GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

Welsh Language Services

Annual Monitoring Report 2025-2026



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Executive Summary

This report addresses the statutory duty of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (the Health Board) to provide an annual account to the Welsh Language Commissioner on compliance with the Welsh Language Standards (the Standards) over the reporting year.

The report reflects the requirements and content as stated within Standard 120 of the Standards:

- Complaints
- Workforce Planning
- Recruitment
- Language Skills
- Training to improve Welsh language skills

This report also addresses compliance with Welsh Government's Five-year plan, 'More than just words'. An overview of progress is provided, including service developments and key achievements from April 2025 to March 2026.

What has been achieved

In evaluating the current position against the objectives set during the reporting year, the Health Board has accomplished its goals.

Some of these key accomplishments include:

- improved statutory compliance through an intense and comprehensive self-assessment approach;
- roll-out of the Standard 110 clinical consultations plan to increase capacity to deliver consultations in Welsh;
- improved overall compliance in creating a bilingual corporate identity and language visibility;
- increase in the uptake of Welsh language training, in addition to achieving all training targets established as part of the 'Work Welsh' Agreement for 2024-2025 with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to ensure continuation of funding support;
- expanded university and future workforce partnerships, delivering Welsh-language awareness sessions to future healthcare professionals at Wrexham University, North Wales Medical School, and at various schools across North Wales;
- conducting successful activities and engagement events to promote the Welsh language and increase visibility;

This report will elaborate on what has been achieved and how this has been done.

The achievements delivered over the past year are not only organisational milestones—they are making a meaningful difference to the experiences of patients and families across North Wales. The following patient stories outlines how these actions are being delivered, and felt, on the ground.

Bringing Patient Stories to Life

This year we got the chance to share two positive Welsh language patient stories, one from the Stroke Department at Deeside Community Hospital and the other from the Childrens Ward at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.

The first patient story we shared highlighted the profound impact of hearing the Welsh language following a stroke. The gentleman was left unable to communicate and feeling increasingly frustrated. His granddaughter described the sense of relief the family felt when members of staff at Deeside hospital spoke Welsh. She explained that it not only provided comfort and reassurance to them as a family, but also had a remarkable positive effect on her grandfather. Seeing his reaction when he heard Welsh for the first time since his stroke was incredibly moving, his eyes “lit up”, demonstrating the powerful connection between language and care.

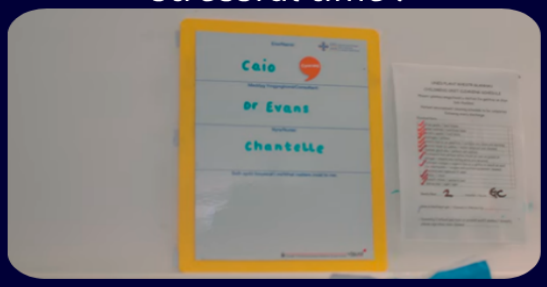


We shared how staff in Deeside support Welsh speaking patients by pairing them with Welsh speaking staff wherever possible, using Welsh words and phrases in everyday interactions, and ensuring the language is heard on the ward. Staff see first-hand how hearing Welsh provides comfort, reassurance and clarity, helping patients feel more at ease during what can be an extremely distressing time.





The other focused on Cai, a young boy whose experience of receiving a diabetes diagnosis was made easier and more reassuring through staff communicating with him and his family in Welsh on the Children’s Ward at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. This highlighted the positive impact of care delivered in a patient's preferred language can have in reassuring the patient and family during what could have been a stressful time .



Whilst on the ward, Cai’s preferred language (Welsh) was clearly identified in his medical notes and above his bed using the orange ‘Welsh’ magnet. This made the whole experience much easier, as all ward staff were aware that Cai and his family preferred to communicate in Welsh. It removed the pressure of having to repeatedly request care in Welsh and ensured that information relating to his diabetes diagnosis could be explained in their first language, making it easier to understand and absorb during a challenging time.

The Health Board was selected by Welsh Government as the focus of two short videos showcasing the More than Just Words framework in practice. To view them click here

Background and Service Model

This report not only reflects the Health Board's progress against the requirements noted in Standard 120, it also demonstrates how the service is designed to address the needs of the population.

The Health Board's Welsh Language Team has been structured to ensure its workstreams provide the necessary support mechanisms required to mainstream language requirements into service planning. It also provides a network of support on an operational level to ensure all written correspondence is provided bilingually, and that there is a structure in place to develop the workforce to improve their language skills.

It consists of four services that support the organisation to both deliver legislative requirements and to address patients' needs.

1. Legislative Compliance
   Ensuring that the organisation is supported to deliver its obligations under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

2. Promotion and Engagement
   In line with the operational elements of delivering the 'More than just words' Five-year plan, services are actively supported and projects and schemes initiated to increase understanding and awareness of culture, and the impact on patient care.

3. Training Provision
   The Welsh Language Training Programme is tailored to address the requirements of various services, along with additional support provide by the 'National Centre for Learning Welsh' with the Welsh Government-funded 'Work Welsh' Agreement.

