Annual Report on the Welsh Language in Estyn 2022-2023

This document is also available in Welsh.

This eleventh annual report includes a summary of progress made between March 2022 and April 2023 against the priorities that we identified in last year's report.

Priorities for 2022-2023

1. **To utilise our overarching Welsh Language Strategic Plan as the key driver for improving and growing our use of the Welsh language both internally and externally with stakeholders. Our approach will continue to regard legislative compliance as the minimum baseline from which we can improve.**
2. **Continue with the process of self-assessment and peer assessment within different corporate teams in order to analyse the extent to which we comply with the Welsh Language Standards and how we may improve our performance and Welsh language services.**
3. **To implement, when possible, the ARFer toolkit from 2022 onwards in order to utilise the Welsh language skills of fluent speakers and learners within the organisation and further normalise the use of the Welsh language. (See appendix 7 for definition of the ARFer project).**
4. **To refine our approach to measuring staff members' Welsh language competencies to inform future professional development requirements more efficiently.**

Introduction

We have made sound progress, where practically possible, in terms of the above priorities during the year and this report is intended to reflect and exemplify that progress.

1. **To utilise our overarching Welsh Language Strategic Plan as the key driver for improving and growing our use of the Welsh language both internally and externally with stakeholders. Our approach will continue to regard legislative compliance as the minimum baseline from which we can improve**

In 2021 we introduced our first [Strategic Welsh Language Plan 2021-2024 Cynllun Strategol y Gymraeg 2021-2024 (llyw.cymru)](#)

We have identified five key Welsh language objectives for 2021-2024. For each objective, we have also set out key actions we will take to deliver them and our success criteria. These objectives, and progress against them are standing items on each agenda of the Welsh Language Working Group's meetings.

Objective 1: We will promote increasing the use of Welsh internally across our entire workforce through initiatives such as ARFer through Canolfan Bedwyr, Bangor University

Objective 2: To promote the concept of the 'proactive offer' rather than a reactive approach to Welsh language services. We will continue with our internal self and peer assessment processes to measure the efficacy of our present compliance arrangements. However, we will constantly seek to improve our standards of service

delivery and approach legislative compliance as the minimum baseline from which we can improve.

Objective 3: To promote the use of the Welsh language, culture and its historical context through inspection activity, including inspection and thematic reports, in line with our vision for education in Wales.

Objective 4: To promote the Welsh language through participating consistently in relevant public and legislative consultations.

Objective 5: Through engaging positively and committing to the objectives above we will aim to lead by example, as an organisation that promotes and utilises honest and open self-evaluation and embraces the importance of the Welsh language to our cultural and educational vision

To ensure that the above objectives remain central to our work the strategic plan is from this reporting year a standing item on each agenda of the Welsh Language Working Group, which meets four times a year. This is helpful in maintain a clear focus on our corporate aims regarding the language and allows the group to evaluate and measure progress on an ongoing basis.

2. **Continue with the process of self-assessment and peer assessment within different corporate teams in order to analyse the extent to which we comply with the Welsh Language Standards and how we may improve our performance and Welsh language services.**

This process involves asking a member of the relevant team from the central services to confer with colleagues and prepare a brief analysis of how they comply with the Welsh Language Standards. During the meeting of the Welsh Language Working Group, the standards appertaining to that corporate team are displayed on the screen and the person talks through them explaining how they are interpreting the standard in their own context. This leads to questions and suggestions from other members of the group, which help to clarify any tricky issues as well as sharpening our collective understanding of the requirements of the standards. If necessary, team representatives are asked to consider issues raised and return to the next meeting after discussing them with colleagues in the same team. This process has proved beneficial to all concerned and led to an effective peer review process leading to an effective self-evaluation of our compliance with the standards.

However, during the recording year it was decided to develop this process further and to include a standing item on each agenda, *matters arising regarding compliance*. All applicable Welsh Language Standards are included on a Power BI report that is regularly updated by the appropriate individuals/groups. In effect, this is a live document that is reviewed in each meeting of the group. By doing this the most effective elements of the previous process are maintained, for example the self and peer-assessment and reflection. In addition, it ensures that this is a continual form of self-evaluation rather than an individual review of aspects of our work at a specific point in time.

