

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Report 2025-2026

How the standards are met, and how opportunities to use Welsh in the workplace and throughout the Service are promoted and facilitated.

Publication date: July 2026

Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg | This publication is available in Welsh



Annual Report on the Welsh Language in North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Overview

This is North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (NWFR) annual report on Welsh language Standards for 2025 - 2026. It evaluates our compliance with the Standards, and the ways in which opportunities to use Welsh have been promoted and facilitated, ensuring that the language was treated no less favourably than the English language during the year. It was prepared in accordance with Schedule 4 of the Welsh Language Standards (No. 5) Regulations 2016, to meet the requirements of standards 158, 164 a 170.

Further information

This publication is available on the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) website at www.northwalesfire.gov.wales. If you require it in another format and/or language, or have any questions about its contents, please contact us using the details below.

Welsh Language Officer,
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Ffordd Salesbury
St Asaph Business Park
St Asaph
Denbighshire
LL17 0JJ

Calls and correspondence in Welsh and English are welcomed. Using Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Related documents

Our compliance notice under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 is available on our [website](#).

Contents

Introduction	4
Accountability and Governance	4
Background	5
The Welsh Language Standards	6
Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards	7
Service Delivery Standards:	7
Operational Standards:	8
Recent appointments and promotions	9
Monitoring, promoting and developing the Welsh language within the service	10
Welsh Language Development	13
Future Opportunities for Improvement	13





Introduction

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFRA) recognises and values the diversity of our Service area and the cultural and linguistic diversity within our communities. We are committed to our legal and moral duty to ensure that the Welsh language is treated with parity to the English language when conducting our business.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets out a legal framework which imposes a legal duty on NWFRA to comply with Standards relating to the promoting, raising awareness, and facilitating the Welsh language within our fire and rescue service.

The Welsh language is an integral part of our core values and is essential to our People, Prevention, and Protection principles, which form part of our [Community Risk Management Plan 2024 – 2029](#).

Our People principle commits to recruiting and developing a bilingual workforce to represent the demographic of our area. Our Prevention principle focuses on reducing risks to our communities by engaging with all people in North Wales and actively offering language choice. Additionally, our Protection principle involves engaging with North Wales businesses, many of whom communicate with us in Welsh.

Accountability and Governance

Within North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS), the Welsh language is governed as part of our organisational structure through the Welsh Language Governance Group, chaired by our Welsh Language Officer and has members that sit on the group from various parts of the Service. The Welsh Language Officer, a member of the Corporate Communications department, has responsibility for implementing the Welsh Language Standards and promoting the Welsh language within the Service. The Welsh Language Governance Group reports to our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO). The CFO takes the executive lead on the Welsh language and has line management responsibility for the Corporate Communications department.

During 2025/2026, NWFRA has continued with efforts to implement the Welsh Language Standards and their requirements. This report details our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards; how we monitor, promote and develop the Welsh language within the Service; and the opportunities for future improvements. This report has been approved by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Committee and subsequently approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting in October 2026.



Background

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993, requiring North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to comply with a set of Welsh Language Standards which ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language.

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued fire and rescue authorities with their compliance duties on 30 September 2016. This document lists which of the Standards, as listed in full in the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.5) 2016, the Authority must comply with, along with any exemptions and their implementation dates.

The Authority is required to publish an annual Welsh Language Standards Monitoring report and to publicise it appropriately.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that in conducting public business in Wales, the English and Welsh language are treated equally. We recognise and value the rich diversity of our communities and the significant natural and cultural heritage.

The Authority also acknowledges its duty towards its staff, most of whom are residents of North Wales and reflect the linguistic and cultural make-up of their own communities.

By acknowledging our moral and legal duties to protect the cultural heritage of the area and meet the expectations of the local community, the Authority continues to work towards ensuring that we conduct our public business in both languages.