4. Translation Services
   The Translation Team ensures that the organisation is able to provide information to patients in their preferred language, and are also providing simultaneous translation to facilitate language preference in clinical and corporate settings.

Governance and Self-regulation

Structural accountability is provided through the Welsh Language Strategic Forum (the Strategic Forum), chaired at Executive Director level, with the Health Board's Chairman appointed as Board-level Welsh Language Champion. The Strategic Forum establishes internal governance arrangements. The Terms of Reference steers the strategic approach, with membership consisting of senior and active leaders who are able to drive requirements forward. There is a scrutiny route for escalating any issues of significance to the People and Culture Committee, as well as annually reporting to the Board on compliance and achievements.

Welsh Language Services Risk Register

It is essential that the Health Board recognises potential areas of risk in relation to the Welsh language and a dedicated Risk Register is in operation. Current risks include meeting the demands of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, implementing the "Active Offer" principle in line with 'More than just words', and delivering the 'Bilingual Skills Policy and Procedure'.

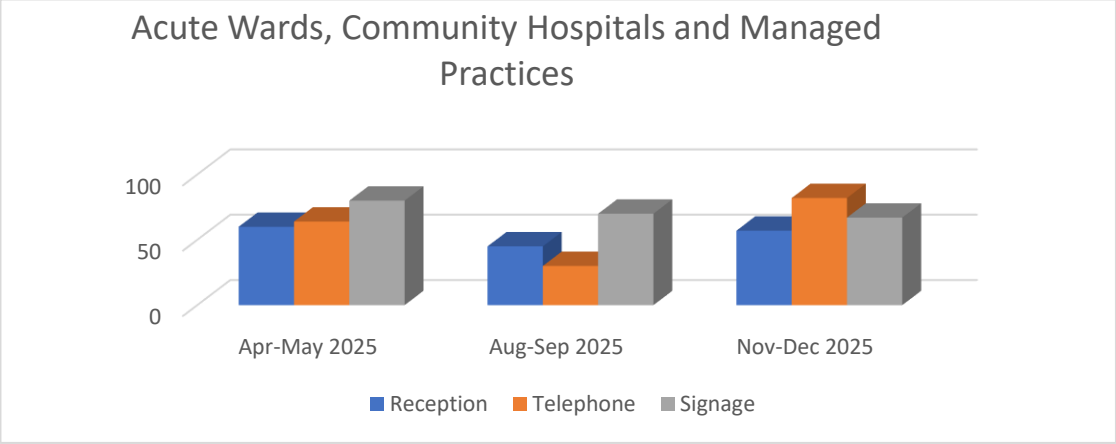
All risks have been reviewed during 2025-2026, with all three risk ratings currently at moderate or minor. In assessing current position, no risks required escalation.

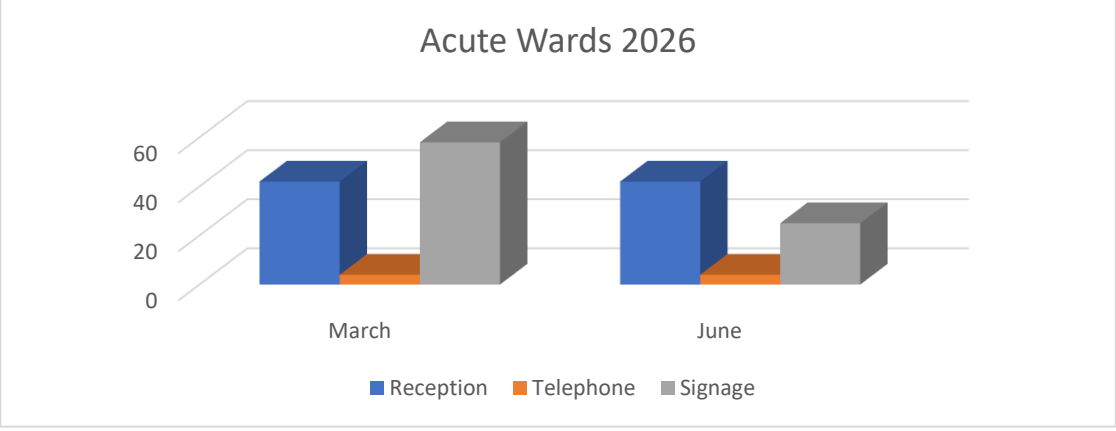
The Welsh Language Services Risk Register is monitored quarterly, and reported upon bi-annually to the Welsh Language Strategic Forum.

Internal Performance Assurance

The Health Board's self-regulation approach continued with the Mystery Shopper Monitoring Programme with the aim of providing strong assurance of the organisation's commitment to deliver high-quality Welsh-language services and maintaining compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Monitoring results confirmed that Welsh-language signage remains a significant organisational strength, with consistently high levels of compliance across sites, demonstrating sustained commitment to a visible and accessible bilingual environment.

The programme also offered valuable insight into areas where further improvement can be targeted, specifically reception interactions, telephone contact, and the visibility of the "Active Offer".





Lower scores in acute wards must be viewed in context as it is clinical staff, rather than dedicated reception teams, often managing first-point-of-contact interactions while prioritising direct patient care. This operational reality explains some variation and highlights the unique challenges of delivering consistent bilingual communication in busy clinical settings.

