

Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2018/19

**Prepared in accordance with the requirements of
The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

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1. Introduction

This report is the fourth Welsh Annual Report produced under the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and covers the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. The table below details the requirements for this report:

Areas	Relevant Standard and/or sub-section
<p>Complaints The annual report must include the number of complaints you received during the year which related to your compliance with the standards with which you were under a duty to comply.</p>	147, 148, 156, 158(2), 162, 164(2), 168(a), 170 (2), (d)
<p>Welsh Language Skills The annual report must include the following information (where relevant, to the extent you are under a duty to comply with the standards are referred to) – (a) 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 standard 151)</p>	170(2)(a) 151
<p>Welsh Language Training 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 members of staff who attended training courses by you in Welsh during the year (in accordance with Standard 128) (b) If a Welsh version of a course was offered by you in accordance with standard 128, the percentage of the total number of staff attending the course who attended that version.</p>	152, 170 (2) (b)
<p>Recruitment 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) – (ch) the number of new and vacant posts that you advertised during the year which were categorise 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, (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 154)</p>	170 (2)(ch) 154

2. Complaints

Standard 158, 164 and 170 requires that the annual report must include the number of complaints you received during the year which related to your compliance with the service delivery standards, policy making standards and the operational standards with which you were under a duty to comply.

The Corporate Complaints procedure logs all complaints related to the Welsh Language and the Welsh Language Standards. Complaints can be made in any format (e.g. email, letter, in person, telephone, social media etc.). No such complaints were received via the Corporate Complaints system during the reporting period.

However, during the reporting period, two complaints were received by the Council which related to the compliance duties for the Council.

Date of Complaint	Complaint	Action
11 April 2018	CSG334: An alleged failure Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to comply with Welsh language standards, relating to signs on roundabouts where names are given, Welsh villages appear below English.	Outcome by the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office The case was closed due to insufficient information provided by the complainant.
2 May 2018	CSG350: "An alleged failure to respond to a Welsh language email sent to the Council's Leader on 16/10/2017 and again on 15/12/2017, 12/03/2018 and 25/04/2018. The emails were sent to the following email address - Cymraeg@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk"	Outcome by the Welsh Language Commissioner dated 26/03/2019: "..to discontinue this investigation, because the investigation has highlighted that the Council did not fail to comply and therefore there was no justification for using resources in continuing the investigation. The evidence has given me assurance that the Council did not accept the complainant's correspondence until the correspondence was sent from a different email address on 25/04/2018 and a full response was sent within 14 working days of receipt of the message."

3. Welsh Language Skills and Ability

Standard 170 requires the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question.

The information in this section has been provided via the Organisational Development Team using the Council's iTrent system and represents staff Welsh language ability as at 31 March 2019.

Staff have the ability and responsibility to maintain their own staff records. The base figure for the data is 2,881 staff on the Council's establishment list, (a decrease of 463 staff from the previous year). It should be noted that each data set has a non-response number of between 548 and 661 staff. The non-response number amounts to those who chose not to answer a particular question.

Speak Welsh

The number of employees who have Welsh language speaking skills as at 31 March 2019 amounts to 610 (21%) staff; they can speak 'fluently', 'quite well', 'moderately', or 'a little'. However 58% of staff declare they have no Welsh Speaking ability. The number and percentage of staff that can understand, speak, write and read Welsh varies slightly between each comparator, which is illustrated in the graphs below:

Chart 1: Speak Welsh

Speak Welsh	Number of staff
Fluently	49
Moderately	165
Quite Well	16
A Little	380
No Ability	1,676
No Response Made	595
Total	2,881