3. **To implement, when possible, the ARFer toolkit from 2022 onwards in order to utilise the Welsh language skills of fluent speakers and learners within the organisation and further normalise the use of the Welsh language. (See appendix 7 for the definition of the ARFer project).**

During the previous year we identified a team who were willing to pilot the scheme. However, the resources from Canolfan Bedwyr Bangor University were not completed and available for us to implement the scheme. During 2022-2023 we were unable to identify one specific team within central services due to internal restructuring. However, we remain committed to doing so and it remains a key aim in our Strategic Welsh Language Plan 2021-2024, and we have since developed a timeline to introduce the scheme to all staff during 2023-2024 with the assistance of Canolfan Bedwyr. We will report on this in the next annual report.

4. **To refine our approach to measuring staff members' Welsh language competencies to inform future professional development requirements more efficiently.**

During the reporting year we distributed an online survey for all staff members to complete. The response rate was very good, and we received a total of 121 responses. Encouragingly, over half of our staff members expressed an interest in learning Welsh or improving their present Welsh language skills.

The survey contained a series of questions asking staff to self-assess their ability in Welsh regarding oracy (listening and speaking), reading and writing. They were asked to grade themselves on a six-point scale. The scale used was based on the internationally accepted levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the levels used by the Welsh for Adults sector (Pre-entry or no Welsh, Entry, Foundation, Intermediate, Advance, Proficiency) which are also based on the CEFR.

In addition, we asked staff members if they used their Welsh language skills in work, and if so, how as well as if they would be interested in training in improving their Welsh language skills.

Oracy

Forty-eight staff members self-assessed themselves as at 5 or 6 on the scale (i.e. Levels B2 – C1/C2 ar y CEFR) regarding oracy. This is higher than the numbers of fluent speakers according to our internal figures and represents a total of 39% of 123 total staff members (rather than the 36% noted in appendix 1).

Reading

Fifty staff members self-assessed themselves at levels 5 and 6 on the scale.

Writing

Forty-six staff members self-assessed themselves as at levels 5 and 6 on the scale.

Interestingly, if we look at staff who self-assess at Level 4 – or B1 (roughly equivalent to GCSE second langage) the results show that 5 self-assess at this level

for oracy, 4 for reading and 3 for writing. This group could be turned into active speakers fairly quickly.

However, this also means that over half of our staff are at lower levels (below GCSE second language levels and it would require significant time and investment to turn them into active fluent speakers.

A more detailed analysis of individuals' levels and learning requirements wll be made during reporting year 2023-2024 and will form the basis of a more targeted approach to Welsh language training than in the past.

Impact of Welsh language training

The availability of Welsh language training for all staff signals the importance of Welsh in our organisation. New staff are alerted to the opportunities for undertaking Welsh training in their Welsh language induction session or when they evaluate their developmental needs as part of their ongoing performance reviews.

The number of staff members taking part in lessons has decreased during the reporting year (see appendix 3). However, we are confident that Welsh language training will incresse significantly during 2023-2024 following the very positive response to our Welsh language skills questionnaire. As indicated previously, over half of our staff members expressed an interest in learning Welsh or improving their present Welsh language skills. This will form the basis of one of our key priorities for 2023-2024.

Record keeping

We keep a record, by following the financial year, of the number of complaints that relate to compliance with the Welsh language standards (whether the complaint is about the standards with which we have a duty to comply or not). During 2022-2023, three complaints were received about our Welsh language services. This related to the following issues

1   The first regarded an error on the sexual harassment young person friendly report landing page and document title. The issue was forwarded to our Communications team and addressed. An apology email was sent to complainant the same morning.

2   The second related to issues with the website - some pages on the Welsh side had defaulted to English text. This was forwarded to the Communications team, who confirmed that it was a glitch that our web designers were able to resolve.

3   The third complaint was about lack of parity between Welsh and English on the website, with some English text appearing on the Welsh site. Acknowledgement made by Communications team and this was taken forward to website developers to resolve.

We monitor the quality of our Welsh language services closely and keep a record of what we do to ensure that we comply with the policy-making standards. We keep a

record (following an assessment of Welsh language skills) of the number of employees who have Welsh language skills (See appendices 1 and 2 below).

We also keep a record of the number and percentage of staff members who attended training courses through the medium of Welsh and/or language awareness courses (See appendices 3 and 4 below).

We keep a record of the number of vacancies where Welsh language skills are assessed as being essential or desirable.

During 2022-2023, 24 new permanent members of staff joined Estyn in different posts (7 members of the inspection staff and 17 in Central Services). In addition, 1 Additional Inspector joined on secondment.

