



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

# **Estyn**

## **Welsh Language Policy**

**This policy is also available in Welsh.**

## Information sheet

### Information box

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Date of publication: April 2021

Planned review date: The policy's impact is evaluated regularly and modifications are made in line with any findings.

### Version control

Document version	Author	Date of issue	Key changes
1.0	Clive Phillips	Nov 2017	
2.0	Clive Phillips	April 2021	

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This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**

### Impact Assessment

- A business rationale assessment has been carried out and this policy contributes to Estyn's strategic objectives and delivery principles.
- An equality impact assessment has been carried out and this policy is not deemed to adversely impact on any people on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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## **Introduction**

This policy is supported fully by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector and the senior management team of Estyn. Estyn's Welsh Language working group with representatives from all levels of the organisation meets regularly to monitor and support the policy's implementation. The organisation is committed to ensuring the success of the policy. We treat the Welsh and English languages equally in the work that we do, both internally and in inspecting education and training in Wales.

Estyn's mission is to continue to achieve excellence for all learners in Wales by providing a high quality independent inspection and advice service. Our vision is to be recognised through our staff's expertise as an authoritative voice on education and training in Wales. We view the Welsh language as an integral part of this vision.

This policy outlines our approach to how we deliver our Welsh language services both internally and externally. The policy takes full account of the requirements of the Welsh language standards and indicates our present and emerging practice across the areas covered by those standards.

Estyn has adopted the principle of treating Welsh and English equally when undertaking public business in Wales. The policy outlines the way in which Estyn operates in accordance with that principle when providing services for the public in

## **Policy developments**

The Welsh language working group assess the impact of new or revised corporate policy on opportunities for staff and others affected by the policy to use the Welsh language. The impact assessment ensures that the new or revised policy does not treat the Welsh language less favourably than English. They are formally signed off by the group following this impact assessment exercise.

## **Correspondence**

Estyn welcomes letters and electronic messages in Welsh and English. When someone writes to us in Welsh, we reply in Welsh, if a reply is needed. Our target time for responding to correspondence in Welsh and English is ten days.

We use the Welsh language with those whom we know prefer to correspond through the medium of Welsh. We ensure that any newsletter, letter or standard form that is presented to the public is bilingual. We write letters to individuals, groups or organisations in the correspondent's chosen language. If we do not know their language preference, the initial letter is bilingual and we include a written statement to convey that we welcome correspondence in Welsh and will respond in Welsh. We keep a record of the correspondent's language preference for all subsequent correspondence. All staff are made aware of these arrangements, and support is given to members of staff who do not speak Welsh to communicate with the public,

as required. All new members of staff are given training on these arrangements, and desk instructions are prepared to help staff comply with the policy.

All auto signatures, disclaimers and out of office replies are bilingual. We use the 'Iaith Gwaith' logo in our electronic auto signatures, and we state that we welcome correspondence in Welsh and English, and that correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

## **Communicating with the public**

Members of the public who wish to deal with Estyn face to face are welcome to do so in Welsh or English, according to their preference. Estyn has no designated telephone receptionists; however, anyone who telephones us is welcome to do so in Welsh or English. Everyone is greeted bilingually and we will inform the caller proactively that a Welsh telephone service is available at the earliest possible opportunity, if the call is not already being conducted in Welsh. They can expect to be transferred to a member of staff who is able to speak to them in Welsh if they wish to do so, if the member of staff who first answers the call does not speak Welsh. We will include a statement on any material or medium that publishes our telephone numbers that we welcome calls in Welsh.

We will treat calls made through video-conferencing technology in the same manner.

Our automated telephone system gives people who call the choice to speak in Welsh or English, and to leave messages in either language. When we call someone for the first time, we ask them whether they wish to receive telephone calls in Welsh. If they respond to say that they wish to do so, we keep a record of their preference, and conduct any subsequent telephone calls to them in Welsh.