Overall, the programme has strengthened the Health Board's understanding of where targeted support will have the greatest impact. The monitoring programme demonstrates that the Health Board has robust arrangements in place to assess Welsh language service delivery and identify areas for improvement. Strong performance in signage compliance provides evidence of sustained commitment to the Welsh Language Standards, while the findings from acute ward settings have offered valuable insight into the challenges faced within clinical environments. The organisation will use these findings to strengthen awareness, improve consistency of service delivery and enhance the visibility of the "Active Offer" during 2026-27, ensuring that Welsh-speaking patients continue to receive an increasingly positive experience when accessing services.

Welsh Language Standards

The Welsh Language Standards (the Standards) have been in operation since the imposition date of 30 May 2019. Significant progress has been made in progressing the implementation of the Standards, monitoring compliance and providing organisation-wide directive.

Monitoring Compliance

Monitoring activity against the Standards is progressing well across the organisation. Several Divisions have now completed a second cycle of review, enabling clear measurement of improvement from the original baseline. Notably, the East Integrated Health Community has demonstrated substantial progress since the first round, supported by the effective implementation of a wide range of remedial actions.

The example below highlights the improvements achieved within Children's Services in the East, illustrating how targeted actions are translating into meaningful and sustained change.

A Progress Summary Report was developed for Children's Services, comparing the findings of the initial monitoring work in 2024-2025 to the follow-on progress during 2025-2026. The overall position noted:

- significant improvements in compliance across all standards
- majority of standards now fully compliant or near full compliance

Compliance Level	2024-2025	2025-2026
≥90% compliant	71	107
≥70% compliant	16	2
≤50% compliant	14	1

There has been a clear shift from **mixed compliance** to **consistently high compliance,** and the key improvements were seen in these areas:

1. Telephony

- Major improvement in offering Welsh language services over the telephone
- Standard Operating Procedures introduced, with staff guidance issued and spot checks implemented
- Standard 9, relating to informing a caller that a Welsh service is available moved from non-compliant to fully compliant

2. Capturing Language Preference

- Now routinely recorded via WPAS and referral forms
- Staff reminders issued and process embedded
- Shift from inconsistent to a systematic approach

3. Meetings & Engagement

- Language preference now routinely asked for meetings
- Translation provision planned proactively
- Previously non-compliant areas now fully compliant

4. Documents & Forms

- Key documents now available in Welsh as standard
- Emergency contact forms fully translated and in use
- Transition from development stage to full implementation

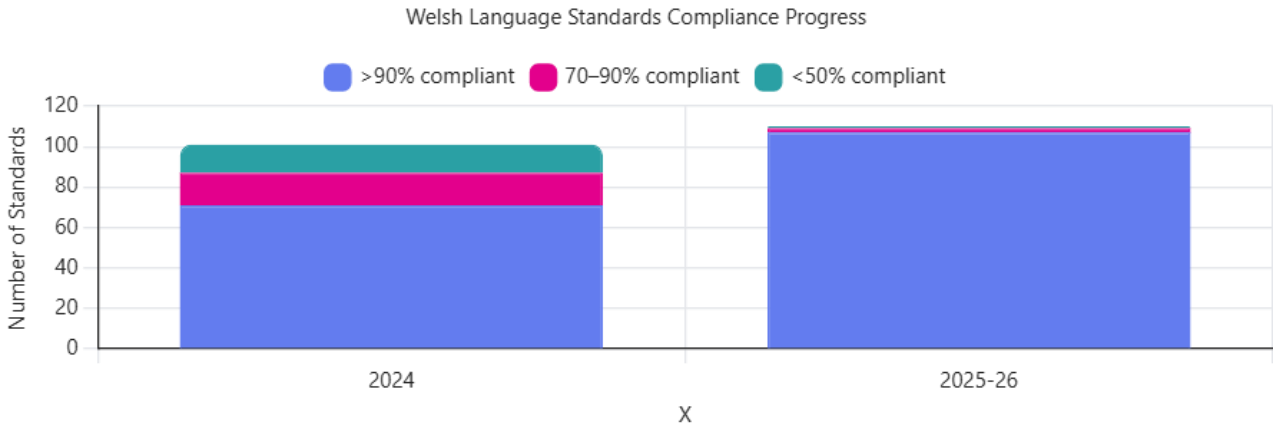
5. Reception & Public-Facing Services

- Welsh language signage and badges now in place
- Staff visibility and access to Welsh improved
- Fully compliant within these service areas

6. Promotion of Welsh Language Services

- Services clearly promoted as available in Welsh
- Information consistently bilingual across platforms

This demonstrates that significant efforts have been made across all areas which can be viewed in the compliance progress chart below:



This demonstrates that ongoing monitoring activity has driven notable improvements in compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, with several areas now demonstrating strengthened and more consistent adherence. This enhanced compliance is already having a positive, tangible

impact on patient experience, particularly through increased availability of Welsh-language communication and more responsive, culturally aligned services.

These developments highlight how systematic monitoring is not only supporting statutory compliance but also delivering meaningful benefits for patients and communities across our services.

