# Annual report for 2022 to 2023 on our compliance with the Welsh language standards

September 2023

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# 1 | Introduction

On 25 July 2016, the Commission of Equality and Human Rights (EHRC) was presented by the Welsh Language Commissioner with:

Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

This notice

• sets out, or refers to, one or more standards specified by the Welsh Ministers under section 26(1), and

• requires a body (EHRC in this instance) to comply with the standard or standards set out or referred to.

The compliance notice remains in force unless, and until, it is revoked.

This seventh annual report outlines the progress achieved by the EHRC for the year 20 April 2022 – 19 April 2023 in delivering the Welsh Language Standards adhered to by the Commission. The Commission’s Welsh Language Officer oversees and monitors, on its behalf, the day to day implementation of the Standards. The Welsh Language Officer reports to the Head of Wales, who provides strategic oversight.

# 2 | Service delivery standards

The Commission provides information, advice and guidance and a signposting service. To that end information is provided in Welsh through:

* a bilingual website with a human rights tracker and up to date bilingual latest news and blog sections
* events and an Equality and Human Rights Exchange Network of 150 members. When at least 10% of the people that have registered an interest to attend state that they wish to use the Welsh language at an event, simultaneous translation is provided. Delegate packs for events are bilingual
* Wales Committee open forum sessions
* email and phone enquiries – e-mail signatures of everyone in the Wales team state:
	+ - Croeso ichi ysgrifennu atom yn Gymraeg. Fe gewch chi ateb yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at oedi.
		- We welcome correspondence in Welsh. We will respond in Welsh and this will not cause a delay.

A similar note is included on our standard letterhead when a letter is issued from the Wales team;

* When we publicise the main telephone number for our office in Wales we state alongside that we welcome being contacted in Welsh or English.
* publications, when the subject matter concerns Wales, are available in Welsh

We endeavour at all times to fully comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. There is guidance for all EHRC staff across Wales and GB on the Commission’s Intranet on how to implement those Standards, and guidance is included as part of induction for new staff.

## 2.1 Telephone communication

**All telephone calls to the main number of the office in Wales are answered with the greeting and name of the Commission given bilingually. More often than not there is a Welsh speaking person available for communication through the medium of Welsh. When specialist advice is needed and cannot be given orally in Welsh, the caller is given the option of speaking in English or communicating in written form in Welsh.**

**Other members of staff will answer the phone to external callers with a bilingual greeting and all have a bilingual message on their personal answer-phones.**

**When we publish our main telephone number we state in Welsh and in English that we welcome calls in Welsh.**

**Our main telephone call answering service in Wales uses a bilingual message which informs persons calling, in Welsh, that they can leave a message in Welsh.**

## 2.2 Communicating with stakeholders and holding events

**Circular, standard and news e-letters sent to stakeholders in Wales by the Commission in Wales are issued bilingually. The same applies to any letters, invitations, email straplines and footers sent by the Commission in Great Britain to stakeholders in Wales.**

**The following invitations and notices were sent out bilingually by the Commission in Great Britain to stakeholders in Wales:**

* 27 April 2022 – UPR report launch
* 28 April 2022 – Sexual harassment in the workplace – toolkit launch
* 9 June 2022 – Treatment of lower-paid ethnic minority workers in health and social care inquiry report launch
* 1 September 2022 – Artificial Intelligence in public services – guidance launch
* 30 September 2022 – Monthly stakeholder newsletter
* 3 October 2022 – EHRE event invitation
* 18 October 2022 – EHRE event invitation
* 27 October 2022 – Preventing hair discrimination in schools – guidance launch
* 1 November 2022 – Monthly stakeholder newsletter
* 9 November 2022 – invitation to apply to join panel of solicitors
* 30 November 2022 – Monthly stakeholder newsletter
* 15 December 2022 – Legal update – ending of two section 23 agreements
* 15 December 2022 – EHRE EOI stakeholder focus groups invitations SEPs evidence
* 16 December 2022 – Human Rights Monitoring update
* 11 January 2023 - EHRE EOI stakeholder focus groups invitations SEPs evidence – follow-up
* 20 January 2023 – Statutory Review – call for evidence in Wales
* 20 January 2023 – Invitation to apply to join panel of counsel
* 24 January 2023 – UNCRC report launch
* 30 January 2023 - Statutory Review – call for evidence in Wales – follow-up
* 31 January 2023 – Monthly stakeholder newsletter
* 2 February 2023 – UNICESCR report launch
* 8 February 2023 – Announcement of section 23 agreement with McDonald’s
* 15 February 2023 – Announcement of conclusion of Labour Party action plan
* 20 February 2023 – Invitation to roundtable
* 28 February 2023 – Challenging decisions in adult social care inquiry – report launch
* 28 February 2023 – Monthly stakeholder newsletter
* 7 March 2023 – Invitation to roundtable
* 30 March 2023 – Monthly stakeholder newsletter
* 14 April 2023 – PSED Technical Guidance launch