Ten recruitment campaigns took place during 2022-2023

- Administrative Officers (Generic posts) – Welsh language skills desirable – 1 out of 7 appointees were Welsh speakers
- Administrative Officer – (IT post) Welsh language skills desirable – no Welsh speakers appointed
- Assistant Director Strategic Programme Director – Welsh language skills desirable – 1 appointee a Welsh speaker
- Additional Inspector (secondment post) – Welsh language skills desirable – 1 appointee a Welsh speaker
- Executive Assistant (Secretariat) – Welsh essential – 1 appointee a Welsh speaker
- Executive Officer (Finance) – Welsh desirable – no Welsh speaker appointed
- Executive Officer (Communications and Events) – Welsh language skills desirable – no Welsh speaker appointed
- Higher Executive Officer (Statistics) – Welsh desirable – non Welsh speaker appointed
- Her Majesty's Inspectors – Welsh language skills desirable – 5 out of 7 appointees are Welsh speakers
- Non-Executive Directors – Welsh language skills desirable – 1 out of 4 appointees a Welsh speaker

Priorities for 2023-2024

1. **Utilise staff voice in an inclusive and proactive manner when developing our Welsh language services and offer both internally and externally.**

2. **Continue to refine our approach to measuring staff members' Welsh language competencies to inform future professional development requirements more efficiently.**

3. **Develop a comprehensive training programme that aligns well with individuals' and organisational linguistic and professional needs.**

    i)   Increase the numbers learning or improving Welsh language skills, whatever their starting points, from the present 3% to 10% of the workforce.
    ii) Support 5% of staff to attend intensive immersion Welsh language courses to expedite their progress and use of the language.

4. **Implement, the ARFer toolkit from 2023 onwards, by offering it to all employees across the organisation, in order to utilise the Welsh language skills of fluent speakers and learners within the organisation and further normalise the use of the Welsh language. (See appendix 7 for definition of the ARFer project).**

    i)   Support 10% of the workforce to take part in the proposed pilot scheme during the autumn term 2023.
    ii) Work with inspection sectors to increase the number of new speakers or those lacking in confidence who can take part in Welsh-medium inspections.
    iii) Facilitate three events for new speakers during the academic year that assist their progress and help them assimilate to Welsh language networks.

5. **Promote the use of the Welsh language with those we work with e.g. providers we inspect, our feedback to public consultations and in contracting with third-party agencies.**

Appendices

Appendix 1: Number and percentage of staff in the organisation's services who are able to speak Welsh as at 31 March 2023 (full-time equivalent)

- By department
- By job grade

Staff	Number of staff as at 31/03/2023	Number of Welsh speakers as at 31/03/2023	Percentage
HMCI	1	1	100%
Strategic Directors	2	1	50%
Inspection staff			
Assistant Directors	6	4	67%
HMI	61	23	38%
AIs (Secondments)	1	1	100%
Total inspection staff	70	30	43%
Central Services staff			
Assistant Director	2	2	100%
Grade 7	4	2	50%
Senior Executive Officers	5	0	0%
Higher Executive Officers	4	1	25%
Executive Officers	25	8	32%
Administrative Officers	14	2	14.5%
Total CS Staff	54	15	28%
Total Estyn staff	124	45	36% (34% in 21-22 & 37% in 20/21)

Appendix 2: Inspection staff able to inspect through the medium of Welsh as a percentage of all inspection staff (full-time equivalent)

	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	31 March 2019	31 March 2020	31 March 2021	31 March 2022	31 March 2023
Inspection staff able to inspect through the medium of Welsh	22	25	25	25	26	29	30
Total inspection staff	64	60	64	65	64	72	70
Percentage	34%	42%	39%	38%	41%	40%	43%