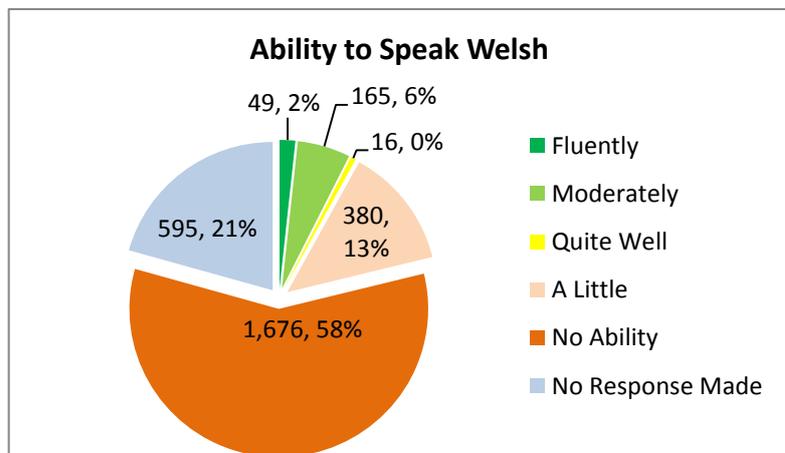


Chart 2: Understand Welsh

Understands Welsh	Number of staff
Fluently	50
Moderately	194
Quite Well	29
A Little	425
No Ability	1,635
No Response Made	548
Total	2,881

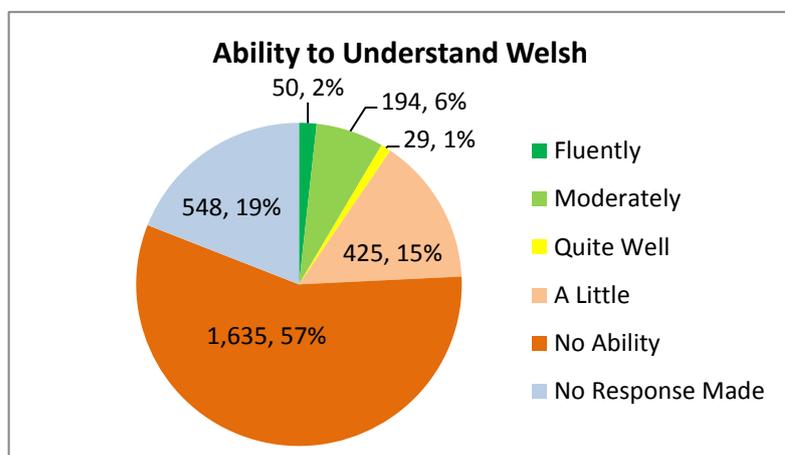


Chart 3: Write Welsh

Write Welsh	Number of staff
Fluently	43
Moderately	131
Quite Well	24
A Little	310
No ability	1,712
No response made	661
Total	2,881

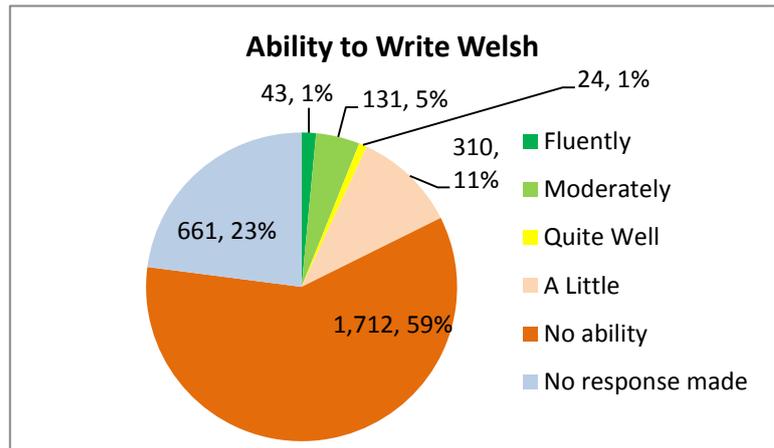
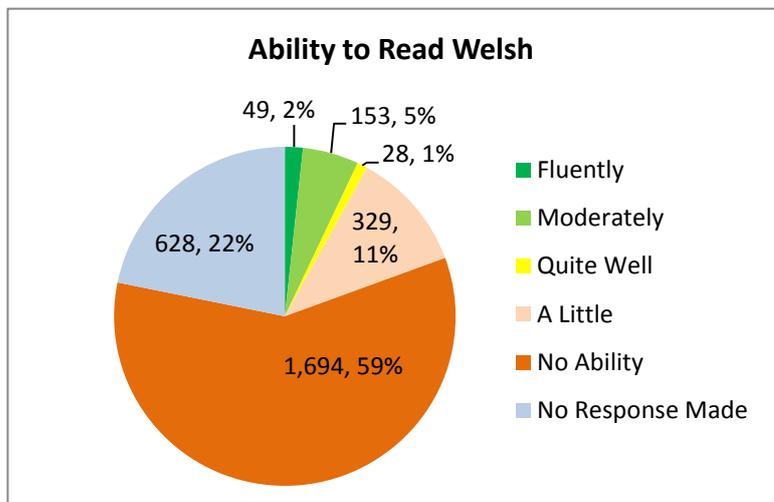