**When organising events for stakeholders in Wales, the Commission sends out bilingual invitations. Delegates are asked to inform the Commission prior to the event, whether they wish to communicate in Welsh. When at least 10% of the people that have registered an interest to attend state that they wish to use the Welsh language at the event, simultaneous translation is provided.**

**All communication to stakeholders by e-mail prior to events is sent bilingually. If Welsh is requested, delegate packs which contain agendas, evaluation forms, biographies of guest speakers and any other information pertinent to the event are bilingual.**

**Below is a list of events organised by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales over the year:**

**2022-23**

**13 July 2022: Socio-economic duty: Public Sector Leaders Forum; all communications including invitations and agendas were bilingual**

**6 October 2022: Socio-economic duty: Public Sector Leaders Forum; all communications including invitations and agendas were bilingual**

## ****2.3 Publishing and printing material directed at the public in Wales****

**The ‘Implementing the Welsh Language Standards’ guideline document, which is also on this web page, sets out the Commission’s normal practice when publishing and printing material directed at the public in Wales. All EHRC publications are now on-line digital copies.**

During the year, the following publications were published by the Commission in bilingual form:

**Corporate publications**

Business plan 2023 to 2024 (April 2023)

Whistleblowing report 2021 to 2022 (September 2022)

**Inquiries and investigations**

Inquiry into challenging decisions in adult social care (February 2023)

Inquiry into the experiences of lower-paid ethnic minority workers in health and social care (June 2022)

**Public sector equality duty**

Procurement: A guide for listed public authorities in Wales (June 2022)

Technical guidance on the public sector equality duty: Wales (April 2023)

Public sector equality duty: Guidance for schools in Wales (April 2023)

Buying better outcomes Wales: mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement (April 2023)

**Human rights monitoring**

Universal Periodic Review in Great Britain (April 2022)

Progress on disability rights in the United Kingdom (report on the UNCRPD) (August 2023)

**Research**

Economic, social and cultural rights in Great Britain (February 2023)

Engagement with the Public Sector Equality Duty by secondary schools, special schools and Pupil Referral Units in Wales: research report (April 2023)

## ****2.4 The website****

We are currently redeveloping our website. We plan to launch in late 2023.

The new website will provide:

* a better user experience
* a more stable hosting platform and technical improvements
* strong compliance with Welsh language standards
* easy access to equality and human rights guidance, news and legal cases

**How our website meets Welsh language standards**

The Commission in Wales section and most pages of the Great Britain website are in Welsh and English.

Every page on the new website will have an English/Welsh toggle option on the top and bottom of the page. This will allow users to easily access the corresponding page in the other language.

Beyond our website, we offer digital experiences in Welsh, such as:

* surveys or investigations (involving the public in Wales)
* online registrations for events in Wales
* job adverts (for jobs in Wales)
* links to external Welsh language versions of webpages (if available)

**How our Welsh language content performs**

According to annual website statistics (April 2022 to April 2023), there were 5,678 Welsh-language page views. 4,660 of these were by unique visitors.

**The role of the Welsh Language Officer**

With the support of the website team, the Welsh Language Officer is responsible for:

* editing, updating and uploading Welsh language pages
* quality control of the standard of Welsh we use
* ensuring equality and human rights terminology is clear for all users of our Welsh language versions

We usually publish the Welsh language webpage alongside the English webpage, however, exceptionally, if this is not possible at the time it is published as soon as possible, given EHRC’s resources, after the English version.

## ****2.5 Social media****

Over 90% of the Commission in Wales’ social media correspondence on EHRC Wales’ X (wasTwitter) account is undertaken in both Welsh and English and are published at the same time. All tweets are bilingual unless they are re-tweets from an English only account. Through social media the Commission regularly reminds stakeholders that it welcomes correspondence in either Welsh or English.

