

The Official Languages Scheme: Annual Report 2025-26

July 2026



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Adam Price MS
Commissioner with
responsibility for
Official Languages

Foreword

The past year has been an important period of progress, preparation and reflection for us in the Senedd. As we approach the start of the Seventh Senedd and respond to significant changes due to the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024, we have had to ensure that our arrangements for working bilingually not only remain robust, but also evolve to meet new requirements. Throughout the year, our aim was to maintain and strengthen the basic principle that both of our official languages, Welsh and English, are treated equally in all aspects of our work, ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation can feel confident to use their preferred language naturally, as a default.

Members continued to be supported to participate in Senedd business in their preferred language, including the provision of briefing documents, bespoke training and support for committees and chairs. New systems and processes were also developed, which will further strengthen the bilingual experience, including better arrangements for recording the language preference of Members and their staff, and the development of fully bilingual onboarding and learning systems. In addition, we have been preparing to make more of our rooms across the Senedd estate interpretation ready, in anticipation of an increase in demand for the service in the Seventh Senedd.

Also, there was a specific focus this year on strengthening people's language skills and confidence in using Welsh in work. The training provision and support available has continued to develop, with very encouraging results in terms of staff confidence and their willingness to use and expand their Welsh skills. This is a key part of our vision for a truly bilingual Senedd: not systems and policies alone, but also an organisational culture where bilingualism is a natural part of the way in which we work, plan and deliver services.

Of course, the year has also been one of strategic preparation. The review of the current official languages framework and the development of a new Scheme for the Seventh Senedd is already underway. In doing so, we are keen to ensure that the framework is fit for the future, reflects the needs of the organisation and its stakeholders, and enables us to respond to an increase in demand for bilingual services without compromising on quality. This report therefore is not only a record of the work of the past year, but is also testimony to our commitment to continue to lead the way as a fully bilingual legislature.

Our performance

Our commitment and values

Senedd Cymru is an organisation that operates in accordance with its values, and these reflect a commitment to ensure diversity across the organisation. We value and encourage diversity within our workforce. We value all of our staff, whatever their level of bilingual skills, for their commitment to the Senedd and for their professional and parliamentary expertise. The principles of our dignity and respect policy underpin everything that we do. We expect every member of staff to be dedicated to providing excellent parliamentary services and support to Members, their support staff and the public in both of our official languages.

The primary objective of the Official Languages Scheme is to ensure that we maintain the highest possible standards and respond positively to the expectations of those who engage with us. Inevitably, the changes that followed as a result of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 mean that we will have to look anew at the official languages framework to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that we are in a position to continue to provide excellent bilingual services by default in light of a significant increase in demand for these services.

Service Standards

Senedd business

Members of the Senedd can prepare to participate in Senedd business in their preferred language. Integrated teams for individual committees draw up briefing documents in accordance with the wishes of committee members in terms of language and timings. All other documents drawn up by the Senedd Commission for Plenary and committee proceedings are bilingual, and Members can choose to contribute and discuss in their preferred language. Members who receive support from the Official Languages Team arrange sessions to prepare for proceedings, and other Members may also arrange training as required. This includes sessions to rehearse a 90 second statement, to ask a question in Plenary or to ask a witness a question in a committee meeting. The team is also available to work with Committee Chairs as they prepare to chair meetings, helping them to incorporate Welsh expressions and phrases, and to encourage others to use their Welsh language skills.

In March 2026, the Chairs' Forum published its review of committee effectiveness during the Sixth Senedd. The review focused on the following:

- committee culture;
- the organisation of committee business; and
- interactions with other Senedd committees, including hybrid working, research support and use of the Welsh language.

The Forum has previously considered how to ensure that everyone who interacts with committees can do so in their preferred language. However, evidence noted that although high-quality translation services were available, the experience of participating through the medium of Welsh was not always equal to that of participation in English. Specifically, the dependence on headphones to access simultaneous interpretation was highlighted as a barrier by some participants.

The Forum expressed its strong support for measures that could increase the use of Welsh in committee proceedings. It was agreed that proposals discussed in July 2024 offered a firm foundation for further work in the Seventh Senedd. In light of the evidence provided, it was recommended that the Senedd Commission should explore options for improving the technology that supports simultaneous interpretation early in the Seventh Senedd.

External communication

Over the past year, the process of procuring a customer relationship management system was completed. As part of the system, a portal will be established. The portal's objective is to allow users to register to receive services, such as help to plan visits, and contact us in their preferred language. When a member of the public registers as a user, they will be able to note their preferred official language, and this information will then be captured on the individual's profile on the system. A specific language can be selected when using the portal itself and when completing any forms, and any automated e-mails are sent in the user's preferred language when they complete application forms for a specific service. If the Customer Services team needs to engage further, the information regarding the individual's preferred language on their profile is used to ensure that they receive this service in the appropriate language.

