strive to deliver a Welsh Language plan that supports our ambitions to enhance our Welsh language and culture across the health board and engages and inspires our staff, patients, and broader communities. We will work to support an increase in the number of Welsh speakers at all levels within the health board and seek to achieve the KPIs outlined within the Bilingual Skills policy, Cymraeg 2050, and Mwy na Geiriau / More than Just Words whilst also striving to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.*

We will continue to do this in conjunction with the service areas during the 2026/27 reporting year:

- Delivering the Welsh Language Standards across the organisation
- Planning the workforce through the implementation of the Bilingual Skills Policy and in light of 2021 Census data
- Continue to implement the Welsh Government's Strategic Framework, Mwy na Geiriau / More than Just Words, which was launched in the summer of 2022
- Continue to develop and strengthen Welsh Language services within Primary Care in accordance with its action plan and its Academy
- Continue to provide a comprehensive translation service to the whole organisation
- Continue to self-assess our delivery against the statutory Welsh Language Standards by implementing the recommendations within our mystery shopper exercise and work with leaders across our organisation to increase awareness of improvement opportunities
- Deliver and evolve the Safon 110 / Standard 110 plan for enabling clinical consultations through the medium of Welsh.
- Work collaboratively with the Welsh Language Commissioner to pilot a Welsh Language Use survey.

These initiatives draw on the priorities in our annual plan, providing assurance that the health board embraces its legislative requirements, and aims to go beyond statutory requirements in the delivery of bilingual services and enhancing and embracing Welsh culture.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the health board's Welsh language and culture goals will be met during the coming years. However, as the organisation deals with financial and operational pressures, it may be necessary to adjust these

priorities as the year progresses. Staff continue to demonstrate dedication and commitment to ensuring that our patients receive care in their language of choice and that a bilingual service is provided. We are confident that our commitment and focus on the Welsh language will provide a flourishing environment for Welsh language and culture at Hywel Dda University Health Board and look forward to sharing our progress next year.

### 3. Compliance with the Welsh language Standards

The following pages present further information on the health board's work grouped by the relevant Standard/s.

#### 3.1 Compliance with the Service Delivery Standards

- **Written correspondence** (Standards 1 – 7)
- **Telephone greetings** (Standards 8 – 20)
- **Meetings and events** (Standards 21 – 33)
- **Producing and publishing documents** (Standards 34 – 38)
- **Website, social media, apps** (Standards 39 – 46)
- **Signage** (Standards 47- 49)
- **Reception services** (Standards 50 – 53)
- **Contracts** (Standards 57 – 59)
- **Communications and corporate identity** (Standards 60 – 62)
- **Courses offered by the health board** (Standard 63)
- **Public address systems –** (Standard 64)
- **Primary Care** (Standards 65-68)

Several of the health board's guidelines have been reviewed and continue to be promoted widely to staff, utilising Viva Engage, social media, staff team meetings, face to face visits to acute and community sites and utilising our Welsh language champions in order to highlight the compliance requirements for the Standards. The guidance is available on the intranet so that all staff can access them readily. Managers are frequently informed of the guidance available and are asked to advise their teams to familiarise themselves with the information. All new members of staff are directed to the guidance during their induction to the health board.

The Guidelines include:

- protocol for answering the phone bilingually
- a guide for receptionists
- use of Welsh in correspondence
- arranging a meeting open to the public
- writing in Welsh – handy phrases
- templates – signs, forms etc
- rules for the use of social media
- translation service information
- arranging simultaneous translation
- how to access Welsh software packages such as 'Cysgliad'.



The health board has applied a consistent approach in relation to use of headed paper and email signatures and requires all staff to use the health board's bilingual headed paper. This ensures that there is a consistent, bilingual message on all letters. We have also actively encouraged all staff to include a banner on email signatures noting that the individual 'welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English'. This approach has been adopted by many across the health board, encouraging correspondence in the individual's language of choice.



We are pleased that all communication platforms such as social media, press releases, and website information are always prioritised and are available bilingually. All communication work continues to be of priority to ensure that the public and patients have access to information in both Welsh and English. All centrally coordinated signage and information leaflets are produced bilingually to the best of our knowledge.

During the past year, the health board's Hybrid Print and Post project has started to offer appointment letters for patients in an online portal. As part of this development, it enables patients to select how they would like to receive correspondence from the health board and to do so either in paper or digital format. This enables patients of certain services to select their preference and, if they choose to do so, receive all their correspondence in either Welsh or English.

The health board continues to promote its Welsh language services by displaying posters, using digital screens at hospital sites, and a banner displayed on the homepage of the intranet site signposting staff to information on the Standards. Numerous messages are shared on our internal social media pages for staff, particularly Viva Engage, highlighting how we need to comply with the standards and pointing to areas of further support available.

A quarterly email reminder is also sent, reaching over 12,000 staff, reminding everyone of the requirements of the Welsh language Standards. This is sometimes concentrated on a certain aspect of the Standards if a particular aspect requires greater attention, and it is felt that all staff need to be reminded of how we comply with the Welsh language Standards.