Audible messages in the lifts in our offices are in Welsh and English. We are continuing to improve our capacity to deliver effective frontline services to the public through the medium of Welsh by providing suitable training for new members of staff and those who move to relevant posts.

## **Meetings**

Anyone who wishes to deal with Estyn face to face is welcome to do so in Welsh or English, in accordance with their preference. When arranging meetings with one or more invitees, we ensure that the meetings are conducted in the language choice of the attendees by asking them proactively beforehand in which language they would like to participate.

When arranging meetings involving the public we make the practical arrangements necessary to ensure that everyone is able to speak in their chosen language. This is relevant to inspection meetings led by HMI, inspectors on secondment to Estyn and contracted inspectors. When we arrange parents' meetings prior to inspection, we ensure that the inspection team is able to conduct the meeting in the language

choice of the parents present in accordance with the usual arrangements of the school.

Members of the public are welcome to speak in Welsh or English in meetings and conferences that we arrange. We provide simultaneous translation services from Welsh to English in our public meetings (unless we have identified that each participant is likely to use the same language). Any invitations or advertisements that are produced prior to public meetings are bilingual, and either note that translation facilities will be available, or invite the public to let us know in advance in which language they wish to speak.

We arrange an appropriate number of Welsh-medium breakout sessions in our training courses and conferences, including those that are held through video-conferencing technology. Course organisers follow this guidance when arranging workshops and discussion groups. There is an assumption in favour of having separate Welsh and English groups, rather than mixed language groups with simultaneous translation. When such sessions are held and recorded through video-conferencing technology, it should be ensured that the Welsh version is available to attendees with English subtitles. However, when there is a valid rationale for conducting mixed groups, this will need to be done by using simultaneous translation to adhere to the principle of linguistic equality.

## **Our public face**

Estyn's name, address and logo are bilingual and are used on all publications, forms, stationery, addresses, presentations and electronic correspondence. Where appropriate, we use the 'Iaith Gwaith' logo and wording, which explains that we welcome the use of the Welsh language. We prefer to have both languages side by side, with the Welsh on the left. Signage in Estyn's offices is bilingual, and the same prominence is given to both languages in terms of format, size, quality and legibility. We would not consider a change to Estyn's identity that would treat Welsh less favourably than English.

## **Publications**

All members of the public are able to read all of Estyn's publications that are relevant to the whole of Wales in Welsh and English. Anyone who is associated with any education or training organisation in Wales can expect reports published by Estyn on individual organisations to be published bilingually when the organisation asks us to do so, or in the case of schools or local authority services, at the request of the school or the local authority. When a bilingual report is not requested, reports on individual organisations appear in English only.

All published forms and explanatory materials are published bilingually. In circumstances where it is more appropriate to publish separate Welsh and English forms (e.g. when documents that are produced bilingually are unwieldy), we publish both versions simultaneously and arrange that both are available.

The English version states that a Welsh version is available and vice versa.

All publicity materials, in print or another format and including display materials, are in Welsh and English. The Welsh and English version are of the same quality and are available simultaneously.

## **Website and information and communication technology**

We encourage and welcome the use of Welsh and English in electronic correspondence. We maintain a bilingual website for Estyn. Welsh and English content appears at the same time on our website. We use the same principles for using Welsh and English on our website, in accordance with the details in this policy under 'Publications'. Internal documents appear in their original language or languages on our intranet.

When designing new websites/apps, developing our current website, procuring new technology, or when redeveloping our current technology, whether it be on the web or back-office software, we follow the guidelines published by the Welsh Language Commissioner. Wherever we offer transactional services, such as registration or paying a bill, a language preference is offered each time. Any other guidance that is published by the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding website development or conducting meetings through technology, such as video-conferencing, is also considered. We adopt the above principles for other social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

Press releases on all aspects of our work are published in Welsh and English, ensuring that both languages are given equal priority. Notifications are distributed to Welsh and English-medium media centres in Wales.

