

Shan Morgan
Permanent Secretary
Welsh Government

20 March 2019

Dear Shan,

Welsh Language Standards

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee has received a letter from Nick Ramsay AM, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee in relation to the publication of the Welsh Government's Annual Report and Accounts for 2018.

The Committee was concerned to find that the Welsh version of the consolidated accounts was published 12 days after the English version. The Chair of the Committee has advised that this contravenes the duties placed on the Welsh Government in the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015. The standards require that, in the conduct of public business in Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than English.

Our Committee is currently carrying out an inquiry into supporting and promoting the Welsh language. As part of this inquiry, we are assessing the impact and effectiveness of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, along with the Welsh language standards derived from it.

We are keen to understand the issues which gave rise to the late publication of the consolidated accounts in Welsh, and any steps taken to ensure this is not repeated in future. We would be grateful if you could set out the reasons why this occurred.

In addition, we would like to understand how the Welsh Government promotes and supports the use of the Welsh language in its internal arrangements.

Please can you tell us:

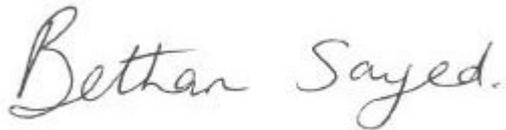
- the provision and take up of Welsh language training within the Welsh government?
- how best practice is promoted in the organisation and

- How the implementation of the Welsh language standards is monitored within the organisation?

In order to inform our inquiry, I would be grateful for your response by 17 April 2019.

Separately, we have invited the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language to attend our meeting from 9.30 until 11.00am on 10 July for an annual scrutiny session. I would like to invite you to attend this session to discuss how the Welsh Government is meeting its legal obligations in relation to the Welsh language. Please can you let me know of your availability?

Yours sincerely,



Bethan Sayed

Chair of the Committee

Shan Morgan
Ysgrifennydd Parhaol
Permanent Secretary



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Bethan Sayed
Chair of the Committee
Culture Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales

16 April 2019

Dear Ms Sayed,

Welsh Language Standards

Thank you for your letter of 20 March 2019 requesting further information about the issues that led to the late publication of the consolidated accounts in Welsh. I appreciate the opportunity to explain the situation to the Committee and to reassure them that we have put robust measures in place to ensure that this will not happen again in the future.

The Welsh Government encountered a number of unforeseen difficulties in preparing the annual accounts for 2017-18. As a result the accounts were 6 weeks later than usual in being signed off by the Auditor General for Wales (AGW). The Welsh Audit Office (WAO) only audit the English language version of the accounts. Therefore, current practice is that the Welsh and English language versions are laid separately before the National Assembly, one by the Welsh Government (the Welsh language version) and the other by the WAO (the English language version).

At the time of sign off of the English language version of the accounts on 1 October 2018, the Welsh Government had not received all of the relevant information needed to complete the Welsh language version of the accounts, including a translation of the audit certificate. However, in the haste to ensure that a set of accounts was laid before the Assembly in time for the PAC hearing on 15 October 2018, officials did not sufficiently recognise the inappropriateness of laying the accounts separately. In hindsight, Welsh Government officials should have asked the WAO not to lay the English language version of the accounts and requested a postponement of the PAC hearing. I sincerely apologise for this.



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The Government of Wales Act 2006 specifies that it is the WAO and not the Welsh Government which must lay the consolidated accounts before the Assembly. To avoid any future confusion I will be suggesting to the AGW that in future the Welsh Government will always provide the WAO with both the English and Welsh language versions of the accounts so that they can then be laid simultaneously by the AGW before the Assembly. In the meantime, and notwithstanding this suggested change in process, I can give the committee my absolute assurance that both versions of the 2018-19 accounts will be laid on the same day.

Below, I provide the additional information requested in your letter.

The provision of Welsh language training and the take up in the Welsh Government:

In accordance with our duties under the Welsh Language Standards, the Welsh Government offers a range of Welsh learning opportunities for its workforce. The organisation has a Welsh language training policy for this purpose. Implementing the policy means a wide range of opportunities are available for staff to develop their Welsh language skills in the workplace. There is a full programme of weekly lessons, from Entry to Advanced level, delivered between September and June each year. Staff are expected to attend the lessons regularly, sit an exam at the end of the term of lessons, and use their skills in the workplace. Language proficiency lessons are also offered for those who want to develop their skills.

An extended offer is currently available to staff under the Work Welsh delivered by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The Work Welsh programme offers opportunities for intensive learning, to attend residential courses (18 staff attended a course during 2018-19) and to take advantage of online learning modules the Centre (130 members of staff have registered for the online 10 hour course). We also, from time to time, and in response to demand, provide more specialist courses. Examples during the past two years include language taster sessions, language courtesy courses and language awareness to security staff and receptionists, confidence boosting courses in answering the phone for staff with level 3 Welsh speaking skills, and high quality bilingual customer service skills courses to other front-line staff. Informal opportunities to practice language skills are also promoted across our offices, such as 'coffi a chlonc' lunch time sessions and a formal mentoring programme to match learners with fluent speakers to practice their skills (90 members of staff who are fluent speakers have registered as mentors). Additionally, one to one training with a tutor in the workplace is offered to members of the Senior Civil Service, and 11 colleagues, myself included, are currently benefiting from this offer.

