

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Report 2024-2025

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



Publication date: October 2025

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 (NWFRA) annual report on Welsh language Standards for 2024 - 2025. 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.

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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	11
Monitoring, promoting and developing the Welsh language within the service.	12
Welsh Language Development	15
Future Opportunities for Improvement.	16





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. 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 2024/2025, 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 2025.



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 its Welsh Language Standards annual report for 2024/25 by October 2025 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 2024/25, the Authority continued to comply with the set of Welsh Language Standards issued in the [Compliance Notice of 30 September 2016](#). We also continue to work 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 face and how we deal with our service users, whether in person, over the phone, or online, as well as any physical or online publications.

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

Standards 1,4, 5-7

During the past year, updated guidance on the correct bilingual correspondence procedure was added to the Welsh language page of the Service's intranet, Hwb Tân. This has also been reflected in the new [Welsh Use – Internal Policy and Guidance](#).

Standards 8-22

All staff are aware of the requirement to consider the importance of language choice when handling telephone calls with members of the public. Resources have been shared internally on how to promote the use of Welsh at work. Updated video guidance has been shared on the Welsh language page of the Service intranet, Hwb Tân, and is included in our [Welsh – Internal Use Policy](#). Although not main telephone lines, our individual fire stations also have guidance on answering the phone bilingually, with the emphasis on using Welsh first.

This year saw the introduction of resources such as phrase mugs, which are ceramic mugs with our most useful English to Welsh phrases for internal use and reminder of using the Welsh language.

The Authority continues to recognise the value and benefit of offering language choice as a necessity in an emergency and operates a fully bilingual Control Room at the Joint Communications Centre (JCC) in St Asaph, even though there is no statutory requirement to answer 999 calls bilingually. The Authority's decision to go above and beyond the requirements of the Standards acknowledges the benefits in terms of safety in emergency situations when some callers prefer to communicate more effectively in Welsh as their first language.



Job vacancies in the Joint Communication Centre are advertised with a minimum of Level 4 Welsh language skills requirement to ensure a proactive language choice is offered to any caller wishing to speak Welsh. During 2024/25 we welcomed three 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 2025, 1,389 calls were handled in Welsh. These include 999 calls and reports of controlled burnings. This number account for 6.4% of all calls handled.

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 28-32

In relation to ensuring the use of Welsh in meetings, all promotional correspondence is bilingual. To facilitate the right of attendees to use Welsh in our public meetings, interpretation is available for non-Welsh speakers.

The use of Welsh in meetings is promoted through resources such as notepads with English to Welsh phrases for use.

Standards 33,34

Promotion of any public events we organise is done so bilingually, and these events are promoted on our corporate social media pages.

During 2024/25, we held a variety of public events, including station open days, recruitment events and experience days for our wholetime campaign, as well as charity car wash events.

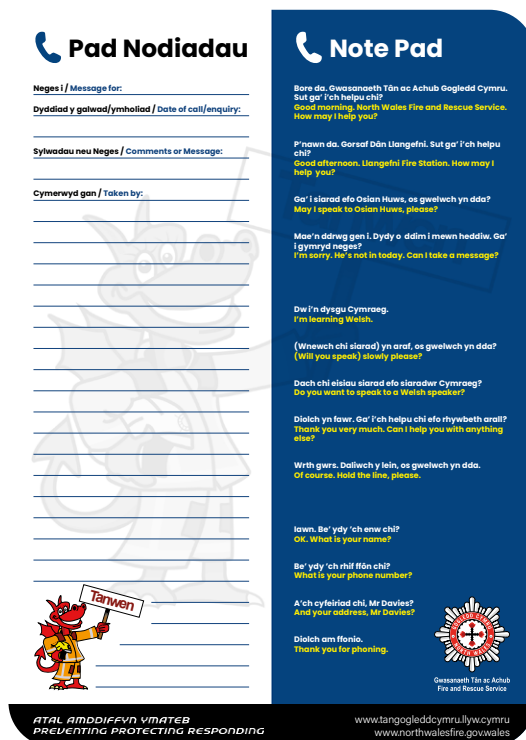
Standards 62-64

Service policy notes that staff with front-facing positions must be fluent in the Welsh language . As of 31 March 2025, there are 89 members of staff occupying designated 'front facing' posts within the Service. This number is the same as the previous year.