## **Services delivered on behalf of Estyn by others**

Estyn reviews all policies and new/revised tenders in order to ensure that the effect of the policy/tender on opportunities to use the Welsh language has been considered appropriately. This process ensures that there is consistency across the organisation in terms of applying the requirement that new and revised policies and tenders should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than English, and whether a new or revised policy has a positive or detrimental effect on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language. Our tendering process can be divided into procurement linked to inspection and procurement that is not linked to inspection.

Procurement linked to inspection is the most extensive by far, as it includes the process by which additional inspectors tender for work to be included in our inspection teams. We offer tenders for additional inspectors, lay inspectors and lead inspectors on nearly all inspections. Inspectors who wish to tender must note their ability to conduct inspections through the medium of Welsh and/or English. We have produced a bilingual leaflet, 'Estyn's Welsh Services in Relation to Inspections', which sets out clear guidance for inspectors. This is available on our website.

We insist on compliance with our Welsh Language Policy on all tender specifications, whatever goods/services are needed. The Contract Log records that a Welsh compliance check has been undertaken in all cases.

### **Raising awareness about the policy**

We ensure that the public are aware of the policy by publishing it on the Estyn website. We inform the public proactively that a Welsh language service is available and encourage the use of that service.

### **Using the Welsh language internally**

When a new post is offered to an individual, the individual is asked whether they wish for the employment contract or service contract to be provided in Welsh, and we act in accordance with their wishes. We ask all employees whether they wish to receive any paper correspondence relating to employment, and that is addressed to them personally, in Welsh. We ask all employees whether they wish to receive any documents outlining the issues below in Welsh and, if they wish to do so, we provide them in Welsh:

- their training needs or requirements
- documents outlining their performance objectives
- documents outlining or recording their career plan
- any forms that record and authorise (a) leave, (b) work absences, (b) flexible working hours

We publish policies regarding the workplace issues below in Welsh:

- conduct
- health and wellbeing
- pay and benefits
- performance management
- work absences
- working conditions and patterns

We provide a synopsis to new staff of that which is available to them in Welsh as well as explaining the expectations of them regarding compliance with our legal duties and outlining our corporate vision regarding extending the internal use of the language.

### **Training for inspectors**

We organise and deliver initial, conversion and update training for our inspectors (registered, additional, peer and lay inspectors, challenge advisers and nominees).



The group sessions are delivered in the language of their choice, as much as it practicably possible. In smaller sectors, on occasions where it is not viable to run groups in both Welsh and English, we will discuss with individual inspectors how we can best meet their training and language needs. In plenary sessions, we ensure that both Welsh and English are used appropriately and that one language is not treated less favourably than the other. We treat face-to-face and remote training in the same way.

### **Complaints made by members of staff**

We operate policies relating to grievances and discipline which allow members of staff to use the Welsh language, in line with the Welsh Language Commissioner's guidelines. Face to face meetings are offered using a translation service from Welsh to English, as required. We inform a member of staff of a decision in relation to a complaint made by that member of staff, or in relation to a complaint made about them or a decision made following the discipline process, in Welsh. These policies are published in any documents that identify grievance or discipline procedures.

### **Information technology, support materials and the intranet**

We provide computer software for a Welsh spellchecker and grammar checker on all of Estyn's computers. We have a bilingual intranet including an interface and menus. The text on each page is available in Welsh and notes clearly on the English pages that the page is also available in Welsh, and a direct link to the Welsh page is provided on the corresponding English page.

### **Building Welsh language skills through workforce planning and training**

We assess employees' Welsh language skills and consider their training needs during the induction period and in later evaluations. On the basis of this information, language development courses are planned in accordance with the needs of individuals and Estyn's business needs.