The Authority's Implementation Plan is available to view using the link below;

[The Welsh Language Standards](#)

The Welsh Language Standards

During 2025/26, the Authority complied with the set of Welsh Language Standards issued in the [Compliance Notice of 30 September 2016](#). We also worked collaboratively with external language groups via the Welsh Language Officer, in addition to managing internal Welsh language governance via the Welsh Language Governance Group. This group has representation from throughout our fire and rescue and serves the purpose of;

- Co-ordinating between departments on Welsh language issues
- Scrutinising and offering guidance to improve any aspect of the bilingual provision of the Service
- Collaborating on how to resolve any challenges or complaints
- Ensuring that the Welsh language is being treated as favourably as the English language within the Service.

Welsh translation matters are contracted to an external company to help fulfil all obligations set by the Welsh Language Standards.

The Authority also continues to collaborate with colleagues at the other two Welsh fire and rescue services and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to share information on best practices and ensure a standardised approach.



Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards

Service Delivery Standards:

The Compliance Notice which lists these Standards can be seen on the [North Wales Fire and Rescue Service website](#). These Standards relate to our public facing activities and how we deal with our service users, whether in person, over the phone, or online, as well as any printed or online publications.

Arrangements have been made to meet the Service Delivery Standards that have come into force including the following:

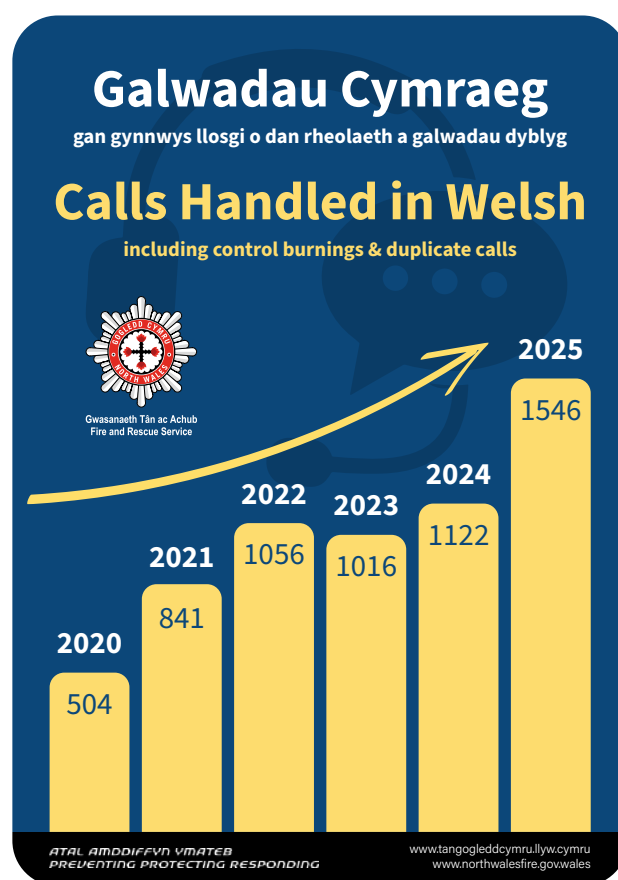
Job vacancies in the Joint Communications Centre, where external calls are directed to, are advertised with a requirement for fluency in spoken Welsh, this requirement is to ensure a proactive language choice is offered to any caller wishing to speak Welsh. During 2025/26 we welcomed six new members of staff into the Control room, all of whom possessed the required Welsh language skills upon appointment.

Data is collected on how many service users contact us in Welsh, for monitoring and evaluation purposes. As of 31 March 2026, **1,364** calls were handled in Welsh. These include 999 calls and reports of controlled burnings. Monitoring these calls has allowed us to recognise the stark rise in the number of Welsh calls received, seeing a 150% growth over the past five years. We attribute this to the active promotion of our Welsh language service, in accordance with the Welsh Language Commissioner's advice that Welsh services should not only be available, but actively promoted and advertised to encourage use.

This is one of our main methods of communication with the public and service users. The availability of this service is regularly promoted on the Service's social media accounts and at public events attended to raise external awareness.