## ****2.6 Signs****

The Commission’s Wales office is located in Companies House, Cardiff. All the signs that direct visitors to the office are bilingual with the Welsh and English names appearing in that order respectively. Staff currently work on a hybrid format between our office and home.

## ****2.7 Awarding contracts****

Any agreements or arrangements which we make with third parties are consistent with the Welsh Language Standards. The Welsh Language is factored in to partnerships, collaborations, joint events and joint publications. Procurement contracts require contractors to factor in time and resources for the Welsh Language where appropriate.

Our procurement arrangements include provision for translation and communication support. Regarding translation and communication support, such as Simultaneous Translation, the Commission, following central Government procurement strategies has pre-negotiated contracts in place which covers a number of languages including Welsh.

This year the following arrangements were organised accordingly:

• EHRC contracted AA Global Language Services to translate the updated pages on our Human Rights Tracker website (delivered November 2022, published December 2022)

• EHRC contracted AA Global Language Services to translate our report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (delivered January 2023, published February 2023)

• EHRC contracted AA Global Language Services to translate our report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (delivered and published January 2023)

• In July 2022 EHRC contracted Just Fair to deliver our civil society project on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The project required that Just Fair produced a joint report on behalf of wider civil society in England and Wales, and that the final report should be translated into Welsh. Just Fair used their own supplier to do this. The final report was launched in English and Welsh in January 2023. They also translated associated project materials into Welsh, for example when organising the call for evidence and capacity-building webinars.

## ****2.8 Policy making standards in Wales****

Compliance requirements with the Welsh Language Standards are addressed in the ‘Other Considerations’ section of EHRC’s Project Brief/Directorate Plan, a mandatory foundation document for delivering the Commission’s business plan. A project cannot be signed off until the GB or country specific implications for the scope and direction of the work have been considered and agreed.

Guidance on cost estimation for the purposes of project planning on our intranet includes advice to consider Welsh translation.

When commissioning or conducting any research or consultation that involves the public in Wales, the Commission ensures that all correspondence/invitations/surveys/consultations are in Welsh and in English. Inquiry Terms of Reference and calls for evidence that are pertinent to Wales are bilingual and respondents can reply in Welsh or English.

Where we publish Case Studies pertinent to Wales, these are available in Welsh.

## ****2.9 Operational standards in Wales****

On 20 April 2022, the Commission in Wales consisted of 15 members of staff, including a Welsh Language Officer. Four of the 15 are fluent Welsh speakers, additionally 4 are Welsh learners or have some understanding of the language.

The Commission’s Welsh Language Officer has a ‘Welsh Word for the Day/Phrase for the Week’ for each week, sent out by e-mail to staff.

The Welsh Language Officer is always available to help and support staff with the Welsh language. Both he and Head of Wales will be leading an internal Lunch and Learn event for all staff on why Welsh is important to us as a Commission in the next few months.

EHRC has now moved into new accommodation at Companies House. The Welsh Language Officer has been in discussions with the Welsh Language Unit at Companies House with a view to sharing and developing resources to promote the Welsh language amongst staff of both organisations, and one aim is for both organisations to join in a monthly informal half-hour ‘Coffi Cymraeg’ in the canteen.

On the Commission’s intranet, the section ‘Commission in Wales’ offers information on working in and with Wales and includes useful resources on how certain things work in Wales, such as devolution and the Welsh language. This section includes support for staff, with basic Welsh language phrases for everyday use, help with pronunciation and useful phrases when answering the phone in the Wales’ office, as well as Welsh language equality and human rights terminology which is acceptable by stakeholders in the field.

The Commission always supports employees in using Welsh in their everyday working role activities when it is appropriate, sensible and practical to do so. Visitors to our office in Wales could not but perceive a working environment that has a healthy regard for both languages. Welsh speakers and learners are at ease communicating in Welsh while carrying out their daily working responsibilities. This positive attitude to the language emanates from the top and has an encouraging and positive effect.

All signs on the current site informing the public of our presence are bilingual. Posters on our office walls displaying key facets of our work are in Welsh and English and there is a variety of reading material in Welsh and English available relating to the work of the Commission.

## ****2.10 Record keeping standards****

During the year of this report, no complaints (formal nor informal) were received relating to the Commission’s compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

During the year the Commission in Wales recruited 6 permanent posts located in the office in Wales. Of the 6 posts, one post stated that applications from candidates that were fluent in Welsh were especially welcomed and two posts stated that the ability to speak Welsh was desirable. The three remaining posts were GB roles that could be flexibly located.