Chart 4: Read Welsh

Read Welsh	Number of staff
Fluently	49
Moderately	153
Quite Well	28
A Little	329
No Ability	1,694
No Response Made	628
Total	2,881

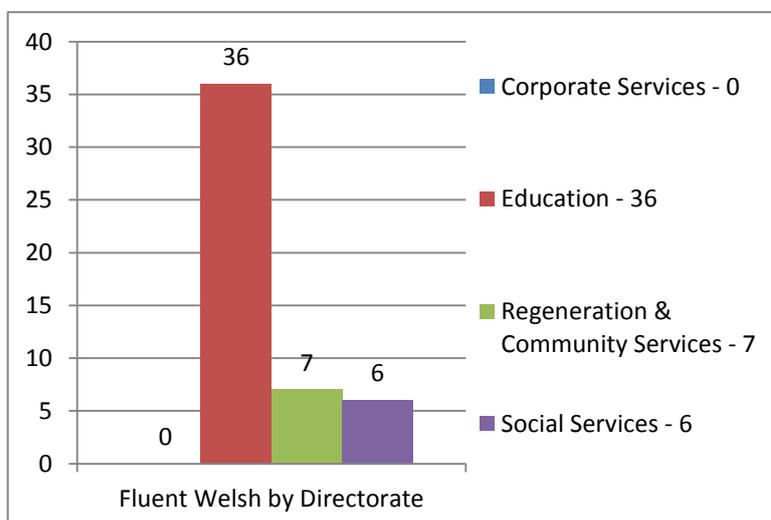


The above graphs show that the figures are very similar across all 4 skill areas. The percentage of staff that declare, they are 'fluent' is typically around 1% - 2% while the percentage who say they have 'no ability' is between 57%-59%. Nearly a quarter of staff (24%) consider themselves as having an ability to Understand Welsh, while only 17% have an ability to Write Welsh, with 1 in 5 noting an ability to Read Welsh and slightly more (21%) being able to Speak Welsh.

Fluent Welsh Speakers by Directorate

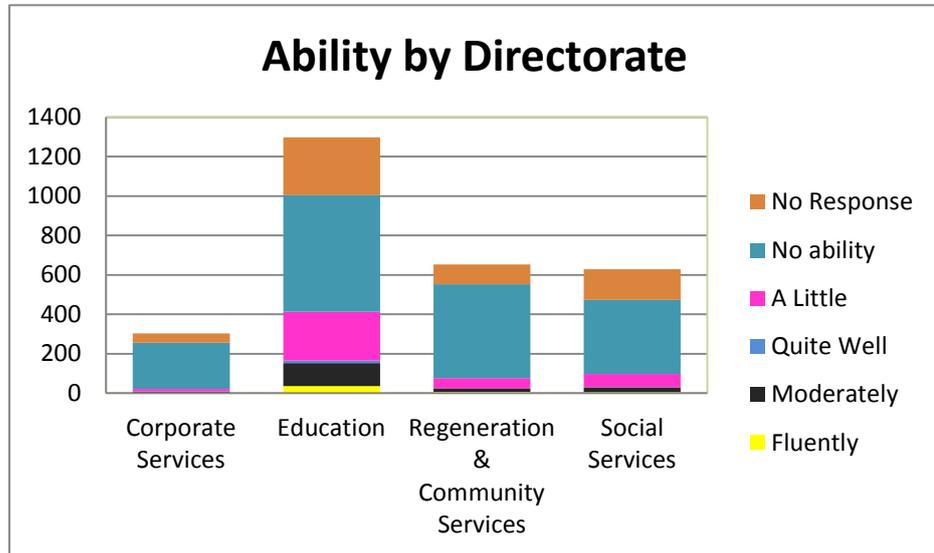
The following graphs and tables reflect the corporate spread of Fluent Welsh Speakers by Directorate and Contract Type.