Here are the statistics for the formal lessons offered on a weekly bases for the 2017-18 academic year.



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Level	Registered	Sat the exam
Entry	84	28
Foundation	55	22
Intermediate	51	13
Advanced 1+2	52	8
Total	242	71

How best practice is promoted within the organisation:

Diverse and progressive initiatives are in place within the organisation to encourage staff to use Welsh in the workplace, and to provide new opportunities for staff to use their Welsh. These initiatives aim to develop Welsh language skills and increase confidence, through the promotion of tools that support bilingual working. Here are some examples:

- guidance for staff on the use of Microsoft Translator (machine translation tool) for drafting bilingual internal messages and to give gist translations of Welsh messages;
- MailTips profile, namely messages on Microsoft Outlook profiles to indicate if a staff member is a Welsh speaker or Welsh learner (more than 1,000 staff have a message on their profile noting "*Rydw i'n siarad Cymraeg*" (*I speak Welsh*) and "*Rydw i'n siarad rhywfaint o Gymraeg*" (*I speak some Welsh*)), the aim of this initiative is to increase the traffic of Welsh language emails within the organisation;
- the Translation Service's Welsh language text checking service available to those who have skills to draft documents or correspondence in Welsh, but who need to check the draft;
- online spell and grammar checking tools such as Cysgeir and Cysill that are available on every machine in the organisation along with guidance on their use on the intranet;
- communication campaigns to encourage staff to develop their language skills, such as promoting the Welsh lessons in the workplace, informal opportunities to use those skills, and the Work Welsh programme;
- a campaign to introduce a group policy to encourage staff to use more Welsh on the computer (for example, by defaulting to the Welsh language Microsoft interface and for the intranet to open in Welsh by default to staff with Welsh language skills at level 4 and 5 – namely almost a thousand members of staff).

How implementing the Welsh Language Standards is monitored in the organisation:

A small team located in the Office of the First Minister's Group oversees the Welsh Government's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Robust internal processes are in place to ensure compliance with the organisation's Standards, including:

- Overseeing the work of collating data in order to comply with the Record Keeping Standards imposed on the Welsh Ministers. These Standards



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- include: recording the number of complaints received relating to the Welsh language (in relation to the Standards and generally); keeping a copy of any written complaints received; recording the steps taken to comply with the Policy Making Standards (which includes managing the process of agreeing all Welsh language impact assessments undertaken by staff); recording the organisations' Welsh language skills; recording the numbers of staff who attend training courses offered in Welsh; overseeing the recording of all assessments made of Welsh language skills needed for new and vacant posts; and the categories of skills required for new and vacant posts.
- A newly agreed quarterly report to the Minister for International Relations and Welsh Language on the implementation of the Standards during the quarter, including details on complaints, an update on the investigations by the Welsh Language Commissioner, and an update on the implementation of the enforcement action resulting from the Commissioner's rulings;
 - An annual report published on the Welsh Government's website on the implementation of the Standards, which includes qualitative and quantitative data on the implementation of the requirements across the organisation;
 - An annual report on complaints presented to the Welsh Government's Board for scrutiny which outlines complaints received relating to the Welsh language by Welsh Government Group;
 - The organisation's Internal control questionnaire whereby directors self-assess their management of resources and statutory requirements during the year and which includes a section for them to reflect on their compliance with the Standards;
 - The Welsh language Co-ordinators' network which provides assurances of compliance within the Co-ordinators' business areas by means of bi-monthly meetings, and which is key to sharing communications messages and good practice within the organisation;
 - Regular, six monthly progress meetings with the Welsh Language Commissioner's staff at which general compliance and investigations are discussed, any trends and issues considered and recommendations provided by the Commissioner's staff.

The team also assists the organisation to comply in practical ways through various initiatives that involve communication campaigns on the requirements of the Standards, face to face training sessions on staff induction courses, compliance workshops for specific groups of staff, quarterly complaints bulletin with "top tips" to comply, a series of quick guides on the intranet on how to comply, a toolkit for line managers to allow them to discuss the Standards at their branch and divisional meetings, and regularly reviewing the robust organisational processes that are in place to facilitate compliance (such as including requirements in procurement templates, recruitment and public appointments' templates, grant offer letters and HR procedures and templates). This work is overseen by a Director within the Welsh Government, namely the First Legislative Counsel, and in turn by his line manager, a Director General who is also the organisation's Welsh language champion.



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I confirm that I will attend the Committee's scrutiny session in July to discuss further how the Government meets its legal obligations in relation to the Welsh language.

Yours,

Shan Morgan

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Ysgrifennydd Parhaol/ Permanent Secretary
Llywodraeth Cymru/ Welsh Government



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