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 96-101

Staff have a right, which is regularly promoted and communicated internally, to receive any relevant correspondence in Welsh or bilingually. Relevant forms, relating to their employment are available bilingually and can be viewed on our Hwb Tân intranet. A record is kept of each staff member's preferred language to receive correspondence.

Standards 102 -108

New and revised policies are published internally in both Welsh and English, with each policy required to have an associated integrated impact assessment to ascertain its impact on the Welsh language, as well as to identify and promote ways of creating a positive impact and avoiding negative impact. A new policy has also been approved and publicised internally on the internal use of the Welsh language as has an accompanied guidance document.

Standards 125 – 132

During 2024/25 one level 2 and one level 3 Welsh Language courses were 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.

During 2024/25 one member of staff also attended an intensive 'Mynediad 2' Welsh learning residential course at Nant Gwrtheyrn.

Language Awareness training is 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.

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 also has an internal policy for staff on how to raise a concern or complaint.

During 2024/25 we received one complaint relating to our compliance with the Welsh language standards.

This complaint (ref. C08.24) was in relation to our social media accounts and website. The complaint was dealt with internally and following internal review, amendments were made which satisfied the complainant.

Standards 147, 150, 151

As of 31 March 2025, 87.6% of our staff were able to demonstrate that they had Welsh language skills (Level 1 and above), 38.6% of whom were classed as fluent speakers (Level 4 and 5 skills).

In all, 98.1% of our staff had either a formal or self-assessment record for their Welsh skills.

Staff that 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, 98.9% of our staff with less than 12 months service have been assessed.

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 during their probationary period. Welsh skills are a part of the probationary requirements.

Self-learning resources are available in addition to further training courses if staff are finding difficulty progressing their skills.





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 2024-2025 the details of recent appointments and Welsh skills include:

Operational staff requiring level 3 Welsh skills:

- Area Manager – External candidate that is actively being supported to achieve the required level of Welsh for the role.

Control staff requiring level 4 Welsh skills:

- Control Operator – 2 successful candidates at correct level on appointment.

Corporate staff where Welsh skills depend on the role:

- Corporate Communications Officer - Successful candidate appointed at the required level (4+)
- Phoenix Assistant – 1 Successful candidate level 2 and 1 level 3 (redeployment pool below the required level (4+))
- BSA – On-Call – Successful candidate appointed at the required level (4+)
- BSA – On-Call – Successful candidate at the required level (4+)
- Compliance Officer – Successful candidate at the required level (4+)
- Executive Assistant – 1 Successful candidate at the required level (4+) other successful candidate internal below the required level
- Executive Assistant – 2 Successful candidates both at the required level (4+)
- Head of Finance and Procurement – Successful candidate level 5 Welsh, above the required level (2)
- Head of Corporate Communications- Successful candidate due to commence 01/06/2025 appointed at the required level (4+)

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.
- An Internal use of the Welsh language policy and guidance was published with the aim of supporting staff to ensure compliance with the Welsh language standards and to promote the use of Welsh within our Service.



WELSH - INTERNAL USE

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PURPOSE

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This policy has been drawn up for implementation in line with the legal requirements placed upon North Wales Fire and Rescue Service by Standard 95 of the Welsh Language Standards, a set of legally-binding national principles created by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

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These standards of conduct both promote and facilitate the Welsh language, as well as ensuring that the Service does not treat the Welsh language any less favourably than the English language.

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The intention in developing this policy is to promote good practice, with input from the Welsh Language Commissioner and Mentrau Iaith organisation, as well as public service partners in North Wales. It is envisaged that this document will help to establish and maintain high standards in the delivery of a bilingual service.

- During our first Staff Networks conference focussing on different aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, we invited a Welsh language speaker to share insights on working using the Welsh language as a benefit.