Education has the most fluent Welsh Speakers (36) and it is noted that there are no staff who declare fluency within Corporate Services.



Directorate	Fluently	Moderately	Quite Well	A Little	No ability	No Response
Corporate Services	0	7	1	14	235	46
Education	36	117	13	247	591	293
Regeneration & Community Services	7	17	0	53	475	101
Social Services	6	24	2	66	375	155
Total	49	165	16	380	1676	595

When comparing to the previous year's Annual Report, there has been a 23% reduction in the number of staff identifying as fluent Welsh Speaking (63 in 2017/18).



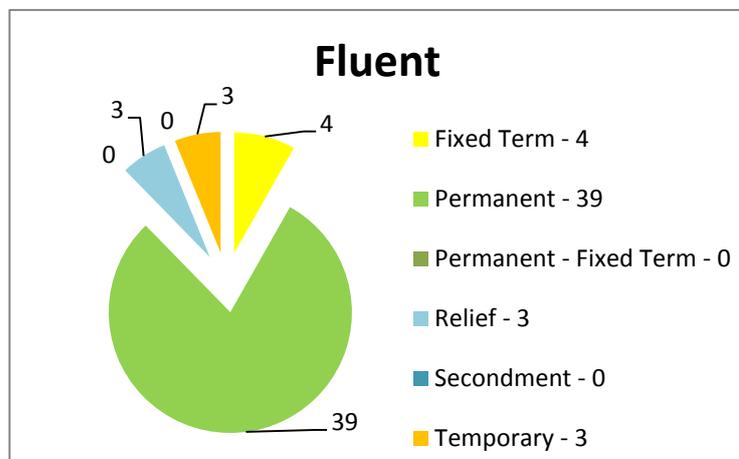
Corporately there is a fairly good foundation to encourage

and support the development of our employee's Welsh Language Speaking Skills further, given that 165 staff declare they have a Moderate ability, 16 can do 'Quite Well' and 380 can speak 'a little'.

Fluent Welsh Speakers by Contract Type:

Contract Type	Fluently	Moderately	Quite Well	A Little	No ability
Fixed Term	4	12	2	64	73
Permanent	39	135	12	249	1432
Permanent - Fixed Term		3	1	13	19
Relief	3	8	1	27	113
Secondment					1
Temporary	3	7		27	38
Total	49	165	16	380	1676

When considering the Contract Type of those staff who identify as Fluent Welsh Speakers, the highest number (39) are on Permanent Contracts; with the remainder on Fixed Term (4), Relief (3) and Temporary Contracts (3). There is little change when compared to the previous year.



In terms of resilience it is noted that 135 of those staff who declare a 'Moderate' ability to speak Welsh are on Permanent Contracts, as are 249 Permanent staff can speak 'A Little.'

4. Welsh Language Training

Standard 170 requires:

- The number of members of staff who attended training courses you offered in Welsh during the year;
- If a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during that year, the percentage of the total number of staff attending the course who attended the Welsh version

During the reporting period, the online training Croeso Cymraeg course was completed by 2 officers.

There were no courses delivered through the medium of Welsh. This is perhaps not surprising given that only 3 of the 2,881 staff identified their language preference as Welsh.

5. Recruitment - Welsh Language Skills Requirement

Standard 170 required the number of new and vacant posts that you advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where:

- Welsh language skills were essential,
- Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post,
- Welsh language skills were desirable, or
- Welsh language skills were not necessary

During the scope of the reporting period a total of 135 posts were advertised by the Council; of which 20 posts stated that Welsh Language Skills were **essential** and 115 posts identified Welsh as '**desirable**'.