Increasing the Health Board's capacity to deliver services in Welsh in line with Standard 110

The five-year programme to enhance compliance with Standard 110 entered its second year during the reporting period. Standard 110 requires Health Boards to publish a plan for each five-year period setting out the extent to which they are able to offer to carry out a clinical consultation in Welsh, and the proposed actions to increase the ability to do so.

This year's activity centred on developing a comprehensive "Active Offer" Toolkit designed to support wards, departments and services in consistently offering Welsh-language care to patients. The toolkit includes visual prompts such as orange magnets to place above a patient's bed, stickers and badges, alongside posters, an information leaflet and guidance on implementing a 'Buddy Scheme'.

The toolkit has already been introduced to the Stroke Team at Deeside Community Hospital, identified as the pilot site. Staff engagement has been highly positive, with the team demonstrating strong commitment to meeting patients' linguistic needs alongside their clinical requirements.

Engagement with senior clinical leaders has continued to strengthen organisational awareness of Standard 110. Presentations were delivered to both the Senior Nurses meeting and the Dietetics Senior Leadership Team, outlining the five-year plan and reinforcing expectations around compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

Early exploratory discussions have also taken place with a Consultant in Elderly Care at Ysbyty Gwynedd regarding the feasibility of recording whether clinical consultations are actively offered in Welsh. While the concept was welcomed, practical challenges were identified, particularly given the high proportion of Welsh-speaking patients and the increasing volume of mandatory clinical documentation.

The Welsh Language Team again supported the Dementia Team at Ysbyty Gwynedd in promoting the "Active Offer". The Dementia Team continues to champion the importance of providing Welsh-language care for vulnerable patients, and information was displayed for staff and the public highlighting the critical role of language in delivering safe, person-centred care for people living with dementia.

Standard Operating Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been produced on specific Standards, providing detailed guidance for staff to ensure accurate understanding and compliance. SOP development prioritised areas of concern that were highlighted either by external concerns or through monitoring arrangements.

SOPs have been created for:

- Corresponding with the public (Standard 7)
- Answering the telephone (Standards 8, 9 and 10)

- Meetings not open to the public (Standards 21, 22, 22a and 22ch)
- Conducting Case Conferences in Welsh (Standard 25)
- Reception Services (Standards 50, 52 and 53)
- Assessing the need to offer courses in Welsh (Standard 63)
- Arrangement of Interviews (Standard 108)
- Translation Guidelines (Overall Compliance with the Standards)

All SOPs have been published on the Health Board's intranet site, 'BetsiNet'. Work will continue during the next reporting year to create further SOPs to include all Standards.

Complaints' Procedures

The Welsh Language Commissioner undertook an Enquiry Line into organisational complaints procedures in late 2025. The purpose of this exercise was to assess the effectiveness of organisations' arrangements for receiving, managing and learning from complaints relating to the Welsh language.

As bodies subject to the Welsh Language Standards, organisations are required to maintain specific processes under the supplementary standards for recording and responding to such complaints. The Enquiry Line sought to evaluate the robustness of these arrangements, identify good practice, highlight areas requiring improvement, and provide recommendations to strengthen compliance.

In response to the Commissioner's findings, the Health Board has taken steps to enhance the visibility and accessibility of information relating to Welsh-language complaints. Updated content has been published on the Health Board's website, both within the Welsh Language pages and on the People's Enquiry and Resolution Service pages. This information clearly outlines the routes available for raising concerns regarding the provision of bilingual services and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

To support organisational learning and continuous improvement, Welsh-language complaints have now been established as a standing agenda item at the Regulatory Assurance Group. This ensures regular scrutiny at a senior level and promotes consistent oversight of compliance, themes arising from complaints, and opportunities for service improvement.

Overall, the reporting period reflects a year of substantial progress in strengthening compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and embedding bilingual practice across the organisation. Monitoring activity has driven measurable improvements, with a marked shift from mixed compliance to consistently high performance across standard areas.

Collectively, these achievements demonstrate that the Health Board is meeting its statutory responsibilities alongside steadily increasing its capacity to deliver safe, person-centred care in Welsh, ensuring that patients experience the benefits of improved bilingual communication and culturally aligned services across North Wales.

Workforce Development Programme

The Health Board's Welsh Language Training Team has continued to make significant progress in developing a confident, bilingual workforce through the delivery of a comprehensive programme of Welsh-language learning tailored to organisational needs.

During the reporting year, more than 1,000 members of staff participated in Welsh-language training, representing a 4 per cent increase compared with 2024–25. This upward trend reflects the strong and growing commitment among staff to developing their Welsh-language skills and applying them in practice to enhance the quality, safety and cultural appropriateness of services provided to patients across North Wales.

The Team has adopted a proactive and strategic approach to aligning learning provision with legislative requirements and organisational priorities. Regular assessments of learning needs across services have enabled the development of targeted courses for frontline staff, ensuring that priority groups receive focused support to strengthen the Health Board's capacity to deliver high-quality bilingual care.