### **Promoting the Welsh language to our staff**

As part of the marketing approach to promote Welsh language services within the health board, the team has produced its own Give it a Go campaign. The campaign consists of a range of merchandise that shares useful phrases in Welsh – displayed on posters, pens, flash cards, table talkers, desk aids and flashcard keyrings. These act as means to encourage and support staff to try and use Welsh in a range of circumstances – with one another and with our patients.

The Welsh Language Services team have continued to promote and distribute the new lanyards for Welsh speakers and learners with many teams opting to use the new lanyards so that patients and other staff can recognise Welsh speakers.



The range of Give it a Go merchandise serves as a visible reminder to staff and patients to use their Welsh, so that staff can:

- Be aware of colleague's language choice.
- Enable patients to use their language of comfort from the first point of contact.

### **Demand on translation services**

There has been an increase of 22% in the total number of words submitted for translation in 2025-26 as compared to the previous reporting period. The growth reflects a continued organisational commitment to bilingual communication, as well as heightened awareness of statutory Welsh language requirements across departments. The team responded proactively to this increased demand by prioritising workloads accordingly. We continued to outsource some larger pieces of work to keep up with the demand for translation.

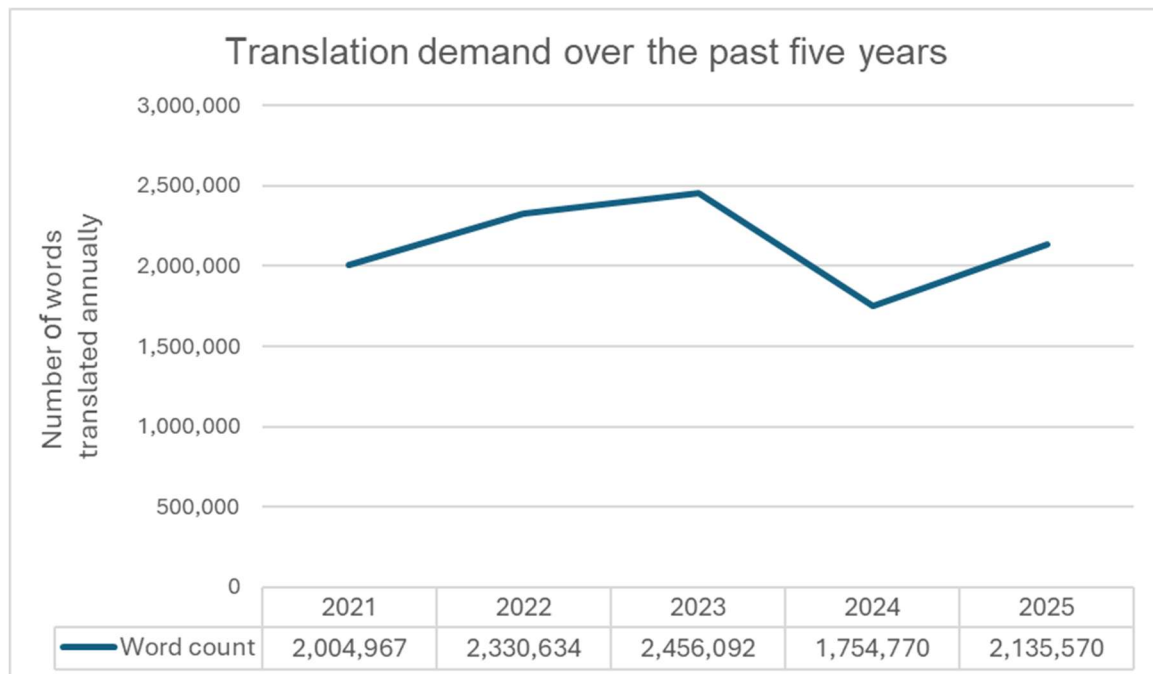
Consultation activities such as Llanelli Minor Injuries Unit and the Clinical Services Plan, where a number of public documents are produced, has increased the volume of translation work submitted to our internal translation team over the past year. The health board's Hybrid Print and Post project has also been a significant piece of work for the translation team – the introduction of revised patient appointment letters in an online portal. The new system enables patients to select how they would like to receive correspondence from the health board and to do so either in paper or digital format. This enables patients of certain services to select their language preference and, if they choose to do so, receive all their correspondence in either Welsh or English. Translation work is ongoing as the online portal develops and letter templates are adjusted.

The demand for simultaneous translators has also increased over the past year. The Welsh Language Services team is responsible for sourcing a simultaneous translator for services across the health board when required. Simultaneous translation has been used for the health board's Public Board meetings, numerous job interviews, consultation events, and clinical consultations. This upward trend highlights both the expanding use of the Welsh language within the organisation and the importance of sustained investment in language services to support future needs.