Inspection staff able to inspect through the medium of Welsh
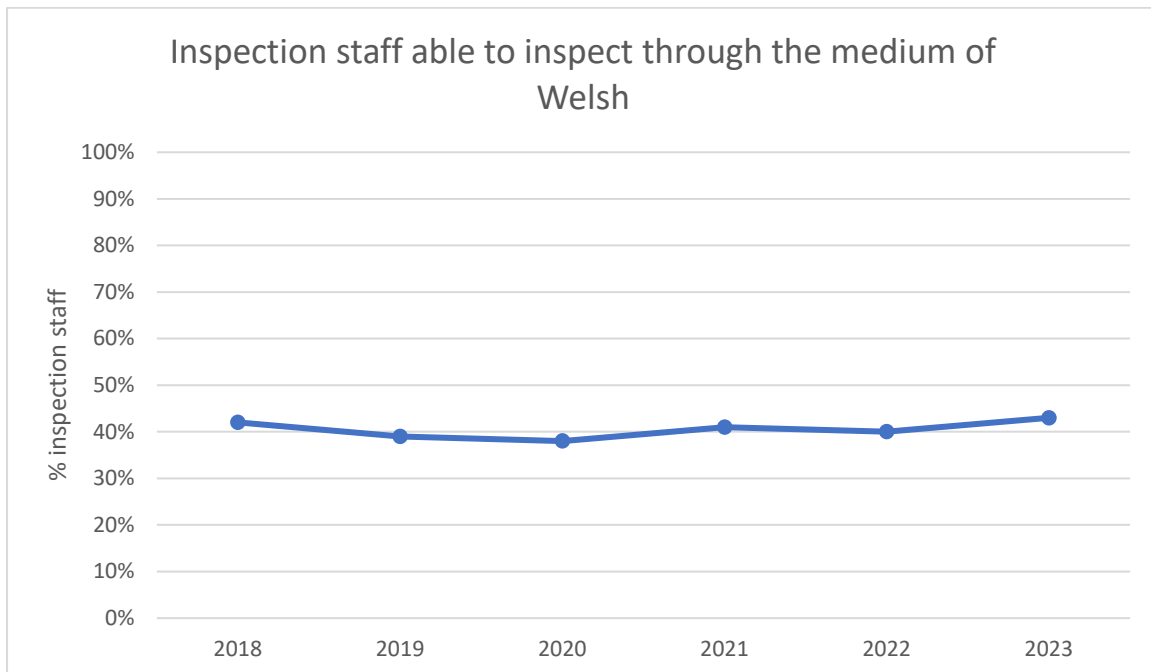
Appendix 3: Welsh language training 2022-23

Type	Number of staff	Provider	Location	Days
Internal courses delivered online				
Uwch 1	3	Learn Welsh Glamorgan	Virtual	25
External courses				
Canolradd	1	Learn Welsh Cardiff	Virtual	17.5
Uwch 2	1	Learn Welsh Glamorgan	Virtual	7

Total: 4 members of staff and 49.5 days (7 members of staff and 71 days in 2021-2022)

Appendix 4: Number of staff who received Welsh language induction training and specific training through the medium of Welsh

All staff, including temporary staff or agency staff, receive Welsh language awareness induction training as part of their induction programme by the HMI who is responsible for the Welsh language. This is scheduled by the human resources department as part of the induction programme for new staff. This training includes raising a broad awareness of the history of the language and its place in the history of Wales, understanding the requirements of the Welsh language standards and an understanding of the way in which Welsh can be used in the workplace. During 2022-2023, 24 new permanent members of staff joined Estyn in different posts (7 members of the inspection staff and 17 in Central Services). In addition, 1 Additional Inspector joined on secondment.

Ten new staff (one secondee and nine Central Services staff) received the training through the medium of Welsh.

Eight agency staff were employed and received training (0 through the medium of Welsh)

Appendix 5: Analysis of how external training/stakeholder engagement meets delegates' Welsh language requirements

This year we ran 52 events overall; 41 online and 11 in person. Online, we used Zoom and Teams to provide simultaneous translation where it was needed, Microsoft Teams to run single-language sessions. In person, we either held single-language sessions or used simultaneous translation, e.g. at our Annual Report Launch event. In addition, the Events team piloted the use of two-way simultaneous translation i.e. from English to Welsh as well as the usual Welsh to English.

422 delegates answered our question on whether we met their language needs. 420 (99%) of these said that we did. Only two people (0.5%) answered 'no' to this question, however they didn't give any further context to their answer. Overall, this similar to the figures for last year, which shows that we are maintaining our high standard of Welsh-language provision.

Live streams

This year, we started running live streamed Q&A sessions online, through our social media and a custom-made web page. After the first of these sessions, we met with the compliance team at the Welsh Language Commissioner's office to ensure we were complying with the statutory guidelines. For the rest of the live streams we also provided Welsh to English translation.

Although the simultaneous translation on the day is working well, we had some problems with audio levels in one of the streams. It can also take a long time to produce the fully subtitled versions of the video in each language after the event. We're continuing to look into our options to improve our service further.


Did the event meet your language needs?
0.50%
99%
Yes   No

Appendix 6: Social media engagement through the medium of Welsh

Estyn communicates bilingually on social media. The charts below show the percentage who view messages in English (EstynHMI) and Welsh (EstynAEM).

During 2021-2022 the number of Welsh language Twitter impressions decreased from 15% of total impressions to 8.65%. This is the lowest level since 2019-20 (9.73%) (Impressions represent views of the Twitter feed.)