We provide training on improving Welsh writing skills for inspectors. During corporate training weeks and conferences, staff are offered opportunities to hold discussion groups in Welsh. We offer free training for members of staff to develop and improve their Welsh language skills. This is achieved by providing lessons during working hours or supporting staff who attend courses conducted by Welsh for Adults providers. All new members of staff are expected to complete online taster courses provided by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. We provide Welsh language induction training to all new members of staff, including a broad awareness of the history of the language and its place in Welsh history, understanding of the requirements of the Welsh language standards, and an understanding of the way in which the Welsh language can be used in the workplace. We encourage staff to use

the Welsh language internally as part of our vision and aim to see Estyn as a truly natural bilingual body.

We provide the wording and logo for staff e-mail signatures which denote whether they are fluent Welsh speakers or learners. We include the same logos on corporate backgrounds for video-conferencing. Similarly, we provide staff with lanyards that include Estyn's corporate logo, in addition to the 'Iaith Gwaith' logo to denote whether they are fluent Welsh speakers or learners. We provide wording that will enable staff to include a Welsh version of their contact details and any message to notify other people that they are not available to reply to emails.

We provide training for inspection staff and corporate staff through the medium of Welsh on a number of themes when they require training, in line with the requirements of Standard 124. This is achieved through face-to-face or remote courses.

Training is provided for employees who manage others on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

## **Recruiting and appointing**

When recruiting staff, the Chief Inspector considers the needs of the business in terms of the number and competencies of staff currently able to work through the medium of Welsh and where there are shortfalls advertises accordingly. We ensure that Welsh language skills are available in posts and/or teams where:

- frontline services are provided
- staff have contact with Welsh-speaking public organisations, including local authorities, schools and colleges
- they arrange conferences/external events for Estyn
- their main purpose is to provide services/information to the public e.g. inspection co-ordinators

Before advertising a vacancy, the Welsh language skills that are required for the post are assessed in accordance with the following:

- Welsh language skills are essential; or
- Welsh language skills are desirable

When Welsh language skills are considered to be essential or desirable, this is explained in job advertisements and job descriptions. Speaking and writing skills are assessed as part of the recruitment process.

Recruitment advertisements for all roles in Estyn, and for inspection training, are in Welsh and English, and are shown together. Both languages are treated equally in terms of format, size, legibility and prominence.

We note clearly that applicants are welcome to undertake the recruitment process in Welsh.

In order to achieve this, we:

- publish our advertisements for jobs and training courses in accordance with our policy, and monitor them in order to ensure that they are produced and published in line with our requirements
- arrange that bilingual information and application forms for external recruitment exercises are available on our intranet site
- ensure that selection interviews can be conducted in Welsh or English, using simultaneous translation facilities, where appropriate, in line with the applicant's preference (although ability in both languages will need to be assessed in the interview for posts for which Welsh language ability is a requirement)

When we notify an individual of a decision in relation to a job application, this will be done in Welsh if the application was made in Welsh.

## **Record keeping**

We keep a record, in relation to each financial year of the number of complaints involving compliance with the Welsh language standards (whether the complaint is in relation to the standards with which we have a duty to comply or not).

We also keep a record of any actions taken to ensure that we comply with the policy-making standards. We keep a record of the number of new posts or vacancies that have been categorised. We keep a record (following an assessment of Welsh language skills) of the number of employees who have Welsh language skills, and the level of those skills, including the number and percentage of staff members who attended training courses that were offered through the medium of Welsh.

## **Overseeing compliance**

We are under a legal duty to operate according to standards that are divided into four categories:

- Service Delivery
- Policy Making
- Operational
- Record Keeping

A spreadsheet of the standards is used to assess if we are complying and relevant officers are able to measure the performance of their departments and report on any deficiencies in the termly meetings of the Welsh Language Working Group. In addition, we operate a system of self-assessment and peer assessment of the departments in these meetings.

## **Promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh**

Estyn is committed to fulfilling our legal obligations under the language standards as well as our vision regarding the use of the Welsh language, as outlined in our [Strategic Welsh Language Plan 2021-2024](#)

We strive 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.

This Welsh language policy document outlines how we promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language by members of the public and stakeholders when dealing with us.