Standards 62 - 64

Service policy notes that staff with front-facing positions must be fluent in the Welsh language, these include any posts that involve direct contact with the public. As of 31 March 2026, there are 96 members of staff occupying designated 'front facing' posts within the Service. Of these posts, 19 have not achieved the required level for their post. Of these roles, two are positions that may have direct contact with the public whereas the other 17 aren't.



Data showing the increase in calls handled in Welsh from 2020-2025

Operational Standards:

The Compliance Notice which lists these standards can be seen on the Service's [website](#). These standards relate to our internal use of Welsh. They place a duty on us to encourage the use of Welsh in our administration and to support our officers and councillors to use the language in their work.

Arrangements have been made to meet these Operational Standards, including the following:

Standards 125 – 132

Relating to the development of our staff's Welsh language skills the provisions made are discussed below.

During 2025/26 one level 2 Welsh Language course was provided to staff through partnership with Coleg Cambria.

Staff can also access the self-learning materials available on our [Hwb Tân](#) intranet Welsh language page as well as receive support from the Welsh Language Officer or a Welsh language champion. Conversation sessions are offered, including 1-to-1 sessions, to promote and support staff to develop their Welsh language skills. Staff can also access paid for subscriptions to Welsh self-learning app 'Say Something in Welsh' to help with their learning.

Our new initiative this year has been to hold monthly 'Paned a Sgwrs' sessions held in different areas of the Service each month. This has facilitated attendance as we understand not all staff can leave their place of work to attend sessions elsewhere in the Service.

During 2025/26, eight members of staff completed a Welsh writing refresher course, to facilitate their use of Welsh in their working day. This course was facilitated by an external company and included guidance on writing letters and e-mails to the public.

Language Awareness training continues to be offered in two ways; first face-to-face, usually for operational staff joining in groups. Secondly, an online module is provided through our LearnPro platform on language awareness.

The requirement to include the Welsh language on e-mail signatures and 'out of office' messages is promoted internally. Examples are available on our [Hwb Tân](#) intranet Welsh Language page along with relevant logos. Staff are also provided with lanyards noting whether they are fluent Welsh speakers or new Welsh speakers.

Standard 143

Complaints are monitored and dealt with by the Human Resources Department and Business Support Unit. Complaints and letters of appreciation are reported annually to the Fire and Rescue Authority. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has published a complaints procedure on our website and has an internal policy for staff on how to raise a concern or complaint.

During 2025/26 we did not receive any formal complaints regarding our Welsh language compliance and provision.

Standards 147, 150, 151

As of 31 March 2026, there were 810 of our staff (90.92%) who were able to demonstrate that they had Welsh language skills (Level 1 and above), 362 (40.41%) of whom were classed as fluent speakers (Level 4 and 5 skills). This is an increase of around 2% on the previous year which shows our commitment to promoting job posts with Welsh speakers.

In all, 880 (98.3%) of our staff had either a formal or self-assessment record for their Welsh skills.

Staff who have been employed for less than 12 months may not yet have been assessed, as Service policy allows until the end of their probationary period to achieve the minimum required Welsh skill level for their post. However, as of 31 March 2025, 86 members of our staff with less than 12 months service have had their Welsh language skills assessed, and one has not.

The Welsh language skills of each new member of staff are assessed either at an early stage where Welsh fluency is a part of their role, or later during their employment. Staff who do not possess Welsh language skills of a minimum Level 2 are required to develop these skills within a year of employment.

Recent appointments and promotions

The Welsh language skills of our staff during promotion and recruitment are tracked to identify the need for skills development.

During 2025-2026 all staff involved in our promotion boards processes already possessed the required Welsh skills for their posts and therefore will not need any further monitoring or assessments.