Twitter impressions

8.65%

91.35%

■ EstynHMI impressions   ■ EstynAEM impressions
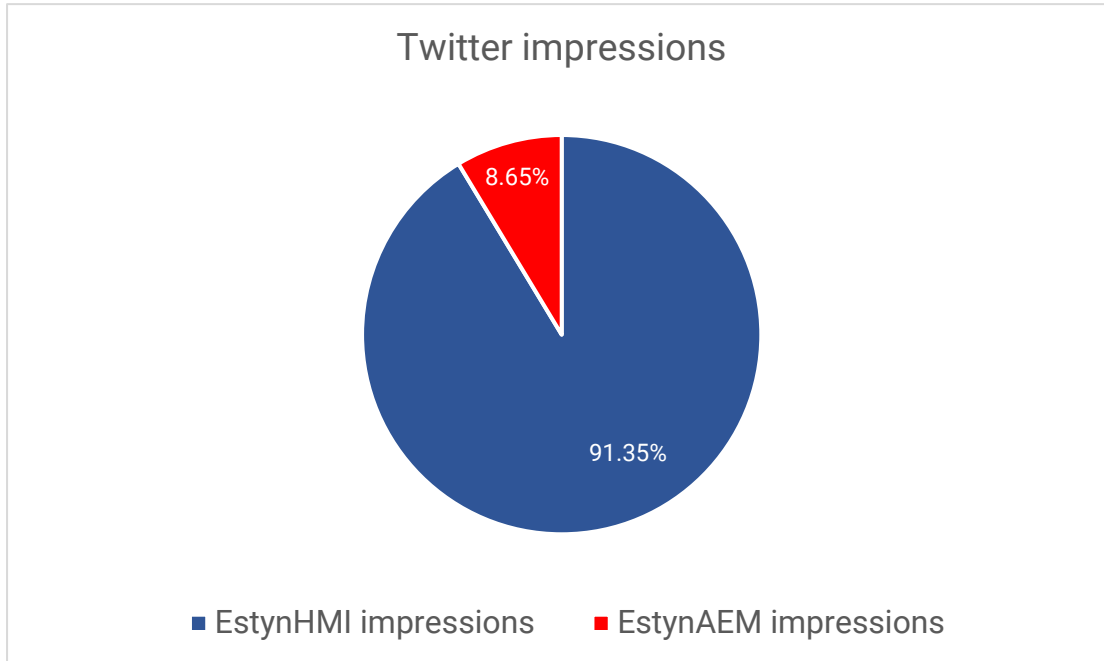
However, the number who actively engage (likes.comments,shares) with us in Welsh on Twitter is lower at 6.71%

Twitter engagement

6.71%

93.29%

■ EstynHMI engagement   ■ EstynAEM engagement
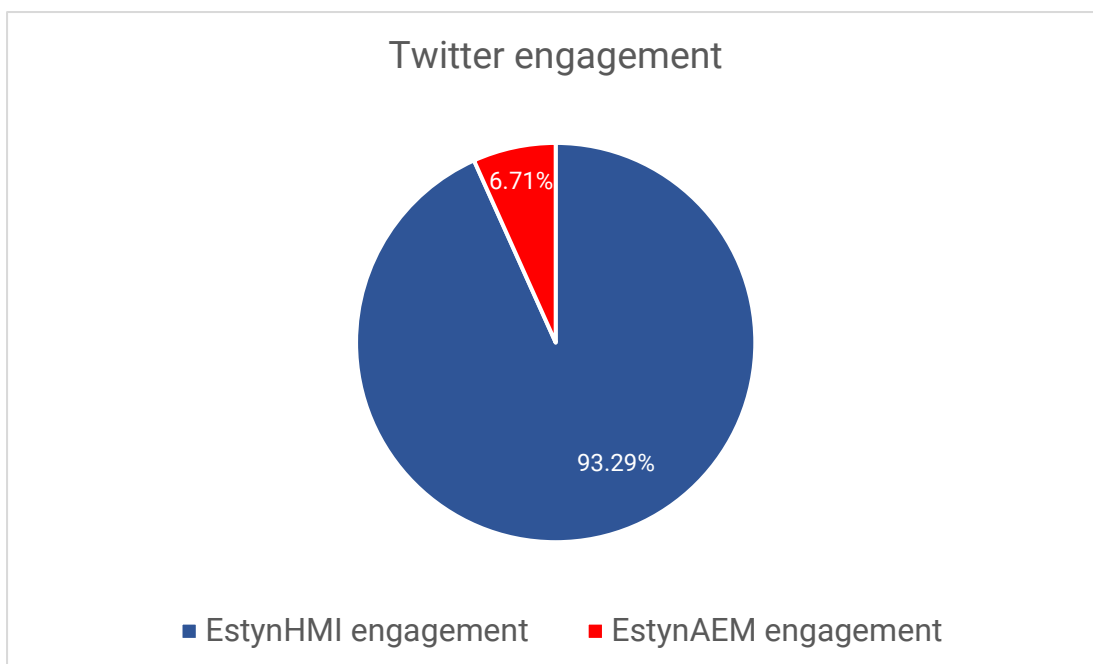
Facebook remains the most popular social media used by Welsh speakers. The percentage of Welsh language Facebook reach increased from 29% to 31.93%. This represents a return to almost the same level as in 2019-2020 of 32.77%