The Council's policy is that all posts are to be made Welsh 'Desirable' as a minimum requirement. Therefore no posts will ever feature that identify Welsh language skills as 'not necessary'. Also, no posts were listed in the reporting period where Welsh language skills were identified as skills that needed to be learnt when an individual was appointed to a post.

6. The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

Standard 145 requires Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to produce a strategy detailing how it will promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language over the next five years¹.

The aims of the Blaenau Gwent's Welsh Language Strategy are linked with the Welsh Government's vision to create a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. In order to meet a target of 44% increase of Welsh speakers by 2050, we would need to gain an additional 2,324 Welsh speakers against the 2011 Census Blaenau Gwent baseline of 5,284. Therefore, this represents an average annual increase of 70 additional Welsh speakers, i.e. 3% of the target figure of an additional 2,324 in Blaenau Gwent for the next 33 years.

The Council has identified the following three Welsh Language Promotion objectives:

- i. Promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language within the families and the community;
- ii. Increase the provision of Welsh language education and informal activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language;
- iii. Increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace.

http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/images/att6176.pdf

Below are some of the key pieces of work being taken forward to promote the Welsh Language within the Council and communities of Blaenau Gwent:

Objective one of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy states that: "The Council will promote and encourage the use of Welsh language within families and the community".

During 2018 the Council continued promoting of events as well as courses and day schools offered by Menter Iaith, Coleg Gwent and Cymdeithas Gymraeg Gwent on the Council's website.

Becoming Bilingual

The Council has produced a booklet promoting and ensuring that parents are fully aware of the Welsh-medium education and childcare options available to them. The aim of the booklet is to answer questions, address concerns and state the advantages of being bilingual. The booklet also maps a clear path for children through the school years from nursery, to primary and secondary schools and beyond. A copy of the booklet is available at:

https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Schools_and_Learning/Admissions_18_19/2018_10_020_Becoming_Bilingual_booklet_-_Blaenau_Gwent_v5_singles.pdf

Objective two of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy states: “To increase the provision of Welsh language education and informal activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language”.

Welsh Education Strategic Plan

Blaenau Gwent’s Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) was formally approved by Welsh Government in March 2018. The strategic objectives highlighted in the draft WESP document for the next three years can be summarised as follows:

- Raise the profile and levels of participation for Welsh-medium education across the County Borough by 2020, to contribute to the vision for one million speakers by 2050.
- Increase the early year’s provision offer to stimulate parental demand to enable growth across the County Borough.
- Increase transition rates from Welsh-medium nursery provision to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg by 50% in 2020.
- Work regionally with South East Wales Local Authorities to secure places for Blaenau Gwent learners in Welsh-medium secondary provision between 2017-2020 and beyond.
- Improving Welsh medium learner outcomes by 2020 so that learners raise aspirations and improve their life chances.

http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/images/att5545.pdf

Seedling Provision

The Blaenau Gwent 21st Century Schools Band B Programme involves the delivery of a Welsh-medium seedling school. The seedling provision is focused on addressing the latent demand for Welsh-medium education identified within the Tredegar / Sirhowy valley, whilst also increasing the provision of Welsh-medium education within Blaenau Gwent, which is presently the only Council with 1 Welsh-medium primary school.

In October 2018, Blaenau Gwent Council received confirmation that they were successful in securing £6 million, awarded in line with the growth of the seedling school proposed under Band B, along with the development of a new 210 place Welsh-medium primary school, which will accommodate seedling pupils moving forward.

Objective three of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy state the Council will aim: “To increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace”.

The Council actively promoted the online Croeso Cymraeg (a Welsh Welcome) course among staff. The Croeso Cymraeg course is a 10 hour online course designed for people who are keen to develop their Welsh Language skills, who consider themselves as having ‘no ability’ or can speak ‘a little’ or as a refresher/further development for those who speak ‘quite well’. The course was promoted to all staff to increase confidence when answering telephone calls in Welsh or for those staff fulfilling a Reception role. As noted above, during 2018 the Council continued promoting a range of external courses and events.