The Welsh Language Services team has worked with specific departments in previous years to audit their current files leading to a surge in translation as departments work to catch up on ensuring materials are produced bilingually. Following a recent complaint and further investigation into Welsh language compliance, one of our main focuses in terms of translation for the year ahead will be to work with the health board's Radiology service to translate their many patient letters and accompanying literature.

A quarterly message is posted on Viva Engage for health board staff as a reminder that a translation service is available and that all material is to be produced bilingually. The translation service is also promoted in the Welsh language Taster

sessions and there's an apparent influx of work received by the translation service team following the sessions. The intention for 2026-2027 is to further our auditing projects and work with other departments across the health board to ensure literature such as patient letters are all available in Welsh.



As part of the ongoing work with the Primary Care and Community Services Academy, we've seen a significant increase in the number of Primary Care providers, GP surgeries in particular, who use the Translation Service to translate signs, notices, and websites. Primary Care providers have access to the Welsh Language Services order form and are encouraged by the Primary Care Academy to request learning materials and Give it a Go merchandise. Numerous GP surgeries have requested laith Gwaith merchandise such as lanyards and badges for their teams – these are provided by our Welsh Language Services team.

During the past year, meetings and events have continued to take place virtually via MS Teams. Guidance on how to conduct bilingual meetings, the requirements of the Standards, and handy meeting phrase sheets are readily available on the health board's intranet site for all staff to access.

The new mandatory All Wales Welsh Language Awareness competency has been assigned to all health board staff, and an e-learning module is available to complete. The course is accessible via the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) and is mandatory for all NHS staff (including staff who have limited or no direct contact with patients / service users). The course will need to be retaken every three years. The training aims to improve awareness of bilingual services, as a need as well as a legal requirement, and shares the experience of patients and why it matters to them.

We're proud to report that 87% of health board staff have completed this ESR module to date. We continue to promote and remind managers to use this module as an informative tool in terms of Welsh language requirements for all staff – not only is it a mandatory module but also valuable for language awareness purposes within teams.

We want to ensure that our staff are supported to offer services in Welsh, and a crucial element to that is building the necessary knowledge and awareness of why we need to do so and how staff can be supported. Our Health Board is committed to supporting our staff to use Welsh and we are proud of the progress we've made so far in building a bilingual organisation, of which this brief training continues to be a big part.

### 3.2 Compliance with the Policy Making Standards (Standards 69-78)

All new policies and initiatives produced by the health board are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, which includes a language impact assessment. This is an opportunity for specific assessment of the Welsh language, where the policy would influence the use of the Welsh language as part of the organisation's service delivery. The Welsh language is embedded in the decision-making processes and is considered in all our work.

The health board's Written Control Document on Policy, as well as the Equality Impact Assessment form were reviewed in June 2021. More criteria relating to the Welsh language have been included with a view to ensuring that the Welsh language is implicit in all decision-making processes and policy amendments.

### 3.3 Compliance with the Operational Standards (Standards 79-114)

- **Internal Administration** (Standards 79 – 82)
- **Complaints (Standards 83 – 85)**
- **Disciplinary Cases** (Standards 86 – 88)
- **Information Technology and the Corporate Staff App** (Standards 89 – 95)
- **Developing Welsh language skills** (Standards 96 – 105)
- **Recruiting and appointing** (Standards 106 – 109)
- **Clinical Consultations** (Standards 110-110A)
- **Signage and notices in the workplace** (Standards 111 – 113)

#### Internal use

Designated pages on the health board's intranet site provide guidance and support on how staff can use the Welsh language for internal communications within the health board. In addition to providing information about the Welsh Language Services team, translation support, and Welsh language Standards, the information

encourages staff to learn how the health board supports them to use Welsh in their working lives.

During 2025/26, the health board has continued to actively promote the online resources that help our staff to make greater use of the Welsh language at work. Following a shift to more digital working, our Welsh Language Services Team has produced various information sheets, handy phrase sheets and further developed the 'learn Welsh' pages on the health board's intranet site. The Welsh language spell-check package, Cysgliad, is available on all laptops and PCs and staff are encouraged to make use of this tool wherever possible. Staff are also encouraged to utilise the useful functions within Microsoft such as spell-check and the translate function within Microsoft Word. Our Welsh Language Services team encourage Welsh speakers and learners to attempt their translations and are on hand to proofread content when required.

A number of templates, which help staff in many areas including responding to Welsh medium e-mail queries, keeping bilingual records, and organising bilingual meetings, are also popular. We hope that these will encourage staff to try to produce their own bilingual emails instead of immediately sending an email for translation. These resources have been promoted in newsletters for staff and on the Global staff emails and Viva Engage, but there are further opportunities to ensure wider engagement and use.

All documentation relating to staff employment, as well as documentation such as performance objectives and career plan documents, are available bilingually. All Wales policies such as Behaviour in the Workplace, Absence from Work, and Health and Well-being at Work are available in both Welsh and English and are published online. As a result of the internal campaigns by Welsh Language Services, staff have an increased awareness of their rights to receive Welsh language services, such as complaints procedures, documentation or meetings relating to disciplinary procedures, and any general correspondence. Complaint procedures have also been adapted; the policies for Raising Concerns, Dignity at Work, Grievance and Disciplinary now have provision within the Policy for staff to be informed of their rights to make a complaint in Welsh or respond to a complaint made about them in Welsh. During the recruitment process, individuals are actively offered their interview in their language of choice and arrangements are made accordingly. On occasions where Welsh speaking recruiting managers are not available, simultaneous translation is organised as an alternative method.