(Facebook reach represents the number of views of Estyn's Facebook page).
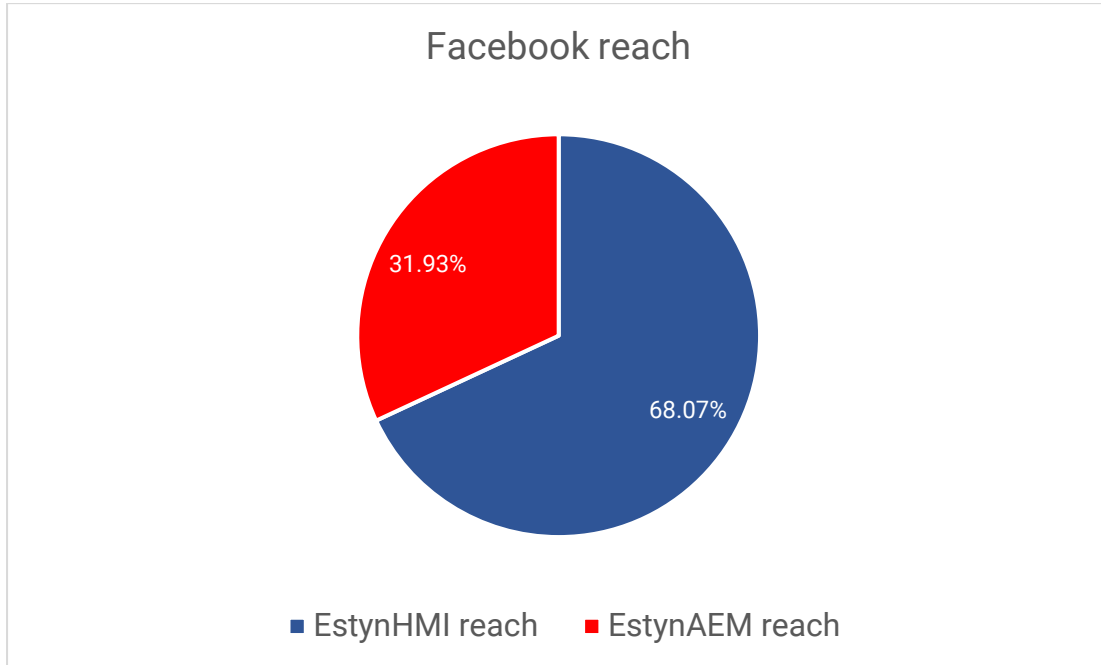
Appendix 7: Definition of the ARFer project

Bangor University has established the ARFer project aimed at ensuring a better understanding of language use amongst co-workers in order to introduce tailor-made interventions and support to encourage the use of Welsh in a bilingual workplace.

ARFer

The ARFer programme is a methodology inspired by the Aldahitz project designed by Soziolinguistika Klusterra in the Basque Country. The project is based on two principles that are rooted in the behavioural sciences: making a commitment to behaving in a certain way; capitalising on the significant influence that defaults can have on people's behaviour.

Essentially, ARFer is a programme that asks individuals to make a commitment to using Welsh as the default language with the aim of establishing the Welsh language as the norm.

The following factors are key to the scheme's success:

- investment in a programme that supports the wish of staff to use the Welsh language

- the importance of creating a context that enables staff to use Welsh

- the importance of supporting Welsh speakers (as well as learners) to use Welsh at work

- the importance of understanding patterns of language use before any attempt at influencing them

    o Welsh version: https://youtu.be/RunMxkOow-o

    o English version: https://youtu.be/-xvHnId2MgA