This approach has been reinforced through continued partnership working with national bodies. The Health Board renewed its twelve-month contract with the National Centre for Learning Welsh under the Welsh Government-funded *Work Welsh* scheme, ensuring continuity of provision, collaborative working and the retention of the Welsh-language Support Officer. Over the past year, 798 members of staff accessed *Work Welsh* courses, further expanding the organisation's bilingual capability.

A notable development has been the introduction of the *Building Confidence / Codi Hyder* training scheme, delivered in partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The Health Board has worked closely with the Centre to pilot a bespoke programme within the Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Division, aimed at strengthening Welsh-language skills and supporting the 'More than just words' ambition of increasing bilingual service provision. This innovative initiative is expected to increase the number of confident Welsh-speaking staff within MHLD, ensuring that patients receive an enhanced and culturally aligned bilingual service.

Collectively, these developments demonstrate the Health Board's sustained commitment to building a future bilingual workforce and ensuring that Welsh-language capability remains a core component of high-quality, person-centred care.

The Health Board's Welsh Learner of the Year Award evening was held this year, and provides an important opportunity not only to celebrate the achievements of our learners and acknowledge their dedication to developing Welsh-language skills, but also to showcase the Health Board's leadership in this area across the Welsh public sector. The event highlights how our commitment to bilingual capability is setting a strong example nationally and demonstrates the organisation's ongoing investment in building a confident, skilled and culturally aligned workforce.

The following sections provide an overview of this year's event, capturing the celebrations, the achievements recognised on the night and the wider impact of the Health Board's continued investment in Welsh-language development.

Welsh Language Training Provision Data Analysis



BCUHB renewed a 12-month contract with the National Centre of Learning Welsh.
798 members of staff had access to the 'Work Welsh' courses, including self-study, residential and confidence-building learning opportunities.



238 members of staff attended the newly launched 'Cwrs Croeso/Welcome Course', which was developed in response to the objectives set out in the Welsh Government's Mwy na Geiriau / More than Just Words five-year plan.



The internal tutor supported over 230 members of staff in learning Welsh during the year, marking a 17.5% increase from 2024–25. Encouragingly, more than 70% of participants chose to continue their Welsh language studies after completing a course.



42 members of staff attended 5-day intense courses at Nant Gwrtheyrn, with four members of staff attending a course designed specifically for staff from overseas and 12 members of staff attended the Fast Track to learning Welsh residential courses.



BCU's Welsh Learner of the Year '24 winner, Leanne Parry reached the final round of the prestigious Welsh Learner of the Year competition at the National Eisteddfod. The team arranged a Welsh Learners trip to the Eisteddfod to support Leanne.



The 'Y Gymraeg yn Betsi' Facebook group continues to showcase examples of good practice and success stories, with 593 followers at present, which is a 22% increase since April 2025.

The Health Board's Welsh Learner of the Year Competition 2026

The Health Board's Welsh Learner of the Year Competition continues to play a significant role in supporting the Health Board's commitment to developing a bilingual workforce and improving services for Welsh-speaking patients and communities across North Wales.



This year, the competition received over 50 nominations from staff across the organisation, demonstrating strong engagement with Welsh language learning and reflecting the growing importance of bilingual skills within healthcare delivery. Following a robust judging process, six finalists were shortlisted across two categories: Entry/Foundation Level and Intermediate/Higher Level.



The awards ceremony, held at the Kinmel Hotel, Abergele, successfully celebrated the achievements of learners and was widely regarded as an enhancement on previous years.

Awards were presented to Bethany Frempong Jones (Entry/Foundation Level) and Dr Caroline Jones (Intermediate/Higher Level), while Mark Butler received the Tutor's Choice Award in recognition of his exceptional commitment to learning Welsh. The event was supported by sponsorship from Cymen and Nant Gwrtheyrn.

The competition continues to deliver clear organisational benefits by recognising learner achievement, encouraging participation in Welsh language training, promoting the practical use of Welsh in the workplace, and strengthening the Health Board's culture of bilingualism. The quality of nominations and finalists highlights the innovative developments in Welsh language training provision.

Overall, the Welsh Learner of the Year Competition remains an important event for promoting and normalising the use of Welsh within the Health Board and supports the Health Board's strategic commitment to delivering high-quality bilingual healthcare services.







Translation Services

The Translation Team plays a critical strategic role in enabling the Health Board to meet its statutory obligations under the Welsh Language Standards and to strengthen the organisation's wider commitment to delivering equitable, person-centred care.

By providing high-quality written translation and interpretation services across all divisions, the team ensures that bilingual communication is embedded as a core operational requirement rather than an adjunct activity. Sustained demand for translation reflects both the increasing visibility of the Welsh language across Health Board functions and the organisation's focus on improving patient experience through accessible, culturally aligned information.

The team's robust quality-assurance processes and prioritisation of time-sensitive materials support operational resilience, mitigate compliance risk, and ensure that staff and patients receive accurate information in their preferred language, thereby reinforcing the Health Board's strategic aim of delivering safe, inclusive and legally compliant services.

The Health Board continues to generate external income through the provision of specialist Welsh-language translation services. In 2024–2025, the Welsh Language Team entered into a Service Level Agreement with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to deliver written translation support, reflecting confidence in the team's capability and professional standards.