Internal communication

As part of preparations for the Seventh Senedd, it was decided that a method of gathering information on Members' preferred languages, and those of their support staff, would be established. To ensure that we gathered information from every Member and every member of support staff at the earliest opportunity, it was decided that the preferred language survey would be incorporated into the induction process. The survey was designed to gather information on the language of choice for communications, working practices and matters related to ICT systems and equipment. This information is shared with relevant services to ensure that there is no need for the Member or member of support staff to register the same information twice. The form also provides an opportunity for Members and their staff to note their level of skill in the Welsh language. The information on Welsh language skills will support the Official Languages Team to plan a comprehensive suite of relevant provision for the Seventh Senedd.

Engagement

In the run-up to the Senedd election, the Senedd Commission has a duty to explain the changes that will follow as a result of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024, as well as encouraging the people of Wales to register to vote and to vote in the election. Since the Act came into force, the Communications, Engagement and Research teams have been working to formulate a campaign and associated materials that provide the necessary

information. These teams have also been developing materials for Members' use to help them to explain the changes to their constituents, and for Senedd Commission staff to ensure that they understand how the changes will impact their work. All of these materials were drawn up bilingually, using language appropriate to the target audiences. This includes material for social media, online advertisements and traditional media.

Events on the Senedd estate

With the advent of the Seventh Senedd, and an increase in the number of Members, it is predicted that more spaces across the estate will be needed in which meetings may be held and simultaneous interpretation provided. Furthermore, in light of the previously discussed recommendation by the Chairs' Forum, it was decided that new, portable equipment for simultaneous interpretation should be procured. The new system is flexible and suitable for the Senedd Commission's needs. It was also decided that some of the meeting rooms on the Senedd estate should be upgraded following a report on the provision in rooms that may be booked for internal or external events. Enhancing the current system will mean that simultaneous interpretation may be provided in events and meetings in more rooms across the estate.

Procurement and working in partnership

This year saw new developments in the Human Resources and Payroll system, as we launched new modules, including a module on Commission Staff performance reviews. The system continues to provide a bilingual experience of the highest standard for users. Lessons learned from the project's initial stages have been invaluable as we sought to implement additional modules or elements as part of the project to develop a Learning Management System (LMS) and induction portal. Both of these will be launched at the beginning of the Seventh Senedd, and will be function fully bilingually for users. This will enhance the experience for new Members and support staff following the Senedd elections in May.

Policy making

Following extensive consultation, and in accordance with the policy governance framework, the Senedd Commissions' recruitment policy was refreshed this year.

The objective of this policy review was to ensure that the Commission's recruitment method:

- supports the process of introducing the People and Culture Strategy and Workforce Plan;
- enables a more strategic approach to making recruitment decisions based on evidence;
- strengthens consistency, transparency and inclusion in recruitment practices; and
- considers active learning, alongside feedback received on the previous policy and the Recruitment Authorisation Document (RAD) process.

The Official Languages Team was consulted as part of this work, and adjustments were made to the policy to align with the Scheme. Specifically, an explanation was added as to the assessment arrangements and panels for positions requiring level 4 and level 5 Welsh language skills.

Duties of Members of the Senedd

In preparation for the Seventh Senedd, the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd has reviewed the Rules and Guidance for Members on the Use of Senedd Resources. Extensive consultation was undertaken on these rules, and an amended version will be published on the website. Comments were received regarding engagement between the Official Languages framework and Members, and these were shared with the Official Languages Team. The need to adhere to the specific requirements of the Official Languages Scheme continues as part of the wider rules and guidance on the use of resources. The exact details of these requirements are outlined in the Official Language Scheme. Members, support staff and the public will have an opportunity to express a view on the Official Languages Scheme for the Seventh Senedd in a consultation as part of the drafting and approval process.

Skills strategy

In accordance with the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012, the Senedd Commission is required to outline its strategy for ensuring that staff as a whole, and staff across service areas, have the necessary language skills to enable the Official Languages Scheme to be delivered. When formulating the Official Languages Scheme for the Sixth Senedd, the Strategy was reviewed and incorporated into the Scheme. This has worked well and has ensured that the objectives of the Strategy and Scheme have been reviewed together. There is also greater opportunity for Members to hold the Senedd Commission to account in terms of the Bilingual Skills Strategy.

Statistical information

In accordance with Service Standard 11.3 of the Official Languages Scheme, the Senedd Commission is required to include statistical information in its annual report on the Official Languages Scheme. We use this information to ensure that we continue to provide excellent bilingual services and that we implement the Scheme consistently, in accordance with all service standards and our stakeholders' expectations. Statistical information for the previous year is also provided as context.