All documents are reviewed annually to ensure that they are up to date and relevant.

### **Increasing the Welsh language skills of our staff**

All staff language skills are recorded on ESR (Electronic Staff Record). Staff are asked to discuss Welsh language learning opportunities during their annual Performance Appraisal Development Review (PADR) meetings, and this is noted on their employee record. If a wish, or need, to learn or improve an individual's Welsh

skills is noted on their PADR, the Welsh Language Services team support and identify a suitable course for the individual. Welsh language courses are advertised widely across the health board and places on courses are prioritised for patient facing staff. All courses are advertised on the newly developed Learn Welsh page on the intranet, staff Facebook page and on the Viva Engage platform. The latest information from the language skills audit is available on page 26.

Online learning has proven to be a popular means of learning with health board staff as it gives staff greater flexibility, especially while not needing to leave the workplace to attend a class. All courses offered by the National Centre for Learning Welsh as part of the Work Welsh programme are offered online, meaning that our staff are more likely to be able to join depending on their workplace circumstances. Collective feedback has indicated that the majority of staff prefer online virtual learning as this option tends to be more flexible allowing the staff to stay on site and attend more flexibly during their busy work schedules. We intend to continue with this method of learning for the foreseeable.

We continue to work closely with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to provide a programme of opportunities to learn Welsh as part of the Health and Social Care Learn Welsh scheme. One of which is continuing to offer Confidence Building Courses to our staff. The Confidence Building Officer, continues to work as part of this scheme by the National Centre for Learning Welsh, and provides a series of short confidence building courses for staff. The aim of the scheme is to assist employers to upskill the workforce to use more Welsh at work.

The full-time Confidence Building Officer is employed by one of the Learn Welsh providers, Aberystwyth University, and has been working with us for the past three years. The scheme offers short confidence building courses and 1:1 sessions working with individuals to build confidence to increase their use of the Welsh language.

The purpose of the confidence building courses is to change linguistic habits and improve confidence, so that staff are more likely to use their Welsh to communicate with others and complete tasks in the workplace through the medium of Welsh. These courses offer a unique opportunity to practise all elements of the Welsh language – speaking, reading, listening, and writing, but with particular emphasis on developing confidence to speak the language.

We are extremely pleased to be able to report back on the successes of the past year. The confidence building courses have been popular among health board staff with attendance from many areas such as nursing, estates, mental health, children's services, administrative roles and many more. Increasing the Welsh language skills of the workforce is a priority for the health board, and therefore seeing so many staff eager to commit to these types of sessions is a very positive step in order to improve the patient experience.

We're very proud to announce our two Welsh Learners of the year of 2025-26, Graham and Liam – both having attended the Welsh Confidence Building programme with the tutor.

Liam Williams, Senior Public Health Practitioner, has been attending Welsh Confidence Building group sessions with our experienced tutor, Richard, for just over a year. Liam has also accessed various self-study courses, uses the Duolingo app and the Say Something in Welsh platform to assist with his learning. Liam begun his learn Welsh journey at Entry level and is now already at an intermediate conversational level.

Graham Boswell, Consultant Physician, has been attending the Welsh Confidence Building courses with the tutor, Richard, and is now speaking Welsh at intermediate level. Thanks to his dedication to learning the language, and even attending additional revision sessions, Graham is now communicating with his patients through the medium of Welsh, as well as his colleagues and family at home, in particular his grandchildren.

	<p><b>LIAM WILLIAMS</b> Senior Public Health Practitioner</p>		<p><b>GRAHAM BOSWELL</b> Consultant Physician</p>
<p>"It's been great to speak Welsh again, having forgotten it from school. Before starting with Richard I could only manage simple phrases, by now I'm able to speak to others in Welsh, with a bit of 'Wenglish!'."</p>		<p>"As a learner the course has given me confidence to use the Welsh language in a clinical environment. It's great to see how much patients appreciate my efforts. A big thank you to my tutor for supporting me on my learning journey. The opportunity to practice Welsh one-to-one is fantastic."</p>	

Both Liam and Graham have found the Confidence Building sessions extremely useful and being able to chat and practice their Welsh with other learners has helped them with their Welsh learning.

Further to this year's success with the programme, we're pleased to announce that further funding has been secured and that the tutor will be continuing his work with the health board for a further 12 months during 2026-27. The series of Confidence Building courses will again be open to all health board staff as well as targeted groups of staff such as Physiotherapists, Speech and Language workers and

Apprentices; staff who have direct contact with patients. More information can be found on page 27.