The success of this arrangement led to a renewed agreement in 2025–2026, and both organisations have now confirmed continuation for a third consecutive year in 2026–2027. This sustained partnership demonstrates the high quality, reliability and reputation of the team's work, while contributing valuable recurring income to the Health Board.

The team has continued to modernise its operational approach by enhancing the use of Translation Memory technology, which has been embedded in daily workflows for several years. As part of a broader efficiency programme, the team has explored opportunities to further streamline processes, reduce duplication, and accelerate turnaround times for high-volume translation requests. This work has included investment in an upgraded Translation Memory system, 'Wordfast', which offers enhanced functionality, improved consistency controls, and greater capacity to support complex translation tasks. The adoption of this updated software represents a strategic step towards strengthening productivity, supporting demand growth, and ensuring that the Health Board maintains a resilient, high-quality bilingual communication service aligned with statutory and organisational priorities.

Urgent translation requests during the reporting period have included press releases, patient correspondence, annual reports, and time-critical public-health information for social media channels. The Translation Team consistently prioritises all public- and patient-facing communications to ensure that essential information is available bilingually within 1–2 working days, and, where capacity permits, within the same working day for high-urgency items. To further safeguard timely bilingual communication, an out-of-hours service remains in place for exceptional circumstances. This provision ensures that critical information can be issued simultaneously in Welsh and English, reinforcing the Health Board's commitment to treating the Welsh language on the basis of equality and maintaining compliance with statutory requirements.

Overall, the number of words translated during the reporting year was 4,622,786.
The services with the highest translation demand were:

Service	Number of Words Translated
Workforce and Organisational Development	1,024,588
Corporate Office	234,005
Speech and Language Therapy Services	127,844
Child and Adolescent Services	127,314
Communications	122,239

The Translation Team continues to offer support in the form of simultaneous translation provided either face-to-face or on the online platforms of 'Zoom' and 'Microsoft Teams'. A total of 43 requests were received with the majority requiring interpretation for stakeholder events, meetings and conferences, and interviews for applicants who wish to have their interviews in Welsh.

Activities and Promotional Events

Activities and promotional events such as national celebration days and events, as well as wider engagement campaigns play an important strategic role in helping the Health Board promote, normalise and celebrate the Welsh language among staff, patients and the public.

By participating in high-profile cultural events and marking national occasions, the organisation demonstrates visible leadership in championing Welsh language and identity, reinforcing its commitment to delivering services that reflect the culture and linguistic needs of the communities it serves.

National Eisteddfod in Wrexham
The Health Board attended the National Eisteddfod which was held at Wrexham, and this year, the stall was delivered as a collaborative effort, with different healthcare organisations attending on different days. Over four busy and successful days, colleagues from a range of Health Board services—including the Stroke Prevention Team, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and the Help Me Quit programme—welcomed visitors, shared information and highlighted the breadth of services available across the Health Board, with a particular emphasis on the importance of Welsh-language services and their positive impact on patients, service users and families.





Everyone's involvement throughout the week helped to showcase the diversity and reach of Health Board services and created valuable opportunities for meaningful conversations with members of the public about accessing care and support through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh Language Team was also invited to the Careers Wales stand to provide advice, guidance and information on career opportunities within the Health Board. In addition, the Team took part in a panel discussion with Wrexham University and Jeremy Miles MS, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, exploring how the Health Board can inspire, develop and support the healthcare workforce of the future in Wales.

National Celebration Days

To mark Diwrnod Santes Dwynwen, the Health Board delivered a highly visible and engaging campaign celebrating staff pride in working for the organisation. As part of the celebration, staff across all sites were invited to share why they love working for the Health Board, highlighting the values, teamwork and sense of purpose that underpin their roles.





To celebrate St David's Day, the Health Board delivered a series of high-profile engagement activities across its three acute sites. Mudiad Meithrin and Cymraeg i Blant were welcomed onto the children's wards at Ysbyty Maelor, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and Ysbyty Gwynedd, where children—and staff—enjoyed interactive sessions featuring well-known Welsh nursery rhymes, creating a warm and culturally rich experience for families. The Health Board also announced the staff shortlisted for the 2026 Welsh Learner of the Year awards, launched the new 'More Than Just Words' videos, and introduced a digital form to streamline resource ordering.

Information stands were held at each acute site, providing opportunities to engage directly with staff, promote upcoming Welsh-language learning opportunities, and distribute resources. Collectively, these activities strengthened the visibility of Welsh language and culture across the organisation.







To mark International Women's Day, the Health Board celebrated the vital contribution women make across the organisation and the wider NHS. Women represent a significant proportion of the Health Board's workforce and have played an integral role in shaping healthcare delivery throughout history. The Health Board highlighted and honoured the achievements of women colleagues and volunteers from across all services, with particular recognition for those who provide bilingual care to patients in North Wales. This celebration reinforced the organisation's commitment to equality, visibility and cultural inclusion, while showcasing the dedication, professionalism and impact of the women who support the Health Board's mission every day.

These activities created opportunities for direct engagement, raising awareness of the Welsh language as a valuable workplace skill, and strengthen public confidence in the Health Board's dedication to bilingual care.