Political Leadership Engagement

The Leader of the Council / Executive Member for Corporate Services continues to hold portfolio responsibility for the Welsh Language and Equalities. Where appropriate, Welsh Language and Equalities is considered politically through Corporate Overview Scrutiny, Executive and where appropriate the Council.

Professional Leadership Engagement

The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) is made up of the Managing Director, Directors and all Heads of Service and includes all of the senior officers. CLT is the decision making body for the corporate element of the Council. CLT recently undertook an internal audit of corporate compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. All Heads of Service have been fully involved in the audit. Responsibility for effective implementation of the standards rests with staff across all directorates and departments.

The Education Transformation Team review and monitor the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) monthly; providing termly reports to the Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) and provides annual reports to Welsh Government. In addition, WEF development and progress reports are taken via the Council's political processes annually. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is also a key focus of the 21st Century Schools Programme Board and Admissions Forum.

Corporate Equality Network

The Corporate Equality Network (CEN) acts as the overarching equalities and Welsh language group for the Council, with a purpose to ensure that the Council as a whole is able to meet its statutory duties relating to the Welsh Language and the Equality Act 2010. The network is made up of key officers representing a range of departments/divisions of the Council with the responsibility of taking forward the equality agenda for the Council. The CEN has four current work-streams, one of which is Welsh Language.

The Policy Team

The Policy team support, advise and guide the political and professional leads on all matters relating to the Welsh Language. The Council's Policy Team continued to offer views and experiences in the key consultations, which during the reporting cycle included the Consultation on Draft Code of Practice.

Welsh Language Guidance for Staff

A range of short, practical and easy to follow guides, have been produced and feature on a designated Welsh Language Guidance page on the Council's intranet (<http://intranet/policies-plans-strategies/welsh-language-guidance.aspx>).

These guides will assist staff to effectively implement many of the Service Delivery, Policy Making and Operational Standards. The guides include describing how staff should answer the telephone bilingually, using bilingual out of office templates, basic greetings, correspondence disclaimers and guidance on how to obtain translation. These are working documents are revisited, revised and updated when and where necessary.

The Compliance Notice and a synopsis of the Standards which includes staff's responsibilities are also available on the intranet page. This intranet page continues to be promoted via a number of mechanisms, including the Corporate Equality Network and Wider CMT.

Staff Welsh Language Preference

As noted in the previous annual report a Welsh Language Preference letter was sent to every staff member with the introduction of the Welsh language standards. This information was coordinated by line managers so that they understood their staff's language choice and the preferences which were logged centrally on the Council's iTrent HR system.

The Council has since introduced a 'MyInfo' employee self-service access to their personal information held on the iTrent system. This function means that staff have every opportunity to update this information, which includes any information on protected characteristics and language preference.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

The Council applies Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA's) and for different contexts e.g. policies, procedures and functions; service based assessments; and proposed financial efficiency saving proposals, which identify financial savings for the Council. etc. The EqIA process continues to include the Welsh language element. The document highlights the importance of the identifying 'positive' impacts in addition to adverse impacts, in line with Welsh language requirements. The EqIA framework remains under review.

Recruitment

When recruiting for new or vacant posts, Managers are required to complete a Welsh Language Job Assessment form. The information shapes the content of the job description, advertisement requisition, interview procedure and subsequently any employment. In line with the requirements of the Welsh language standards, the Council maintains appropriate records of each assessment, which are reported in this annual report.

Performance Monitoring Visit

The Head of Governance and Partnerships, the Service Manager for Policy and Partnerships and Policy Team Leader met with Dylan Jones, Compliance Officer with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office on 1 March 2019. The meeting was very positive, with discussions covering the following areas of interest:

- Findings of monitoring work in 2017-18 in relation to the organisation
- A Measure of Success – main message 1: availability and quality of services
- A Measure of Success – main message 2: encouraging use / understanding users' experiences
- A Measure of Success – main message 3: considering impact on the Welsh language / internal operations
- Operational matters