The collaboration between the Welsh Language Services team and the Learning and Development department has continued over the past year to provide online Welsh language taster sessions for staff. Over the past year, the team have held monthly one-hour online sessions that include a short Welsh language awareness session, patient focused case studies, video clips, information on learn Welsh courses and mainly an opportunity for staff to practise useful terminology and greetings. The sessions are advertised health board wide and are booked via the ESR system. The sessions are available to new and existing staff. Over the past year, 39 members of staff have attended the sessions, staff from various departments health board wide; Emergency Department staff, consultants, primary care workers, mental health workers, administrative staff and many more.

Welsh language awareness training sessions continue to be offered virtually over MS Teams and departmental managers are encouraged to organise a session for their staff. Welsh language awareness sessions are advertised via Viva Engage; however, the take up is limited due to service pressures. New staff continue to be encouraged by their line managers to contact Welsh Language Services for advice and support in their new roles. Iaith Gwaith lanyards and badges are given to Welsh speaking staff, and learner lanyards and badges are given to staff who are actively learning. Over the past year, we've organised Welsh language awareness sessions for teams such as Workforce & OD, Drug & Alcohol Misuse team, Emergency Department staff, Physiotherapy, and many more. Plans are underway for the year ahead to review the process in which we deliver the awareness sessions, looking at other methods such as the use of video to maximise opportunities and reach as many staff as possible.

The Welsh Language Services team have also secured a regular place on the Community Induction Programme for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire – an induction programme for health care support workers and carers in the community. This again involves a Welsh Language Awareness session and an opportunity to highlight the importance of patient language choice.

A great deal of work continues to be carried out by the Workforce team in supporting the recruitment of new employees. Recruitment managers are advised to assess the need for Welsh language skills and categorise accordingly. New guidelines and a clear process has been shared with all recruitment managers to ensure the Welsh language is considered throughout the recruitment process. All new posts are advertised bilingually, and applicants can state their language preference on application forms.

Standard 107a(ch) continues to be an area of focus for our Workforce team. This Standard refers to the translation of all job descriptions for advertising new and existing posts. Some progress has been made to assess priority job descriptions

where greatest impact can be had. The health board is striving for full compliance with this Standard and has a work plan in place that demonstrates how it will achieve full compliance in the future. In the meantime, assessing priority job descriptions for translation has been a focus area, with the following actions being progressed and prioritised:

- Posts that are deemed Welsh essential are translated and advertised in Welsh.
- Posts that have the most frequent contact with patients/service users.
- Those where services are delivered locally and in our communities.
- Posts that tend to be the most frequently advertised e.g., Band 5 Staff Nurse, Health Care Support Worker (Band 2, 3 and 4), Community Nurse, Nurse Manager (Band 6 and 7), Receptionist and Porter.
- 166 job descriptions are available in the NHS Wales Collaborative Library (approved for sharing across Wales) and 53 generic job descriptions are agreed and already translated. These 53 job descriptions are core job descriptions as identified within the health board.

### 3.4 Record Keeping Standards (115-117)

- **Complaints** (Standard 115)
- **Record of employee Welsh language Skills** (Standard 116)
- **Record of the new or vacant posts which were categorised** (Standard 117)

#### Complaints received during 2023/24

(Standard 115) *You must keep a record, in relation to each financial year, of the number of complaints received relating to your compliance with Standards.*

All complaints received during the reporting period were dealt with in accordance with the health board's Complaints Procedure.

Four Welsh language service complaints were received by the health board during 2025/26, 3 came directly from the Welsh Language Commissioner's office.

**Complaint 1:** A complaint was received from an individual who had been through an interview process within the Health Board. The website was not displaying jobs through the medium of Welsh, and she had to contact the board to request the job advertisement in Welsh. The information did not reach the complainant until the closing date, so she applied in Welsh using the English version.

The complainant asked for the interview to be conducted through the medium of Welsh. Prior to the interview, the panel contacted her to confirm that she wished to have the interview in Welsh. On 30 September 2025, the date of the interview, the questions were not asked in Welsh. Instead, the complainant was asked to read the questions from a piece of paper, after the panel asked the interpreter at the time

whether they would be willing to ask the questions on the panel's behalf. The complainant alleges that she was not given the same opportunity as other candidates who did not have to read the questions themselves.

This complaint is now being investigated by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

**Complaint 2:** Complaint from a member of the public on 9 February 2026 about the fact that he received an English only appointment letter from Bronglais Hospital's Radiology Department.

This complaint is now being investigated by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

**Complaint 3:** Issues relating to the lack of Welsh-language provision at Wityhush Hospital, Haverfordwest, on 5 March 2026.

The complainant notes the following:

1. General Office – There was no Welsh-language information available. Several A4 posters printed in English only had been taped to the glass and the counter, without a single word of Welsh. These posters contained general information such as further details, phone numbers and instructions.
2. The complainant was not greeted with “bore da” by the member of staff, Natasha Jones.
3. HC5WT form (travel cost reimbursement claim form) – The form provided was English-only. When the complainant asked for a Welsh copy, the member of staff searched extensively under the counter but none were available, strongly suggesting that they had no supply. After the complainant insisted on receiving a Welsh copy, the member of staff spent around 10 minutes on the computer, making calls and searching for one, only to state again that no copy was available to print. A few hours later, the complainant received a copy by email.
4. When the complainant pointed out that this breached the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, the member of staff appeared indifferent, which further added to the complainant's disappointment.