Monitoring, promoting and developing the Welsh language within the service

Monitoring and promoting initiatives of the Welsh language among staff are delivered internally in a variety of different ways. The services available in Welsh for the public are also promoted and highlighted through external campaigns

Welsh language monitoring happens through the Service assurance structure that sees a Welsh language governance group meet quarterly to discuss matters relating to the Welsh language. The group reports to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee with an update on data and annual overview of all key performance indicators of the Welsh. The group also reports to the Organisational Resourcing Committee on matters relating to Welsh language skills of staff and/or recruitment information.

The Welsh Language Champions scheme continues to offer an allowance to members of staff who are part of the scheme to reward their commitment to promoting the Welsh language within their departments or fire stations.

Welsh Language Champions are located across the Service area and across functions. They help to promote the use of Welsh at work, to support staff with Welsh language assessments, and to promote Welsh language activities to other staff. The Welsh Language Champions are required to submit a quarterly task form noting their achievements to receive their allowance and this provides an insight of the promotional work conducted between staff.

Work is ongoing to improve the collaboration among these members of staff and we plan to introduce biannual meetings to share good practice.

The 'Welsh Wednesday' monthly bulletin shares information about the Welsh language to staff, including opportunities to learn Welsh and how to increase the use of Welsh on a day-to-day basis.

Also included within is a section reminding staff of key Welsh Language Standards and ways they can ensure compliance e.g. bilingual e-mail signatures and out of office messages. The analytics from the recent year show that this bulletin receives an average of 87 unique openings in Welsh and 194 in English per month.

Engagement with staff during Welsh national events is a key part of promoting our commitment to language choice.

Our staff from Holyhead fire station joined the Welsh Language Officer and attended St. David's Day celebrations in the town as part of Menter Môn's wider celebrations.

We also had a quiz for staff on St David's Day which included the opportunity to win a Welsh produce hamper.



Staff members at Holyhead St David's Day parade



Staff member at Rhyl Fire Station with the St David's Day quiz prize

These opportunities initiate engagement with staff throughout the Service and it also results in greater engagement with Welsh language pages of internal communications.

A member of staff from Rhyl Fire Station won the prize for St David's Day 2026 which was a hamper of local goods.

As part of the Welsh language – internal use policy introduced during in 2025, it has been included that in all internal communications, station names will be referred to using their Welsh-language forms only where appropriate.

This has been promoted and encouraged throughout 2025-2026 through our Welsh bulletins, Welsh newsletters and in our internal comms weekly update.

A poster has also been shared reminding staff which of our stations, that had Welsh and English names,

Two of our annual 'Tanio Sgwrs' Welsh promotional workshops, which aim to promote the Welsh language amongst staff, were held during 2025-2026. These are opportunities for staff to engage with each other through Welsh, as well as hearing from guest speakers in Welsh speaking about a range of different themes. The aim of these workshops is to encourage and normalise the use of Welsh in the workplace among staff, and to bring speakers of all abilities together with a goal of encouraging new Welsh speakers to practice and gain confidence.

As part of wider celebrations for St David's Day, two workshops in our fire stations in Mold and Dolgellau were held and attended by 40 members of staff. These 'Tanio Sgwrs' workshops were accessible to staff throughout the Service providing an opportunity to find out more about the Welsh language as a modern and thriving language in places beyond the workplace.

Guest speakers this year included Ywain Myfyr, one of the directors and founders of Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau; Kris Hughes, founder and head of the Anglesey Druid Order, he is an award winning author; Joseff Roberts, who runs the company Tirlun and is a social media content creator who explores the history, mythology, language and landscape of Wales; Lowri a Shop owner from Oswestry who has opened a Welsh shop over the border; and the chief officer from Menter iaith sir y Fflint a Wrecsam came by to tell us more about what's on offer for residents of both counties to support the Welsh language. Thank you to all speakers for attending this year, feedback was very positive and once again staff have appreciated the opportunity to be able to listen and speak in Welsh.