- The Welsh language officer was invited to North Wales Police's Conference on Promoting Bilingualism and presented a talk about how the Fire and Rescue Service promotes the Welsh language and address and discuss any challenges faced.
- 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 carried out between staff.
- 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, in Welsh and English, receives an average of 75 unique openings.
- During December 2024, the Service took part in a national [social media campaign](#) to promote Welsh Language Rights Day and promote our commitment to language choice, both internally and in our communities. The purpose of the campaign was to highlight and spread awareness of what services people can expect from us in Welsh, and to encourage use of these services, such as calling us to report incidents, requesting safe and well checks and engaging with us at community safety events.
- Engagement with staff during Welsh national events is a key part of promoting our commitment to language choice. Our on-call crew at Llanrwst fire station attended St. David's Day celebrations in the town and a Welsh quiz was held on St David's Day for staff, which included the opportunity to win a Welsh produce hamper. This sees engagement with staff throughout the Service and results in greater engagement with Welsh language pages of internal communications.
- Following the successful launch of our 'Tanio Sgwrs' workshops last year, three workshops were held during 2024-2025 with the aim to encourage 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, three staff workshops to promote the Welsh language were held during February and March 2025 at our fire stations in Caernarfon, Rhyl



and Deeside. 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 included a Welsh author and teacher who has a wide social media presence, staff from Canolfan Bedwyr, Bangor University, that promoted their new app to encourage more use of Welsh, local Welsh business owners that shared how the Welsh language has shaped their businesses and staff from local 'Mentrau iaith' that shared the work they do within the community to promote the Welsh language

These opportunities gave staff an insight into wider Welsh language initiatives as well as a chance to use Welsh with colleagues.

- A 'Contribution to the Welsh language' award in our annual Community Awards Ceremony is presented to a member/ or member of staff that has/have shown dedication to the Welsh language, either by promoting the language in the workplace, supporting development, or their own personal learning commitments. In 2024, the award was presented collectively to members of staff from Red Watch Colwyn Bay Fire Station. Encouraged by the Welsh language champion of their team, and with support from the Welsh language officer, the group spent a year holding Welsh learning sessions during their shifts as and when possible and one by one the members of the Watch succeeded to pass their level 3 Welsh assessments.
- One of our primary means of engaging with the community is through conducting Safe and Well Checks (SAWCs) in their homes. In 2024–25, 1,817 Safe and Well Checks were conducted in Welsh, compared to 1,852 in 2023–24. This slight decrease may be attributed to regional variations in uptake or reduced visibility of the Welsh-language offer, which we aim to address through targeted promotion and data-led outreach. Data will also be collected on the number in each county so that we can target areas with lower uptake.





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 are now facilitated internally through Coleg Cambria and are available on request.

During 2024-2025 the Welsh learning take-up included the following;

- 9 staff members attending and passing a level 2 Welsh course
- 2 staff members attending and passing a level 3 course.
- 9 staff members were also improving their Welsh by using the Say Something in Welsh App which is facilitated by the Service for 12 months.
- 1 staff member attending an external residential course at Nant Gwrtheyrn to develop their Welsh language skills. These courses are encouraged by the Service through compensating staff for the fees.

Welsh language development sessions with the Welsh Language Officer are also available up to Welsh Level 3. These can be arranged on a group or 1-2-1 basis.

Future Opportunities for Improvement

The following priorities have been identified to support continued progress and address areas requiring further development in 2025–26:

- As part of the Welsh language – internal use policy introduced during 2024-25, it has been included that in all internal communications, station names will be referred to using their Welsh-language forms only where appropriate.
- Further staff recognition for success in achievement following attendance on Welsh language courses.
- Revisiting opportunities for informal use of Welsh in work with more paned a sgwrs initiatives.
- Increase our on-call staff's awareness of Welsh language standards through visits to their station during drill nights.
- Promote and discuss within the Welsh language governance group ways to increase the number of Safe and Well checks carried out in Welsh.



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service