The Health Board has provided a response to the Welsh Language Commissioner, and we are awaiting their findings.

**Complaint 4:** From a patient about the fact that he received an English-only letter inviting him to an appointment at the Audiology Department at Prince Philip Hospital. I have attached a copy of the letter for your attention.

Following an investigation by the Audiology Department, it seems that this was a basic human error involving how the letters are printed. Staff have been reminded of the process and need of printing letters bilingually. At the time of writing this report, we are awaiting a response from the Welsh Language Commissioner.

## Update on a complaint received during 2024/25

The Welsh Language Commissioner decided to open an investigation into Hywel Dda University Health Board's compliance with the Welsh language Standards, specifically standards 9 and 10 relating to telephone calls. Despite their efforts to highlight the issues and provide opportunities for improvement, there was evidence that there had been no clear improvement in compliance with the telephone standards. As a result of this, the Health Board produced an action plan that was implemented during 2025. Highlights of actions taken included:

- all calls are greeted in Welsh and that staff can handle initial conversations in Welsh
- protocols were developed for transferring calls to Welsh-speaking staff when necessary
- ongoing Welsh language training is provided to staff to improve their ability to handle calls in Welsh

### 3.5 Welsh Language Skills Audit

*(Standard 116) You must keep a record (following assessments of your employees' Welsh language skills made in accordance with standard 96), of the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of each financial year and, where you have that information, you must keep a record of the skill level of those employees.*

The language skills of health board staff are captured and recorded on the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system. As of March 31, 2026, 98% of staff have recorded their Welsh language skills as can be seen in the table below.

The Welsh language skills questionnaire form continues to be used to capture the data required and is available for download via the intranet. Staff language skill data is also discussed with managers at performance review meetings. Staff language data is also now transferred from NHS Jobs to ESR on appointment to post.

The breakdown of Welsh Language recording as of 31 March 2025 was:

Welsh skill level	Number of employees	%
0 - No Skills / Dim Sgiliau	5,195	41%
1 - Entry/ Mynediad	2,737	22%
2 - Foundation / Sylfaen	1,107	9%
3 - Intermediate / Canolradd	914	7%
4 - Higher / Uwch	922	7%
5 - Proficiency / Hyfedredd	1,400	11%
Not yet recorded on ESR	251	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,526</b>	<b>100%</b>

The areas of improvement, and steps we intend to take during the coming months to improve the recording and development of Welsh language skills include:

1. Encouraging staff and managers to review ESR levels where improvement in language ability has been made.
2. Further encouraging those on level 0 to move to level 1. We aim to encourage more staff to complete the 10-hour online taster courses
3. Implementing our strategy to encourage those on level 1 to move to level 2. This is in line with our Bilingual Skills Policy; a commitment to get to 50% at level foundation in 10 years.
4. Reviewing Bilingual Skills policy targets in light of the 2021 Census data

### 3.6 Recruitment

*(Standard 117) You must keep a record, in relation to each financial year, of the number of new and vacant posts which were categorised (in accordance with standard 106) as posts where— (a) Welsh language skills are essential; (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post; (c) Welsh language skills are desirable; or (ch) Welsh language skills are not necessary*

The number of new and vacant posts over the past year are as follows:

	Level of Welsh required for each post				Total number of new / vacant posts
	Welsh essential	Welsh desirable	Welsh needs to be learnt	Welsh not necessary	
Hywel Dda UHB	32	2,069	0	322	2,423

Of the 2423 posts advertised, 2616 posts were offered and 499 individuals appointed to these posts hold Welsh language skill levels 3 to 5.

The Workforce & Organisational Development Team has added a Welsh language skills requirements assessment to the recruiting process. This assists managers to determine whether posts should be advertised as Welsh Essential or Welsh Desirable. The tool ensures that managers follow a set formula that considers the language needs of the population and the current skill mix, and skill gap, within the team. This allows services to recruit individuals with the required level of Welsh language ability to ensure a comprehensive Welsh language service is available. A Top 10 Tips animation continues to be used widely to support recruiting managers in understanding their responsibilities in delivering the aims of the bilingual skills policy. We also look to hold Welsh Language training sessions with Workforce and Organisational Development to improve knowledge of how they apply to their day to day work.

We continue to make use of Lleol website, a jobs website that promotes roles where Welsh is noted as essential, to advertise the health board's Welsh essential jobs. Welsh essential posts are also shared to a specific group on Facebook that only advertises Welsh essential posts.