Ein gorsafoddd yn Gymraeg **Our station names in Welsh**

Barmouth	→	Abermaw
Beaumaris	→	Biwmares
Buckley	→	Bwcle
Colwyn Bay	→	Bae Colwyn
Chirk	→	Y Waun
Deeside	→	Glannau Dyfrdwy
Denbigh	→	Dinbych
Flint	→	Fflint
Holyhead	→	Caergybi
Holywell	→	Treffynnon
Mold	→	Yr Wyddgrug
Ruthin	→	Rhuthun
Menai Bridge	→	Porthaethwy
St Asaph	→	Llanelwy
Wrexham	→	Wrecsam



Joseff Roberts, Tirlun, speaking at our 'Tanio Sgwrs' events



Staff members attending 'Tanio Sgwrs' in Mold Fire Station

A 'Contribution to the Welsh Language' award is presented as part of the organisation's annual Community Awards Ceremony to recognise individuals who have demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting and supporting the Welsh language in the workplace.

In 2025, Tina Griffiths who was a staff member in the business support unit at the time, was presented with the award in recognition of her contribution to supporting colleagues with their Welsh language learning and encouraging the day-to-day use of Welsh within the workplace. While working as a team leader, administrator for the on-call duty system as well as the Operations Department in Rhyl, Tina provided ongoing informal support to staff undertaking Welsh language training, including assisting with coursework, conversational practice, and maintaining learners' confidence during interruptions to formal provision.



Tina Griffiths accepting the 'Contribution to the Welsh language' award from Councillor Dylan Rees, Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority

Her initiative-taking encouragement of the use of Welsh in everyday interactions contributed positively to the development of Welsh language skills amongst colleagues. Following her appointment as a full-time firefighter, Tina has also undertaken the role of Welsh Language Champion at Rhyl Fire Station.

One of our primary means of engaging with the community is through conducting Safe and Well Checks (SAWCs) in their homes. In 2025-2026 1,927 Safe and Well Checks were conducted where Welsh was noted as the preferred language in the home, compared to 1,817 in the previous year.

To improve reporting on Welsh SAWC data, the data inputting form has been amended so that Welsh appears first when staff are prompted about the language of the Service user and is a mandatory question. We have also added in a further question to help establish the main language used during the visit, as we are aware that bilinguals may prefer to have some information in their other language too.

Promoting the use of Welsh internally through monthly 'Paned a Sgwrs' sessions has been a success this year with six events having been held across our Service areas to ensure staff from all stations and departments are given the same opportunities to attend. We have had staff from all abilities of Welsh attending to help improve and receive support and resources with their Welsh journey. Staff of Welsh fluency have expressed that they appreciate the opportunity to be able to use Welsh with new colleagues in an informal setting.



Welsh Language Development

The Training and Development Department maintains a record of the Welsh courses attended by our staff and all the assessments they have undertaken and keeps records of the results on an internal recording system.

Following a Welsh language assessment, the ability of staff is subsequently recorded onto the iTrent system used to record internal staff information such as leave requests and timesheets.

Welsh courses happen internally through collaboration with Coleg Cambria and are available on request with work ongoing to further facilitate these courses for Operational On-Call staff members.

During 2025-2026 the Welsh learning take-up included the following;

- Two staff members attending and passing a level 2 Welsh course
- Eight new staff members were also improving their Welsh by using the Say Something in Welsh App which is facilitated by the Service for 12 months.

Staff members with fluency in spoken Welsh also attended a Welsh writing refresher course aiming to help with common grammar refreshing, formal letter writing and how to differ in writing an informal message or e-mail to more formal correspondence. An external company facilitated this course.

Future Opportunities for Improvement

The following priorities have been identified to support continued progress and address areas requiring further development in 2026-2027:

- Facilitate Welsh courses and learning opportunities for our Wholetime and On Call staff members to ensure that they have the same opportunities as other staff members.
- Continue working to facilitate Welsh language use and build confidence with internal initiatives.
- External initiatives for Welsh language promotion, and to encourage the use of Welsh with us as a Service. This will include public events at our fire stations.



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service