An additional highlight within this year's activities and promotional events was the introduction of the first Welsh-language oncology bell in Wales. Patients on the Children's Ward at Wrexham Maelor Hospital can now celebrate the completion of their cancer treatment with a meaningful touch of Welsh pride, following the installation of a bilingual end-of-treatment bell inscribed with a Welsh-language message. This development provides children and families with the opportunity to mark a significant milestone in their first language and reflects the Health Board's commitment to the visibility of Welsh within clinical environments. The arrival of the bell was warmly received and represents a positive step in enhancing patient experience through the integration of Welsh language and identity in care settings.





Welsh Language Week

Our eighth annual Welsh Language Week took place from 20–24 October, raising awareness of the importance of bilingual healthcare and celebrating the work of staff who support Welsh-language services across the Health Board. The week also provided opportunities for the Welsh Language Team to engage directly with staff.

Highlights included:

• Sharing a patient story through the launch of a video, highlighting the importance of the Welsh language on our Childrens wards.

• Dewin visited all three Childrens wards in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin and Cymraeg i Blant who sang and read books with the children on the ward.

• 'Turbo Charge your Welsh' course were available to staff, giving them the opportunity to improve their Welsh, gain confidence in using the Welsh language and also learn more about our Welsh language training opportunities.

• Information stalls at the three acute hospitals and community hospitals in Llandudno, Denbigh and Deeside to celebrate Shwmae Sumae day. The stalls gave us the chance to chat with staff and give advice and guidance on a range of topics relating to bilingual services. In addition, we encouraged staff to use their Cymraeg/Welsh on a day-to-day basis at work.

• A 'Welsh Pledge' competition was held at the stalls to give staff the opportunity to commit to doing one thing regarding the Welsh language, e.g. I promise to start every conversation in Welsh with my patients.

At the end of the week we selected a name at random, Sarah from Deeside Hospital won a hamper for Welsh language pledge.

• Launch of the 2026 Welsh Learner of the Year Awards.

• Radio interviews on Radio Ysbyty Gwynedd and Radio Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.





















The week was a great success, celebrating the Welsh language, promoting bilingualism and encouraging staff to develop and use their Welsh-language skills.

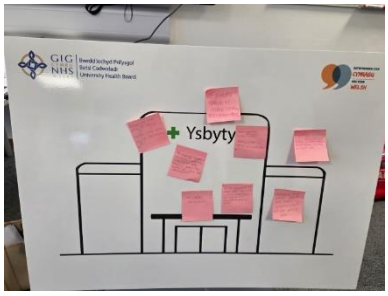
Showcasing Welsh Language as a Professional Skill

The Health Board has strengthened its strategic partnerships with universities, schools and sector organisations to promote the Welsh language as a valuable professional skill and an essential component of a future bilingual workforce. Through this collaborative approach, the organisation is helping to embed the understanding that Welsh-language capability is integral to high-quality care and modern public-sector practice.

The Team has continued to work closely with Careers Wales on a range of engagement activities with learners across Ysgol Morgan Llwyd, Ysgol y Creuddyn, Ysgol Rhosnesni, Coleg Cambria and St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School and many more**.** These included Welsh in the Workplace sessions, carousel-style events where pupils, in small groups, had the opportunity to ask questions about the importance of the Welsh language in the workplace, as well as mock interviews for Year 10 pupils to help prepare them for their future careers. The Team also shared information and examples of good practice at careers fairs and other careers-related events.

These activities provided valuable opportunities to promote the use and importance of the Welsh language within healthcare settings and to raise awareness of the significant difference that Welsh-language services can make to patients, service users and their families. Through engagement with learners and young people, the Team highlighted the wide range of career opportunities available within healthcare and the importance of bilingual skills in delivering person-centred care.







It was encouraging to receive such positive feedback from school staff, with St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School commenting:

> *"It was great to have the Health Board's Welsh Language Team in school delivering again this year about the importance of Welsh in the workplace and in the medical sector. Having staff come in and deliver to pupils is extremely powerful in supporting the importance of being able to converse with patients in the language they are more comfortable with. This in turn supports the work of schools and student outcomes by helping to contextualise the importance of their learning and the subjects they study."*

Also, during the reporting period, the Health Board strengthened its partnership work with regional universities to support the development of a future bilingual workforce. The Welsh Language Team collaborated with Wrexham University as part of its new 20-credit 'Welsh in the Workplace 1' module for Health-Related Professions students, delivering Welsh-language and

language-awareness sessions designed to equip future clinicians with the confidence and skills to use Welsh in professional practice.





Similarly, the Health Board continued its engagement with Bangor University and the North Wales Medical School through the new Medicine Programme. The team delivered sessions outlining the organisation's strategic approach to promoting and embedding Welsh language and culture across clinical services, emphasising the importance of language choice in safe, person-centred care. One of the Health Board's Consultant in Care of the Elderly at Ysbyty Gwynedd provided a practitioner's perspective on the value of using Welsh daily in clinical interactions and the positive impact this has on patient experience.

The Health Board also took part in a question-and-answer session with Year 2 students at the North Wales Medical School to demonstrate the importance of speaking Welsh with patients, and the support offered by the Health Board once on placement.