### **3.7 Learning opportunities provided during 2025-26**

The shift to more online learning has continued to be a positive move for health board staff in terms of accessing learning. As a health board we are fortunate to be offered various learning opportunities through the Welsh Government funded initiative Work Welsh - an opportunity for employees to learn Welsh from little or no knowledge, or to further develop their existing language skills. The Welsh Language Services Team are a link between our staff and course providers making the process of finding the best course for our staff as easy as possible.

The Work Welsh scheme offers a range of opportunities from online self-study courses, taster courses, Nant Gwrtheyrn 'Use' courses and more recently the Work Welsh Academy which provides training, support and guidance for employers that will help employers gain a better understanding of how to support learning, and how to plan and increase the Welsh language skills of the workforce. An example of a recent training programme offered is 'Planning and Managing Welsh and Bilingual Workplaces', which is again available for any member of staff health board wide.

The health board participates in the Health and Social Care scheme which forms part of the Work Welsh initiative. The scheme offers a range of health and social care specific opportunities for staff such as the Confidence Building courses, Croeso courses and Palliative care courses. Over the past year the scheme has expanded and further developed to offer an even broader range of courses to include Neurodiversity courses, Dementia courses and the newly launched Health and Social Care Speaking scheme. We're very proud to be able to offer such opportunities to our health board staff, of which all are fully funded by Welsh Government as part of the Work Welsh initiative.

Being able to offer learn Welsh opportunities to staff working in the dementia field supports our work in implementing the More Than Just Words Framework and in particular the active offer – being able to offer services in Welsh to vulnerable groups without the patients having to ask for their care in Welsh. The new dementia courses include Taster sessions, Confidence building sessions, and 1:1 sessions that are available to staff with all levels of Welsh. The programme is run by a tutor with extensive experience within the dementia field focusing on various vocabulary and phrases relevant to the work is incorporated into the learning. The aim is that this will lead to a better awareness of the importance of using the Welsh language when providing dementia services, as well as building confidence to use the Welsh language with patients and their families.

The introduction of the Health and Social Care Speaking Scheme is another major development to support our Welsh learners and encourage the use of Welsh in the workplace. The Speaking Scheme aims to pair Welsh learners with a fluent Welsh speaker to provide more opportunities to practice the language in an informal and natural environment whilst also gaining support and guidance to build confidence to use the language in day to day life. Five Welsh learners have committed to the Speaking scheme thus far and are in the process of being paired with their 'buddy'. We're very looking forward to seeing how this scheme develops over the year to come.

One of our most popular courses with very high participant uptake is the Confidence Building course.

### **Confidence Building Courses**

We were delighted to hear that the tutor would be remaining with us for another year. The aim again during 2025-2026 was to offer short confidence building courses and work with individuals to build on confidence to use more Welsh in the workplace. The series of Confidence Building courses were available to all health board staff as well as specific targeted services such as Nursing, Occupational Health and Mental health; staff who have direct contact with patients. The purpose of these sessions is to change linguistic habits and improve the confidence of reluctant speakers, so that they use Welsh when they would normally use English.

The courses are held via virtual classroom, including an opportunity for one-to-one sessions with the tutor for further support. The course supports individuals by providing general guidance or, if staff have specific areas of work they wish to concentrate on e.g. practise a telephone script, or how to write a formal email. Another example was a Paediatric Mental Health Consultant who met with the tutor to practise service specific topics that would benefit his Welsh communication with patients. A typical course involves two hours of learning per week for twelve weeks. As part of the Confidence Building programme, we have further developed the aftercare options following the completion of a course – staff now have the option of joining a 'ôl-ofal' (aftercare) group, led by the tutor. The purpose of this aftercare group is to still be able to support and encourage staff to use their Welsh and an opportunity to enhance their Welsh language skills even further.

At the end of the reporting year (31 March 2026), 118 members of staff had completed the courses. This is a fantastic achievement as the set target for the year was to reach 100 members of staff. Current work pressures continue to be a limitation in terms of attendance and drop-off rates, however, the flexibility of the courses and the opportunity of 1:1 sessions helps, and staff always have the opportunity for to re-join at a later date or attend on a 1:1 basis with the tutor.

### **Further analysis of the Confidence Building courses**

Three cohorts of staff joined the Confidence Building programme during the past year. Each cohort of staff attended a two hour per week session over 12 weeks. This

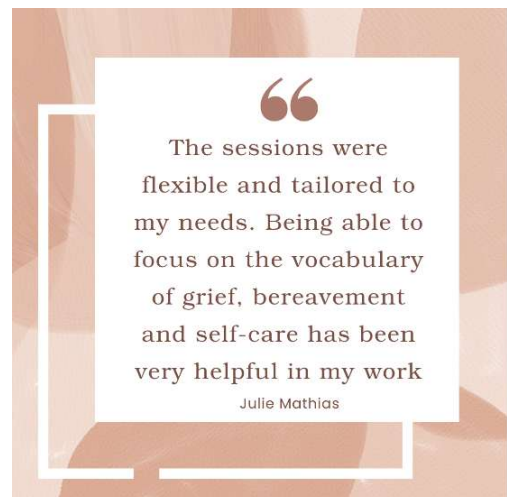
equates to 24 hours of contact for each course. The one-to-one sessions have been extremely popular with the staff with approximately 500 hours of contact noted by the tutor. The time spent with each individual varies, with some spending up to 12 hours one-to-one with the tutor, and others only needing a few hours to build confidence.

Month	Number of individuals
Cohort (1) May 2025	18
Cohort (2) September 2025	15
Cohort (3) December 2025	10
Aftercare sessions	64
Self-study courses	32

Below are examples of employees who have benefited from the course and the difference it's made to their confidence to use the Welsh language in the workplace.

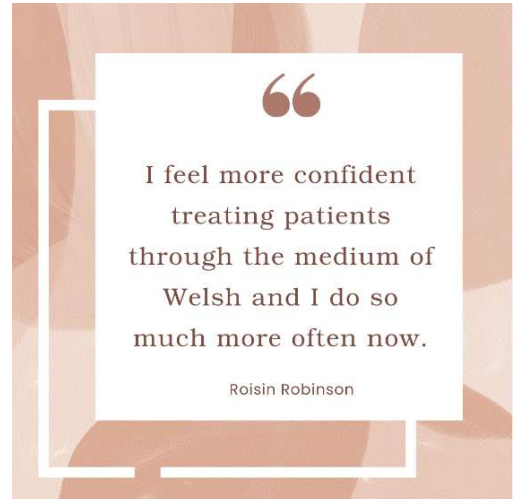
### **Julie Mathias, Bereavement Counsellor**

Julie felt comfortable speaking Welsh with children before taking the course, but less confident to use the language with adults. She wanted to offer more counselling sessions in Welsh and use the language more proactively at work. With her tutor, they practised conversations related to her work and read Welsh resources about grief and bereavement. She now starts conversations in Welsh with colleagues and offers a Welsh language service to children, families and anyone who wishes to use it.



### **Roisin Robinson, Speech and Language Therapist**

Roisin works with stroke patients at Bronglais hospital. She already understood a bit of Welsh from her years at primary school but lacked the confidence to use the language. Along with the help of the tutor, as well as her two Welsh speaking colleagues, Roisin feels more confident using terminology related to her role, in particular aging issues and stroke symptoms (NESA/FAST). Roisin was assessed at a level 3 intermediate level speaker before commencing the course and is now at a level 4 Higher level



### **Laura Button-Jones, Occupational Therapist**

Laura could already speak Welsh but lacked the confidence to use the language. She started the Confidence Building course at an intermediate level 3 and has now progressed to a be a level 4 speaker. Along with the support from a fellow colleague, Laura is now conducting patient assessments through the medium of Welsh. She works with a placement student who also speaks Welsh meaning that much more Welsh is spoken within their working environment as a team.



### **Other learning Welsh opportunities**

The Welsh Language Services Team continue to proactively promote all Welsh Language learning opportunities to staff, as well as supporting them to choose the most appropriate course for their level of ability.

### **Cwrs Croeso | Welcome to Welsh**

We further developed the programme by offering more Welcome to Welsh sessions at beginner level. The courses are a one-off online session for 1.5 hours held by the tutor. These taster sessions are an introduction to the language, learning about Welsh culture as well as an opportunity to learn basic phrases and linguistic patterns to health-related words. The session also gives an overview of what resources are available to staff if they decide to continue learning Welsh.

A total of four sessions were held throughout the past year. We're delighted that the National Centre for Learning Welsh has confirmed that the Welcome to Welsh courses will once again be offered for 2026-27.

### 10 week beginner level courses

Following the success of the pilot project to trial a new 10 week course, we were pleased to be able to offer three more courses over the past year. The 10 week courses proved popular amongst staff and in particular the staff who have completed the Welcome to Welsh course; a fantastic opportunity to learn basic phrases and every day conversational Welsh. Recent feedback indicates that this type of course, where staff are asked to commit to a short one hour per week, is best suited for health board staff, and in particular patient facing staff as it is more manageable and doesn't impact on the service. It is confirmed that the 10 week courses will be offered for 2026-27 in conjunction with the Welcome to Welsh courses.

The following table shows the number of participants enrolled on the various courses offered at the health board during 2025-26.

Course	Level	Location	Number of participants enrolled
Confidence Building Courses	Level 3 and above	Online virtual classroom & 1:1 sessions	118
Cwrs Ôl-Ofal (Aftercare course)	All levels	Online virtual sessions and self-study	64
Welcome to Work Welsh online course	Entry	Online self-study	32
Cwrs Croeso	Entry – Level 0/1	Online virtual classroom	102
10 hour course	Entry – Level 0/1	Online virtual classroom	31
Online Self Study course	Entry	Online	32
Dementia Programme	Entry	Online virtual classroom	2
'Use' course Nantgwrtheyrn	Intermediate Higher	Face to face	2
Cynllun Siarad (Speaking Scheme)	Entry +	Online	5

## 4. Further information

For further information about the health board's Welsh Language Services, please contact:

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