These collaborations form an important component of the Health Board's long-term strategy to build a confident, bilingual clinical workforce and ensure that future generations of healthcare professionals are equipped to meet the linguistic needs of the population.

Key Performance Indicators

The data included below are in accordance with Standard 120 of the Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Workforce Planning

- ***Number and percentage of the organisation's employees whose Welsh language skills have been assessed across the organisation.***

Count of Employee Number	2023/24		2024/25		2025/26	
Individual Proficiency Level	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
0 - No Skills / Dim Sgiliau	9645	46.25%	10217	48.33%	10271	49.02%
1 - Entry/ Mynediad	2781	13.34%	2739	12.96%	2828	12.93%
2 - Foundation / Sylfaen	1371	6.57%	1394	6.59%	1426	6.52%
3 - Intermediate / Canolradd	1438	6.9%	1472	6.96%	1555	7.11%
4 - Higher / Uwch	1588	7.62%	1600	7.57%	1613	7.38%
5 - Proficiency / Hyfedredd	2743	13.15%	2778	13.14%	2926	13.38%
Total	19,566	93.8%	20,200	95.54%	20,619	96.34%
Total number of staff	20,852		21,142		21,871	

2025 / 2026 Data:

96.34 per cent of the entire workforce had recorded their Welsh language skills on ESR

2024 / 2025 Data:

95.54 per cent of the entire workforce had recorded their Welsh language skills on ESR

Training to Improve Welsh Language Skills

- ***Number and percentage of the organisation's workforce that received training to improve their Welsh skills to a specific qualification level.***

2025 / 2026 Data:

Number of the organisation's workforce that have accessed training to improve their Welsh skills to a specific qualification: 1037

This total equates to 4.9 per cent of the Health Board's current workforce.

2024 / 2025 Data:

Number of the organisation's workforce that have accessed training to improve their Welsh skills to a specific qualification: 995

This total equates to 4.7 per cent of the Health Board's current workforce

Recruitment

- ***Number and percentage of new and vacant posts advertised with the requirement that:***

2025 / 2026 Data:

- **Welsh language skills are essential - 274 (6.9%)**
- **Welsh language skills are desirable - 3631 (91.1 %)**
- **Welsh language skills to be learnt - 69 (1.7%)**
- **Welsh not a required skill - 10 (0.3%)**
- **Total number of vacancies advertised - 3984**
-

2024 / 2025 Data:

- **Welsh language skills are essential - 301 (6.5 per cent)**
- **Welsh language skills are desirable - 4238 (92.2 per cent)**
- **Welsh language skills to be learnt - 49 (1.1 per cent)**
- **Welsh not a required skill - 8 (0.17 per cent)**
- **Total number of vacancies advertised - 4596**

Complaints

- ***Number of complaints received about the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards***

  The Health Board received four new complaints relating to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards during the reporting year, three through the Welsh Language Commissioner and one through the Complaints Team.

  One complaint was referred to the status of an investigation by the Welsh Language Commissioner, and concerned delays in answering a Welsh telephone line. Evidence was provided stating that there were delays on the Welsh and English lines for a period of one hour while the call centre was moving from Bangor to Caernarfon.

  The other two complaints were dealt with by the Welsh Language Commissioner in full after the initial letter, and were not escalated to the status of an investigation. One complaint related to a failure to arrange a job interview through the medium of Welsh. The second concerned English-only signage in a Children's Outpatient Department.

  The complaint sent directly to the Health Board related to a lack of Welsh language service in a Dental Centre. The dentist was reminded of the six duties that primary care services need to comply with support offered from the Welsh Language Team.

  All complaints were addressed in full in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 complaints timetable or under the Putting Things Right Regulations.

Reflection and Forward Vision

This report has demonstrated that progress has been implemented in:

- improving the quality of care provided through the language of choice.
- increasing compliance with legal and statutory requirements.
- identifying initiatives that have been implemented and rolled out to respond to language need as an integral element of care.
- improving organisational development in terms of how the workforce is supported to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.

However, the Health Board is looking towards the initiatives and opportunities in development for the next reporting year through its three-year approach to service planning. There will be a focus on embedding Welsh language in Service Design and Delivery, enhancing the “Active Offer” across clinical settings through the implementation of the Standard 110 Five-year plan, and scaling successful initiatives across services to ensure consistent bilingual service delivery.

Setting the ambition for 2026-2027

Looking ahead, the Health Board's Integrated Medium-Term Plan 2026–2029 sets a clear vision for strengthening Welsh-language capability across services, and the coming year will focus on consolidating these foundations.

Key priorities will include:

- developing a clinical-focused plan to increase the use of Welsh in line with Standard 110;
- expanding targeted training for staff working with vulnerable groups;
- further enhancing governance arrangements to monitor compliance and progress.

Work will also continue to identify priority patient and workforce groups requiring additional support, alongside a renewed emphasis on increasing the visibility and everyday use of Welsh through staff engagement, social presence and the introduction of a Language Champions' Programme.

These actions will help embed Welsh more deeply within core functions and promote wider cultural ownership across the organisation, ensuring sustained progress and a stronger bilingual service for the people of North Wales.