Recruitment

Table 1: Number of posts advertised at Courtesy Welsh level, or with a higher language skill level required

External

	Number of posts advertised	Courtesy level	Combination of skills*	Level 1-5
2021-22	47	32	0	15
2022-23	51	34	0	17
2023-24	34	24	0	10
2024-25	40	29	0	11
2025-26	57	37	0	20

Internal

	Number of posts advertised	Courtesy level	Combination of skills*	Level 1-5
2021-22	20	9	0	11
2022-23	19	13	0	6
2023-24	27	20	0	7
2024-25	36	28	0	8
2025-26	46	31	0	15

Total

	Number of posts advertised	Courtesy level	Combination of skills *	Level 1-5
2021-22	67	41	0	26
2022-23	70	47	0	23
2023-24	61	44	0	17
2024-25	76	57	0	19
2024-26	103	68	0	35

Percentages

	Courtesy level posts	Posts at level 1 - 5
2021-22	61%	39%
2022-23	67%	33%
2023-24	72%	28%
2024-25	75%	25%
2025-26	66%	34%

The level of language skills required for each post is identified in individual services' language plans, developed in collaboration between the Official Languages Co-ordinator, the Head of Service and the Official Languages Team. Confirming the language skills requirement for each vacant post or new post is part of the process of receiving permission to advertise from the Executive Board.

The past few years have seen a decrease in the number of posts advertised as requiring language skills at level 1 - 5. The majority of posts advertised have become vacant as a result of an individual moving on to a different position, either internally or externally. The new posts that are being advertised in preparation for the Seventh Senedd have been assessed in accordance with the needs of the relevant role and service, and language skills requirements are imposed in accordance with individual services' language plans. As the Seventh Senedd approaches, and as the number of posts advertised increased, we see that the percentage of posts advertised at level 1 – 5 has also increased.

Senedd business

Table 2: Documents published by Senedd Committees in Welsh, in English and bilingually for the year 2025-25.

Type of document	Welsh	English	Bilingual
Prepared internally		37	1,127
Secretary of State		17	7
Welsh Government		30	1,422
Individual Members		6	11
External		618	308

Senedd committees draw up every document to be published on the Senedd website in both official languages. In accordance with the requirements of the Official Languages Scheme, letters and documents for individuals or organisations that have stated their preferred language will be drawn up in that language alone. It is a matter for members of individual committees to decide in what form documents to be considered by their committee in private session (for example, draft reports) and briefing documents for Members are provided. This includes the language used in such documents. Staff members who support committees have discussions with Members to understand their working practices and to ensure that they are able to prepare for meetings and participate in proceedings in a timely manner and in their preferred official language. During the induction process for new Members, we will be recording their preferred language for briefing documents, as well as for written and in-person communications. Committee clerks will confirm these preferences with members of individual committees and will also discuss detailed options with committee Chairs.

Table 3: Number of documents tabled in Welsh, English and bilingually.

Year	Number of documents tabled	Number of documents not tabled bilingually	Percentage
2021-22	930	69	7%
2022-23	885	47	5%
2023-24	777	39	5%
2024-25	811	33	4%
2025-26	1192	50	4%

Documents produced by the Senedd Commission are drafted and laid in both official languages. In accordance with Standing Order 15.4, any documents laid

or business tabled by the Llywydd, Commission, Welsh Government, any committee or the clerk should be laid or tabled in Welsh and English, as far as is appropriate under the circumstances and reasonably practicable.

Documents that were not tabled bilingually this year fall into the following two categories:

- reports by external bodies that the Senedd Commission or Welsh Government are required to lay before the Senedd; and
- legislation laid on behalf of an external body.

Table 4: Business laid at the Table Office

Year	Oral questions	Written questions	Motions	Amendments	Statements of opinion	Topical questions
2021-22 (Welsh)	14%	4%	2%	4%	10%	18%
2021-22 (Bilingual)	0	0	11%	11%	3%	0
2022-23 (Welsh)	15%	3%	2%	0	6%	10%
2022-23 (Bilingual)	0	0	51%	32%	2%	0
2023-24 (Welsh)	9%	1%	3%	11%	4%	6%
2023-24 (Bilingual)	1%	0	55%	31%	2%	0
2024-25 (Welsh)	11%	9%	6%	25%	1.5%	7%
2024-25 (Bilingual)	1.5%	0.5%	63%	32%	3%	0%
2025-26 (Welsh)	11%	9%	3%	38%	2%	9%
2025-26 (Bilingual)	1%	05%	66%	16%	4%	0

Individual Members may table business in their preferred language. Training is available for Members and their support staff who wish to improve their written Welsh language skills, and we will promote the available training opportunities at the beginning of the Seventh Senedd to ensure that Members and support staff can feel confident to use their skills when tabling business. Members and

their support staff can choose an interface in their preferred language when using the Table Office's system for tabling business.

Proceedings

Table 5: Percentage of contributions made in Welsh during Plenary proceedings and in committee meetings.

Type of contribution	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2021-22	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2022-23	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2023-24	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2024-25	Percentage of contributions in Welsh 2025-26
Plenary proceedings	30%	30%	28%	29%	31%
Committee proceedings	12%	8%	9%	9%	8%

Members may receive support in their preferred official language to prepare for proceedings in Plenary and committees, including briefing documents. A number of external factors affects the percentage of contributions made in Welsh, including witnesses' choice of language when giving evidence to committees, alongside the less structured nature of discussions in committee meetings.

At the beginning of the Seventh Senedd, we will continue our efforts to ensure that Members and others taking part in proceedings are aware of their right to use their preferred language in proceedings, and that they feel confident in doing so. We will also continue to provide services such as tailored training for Members who are learning Welsh, bilingual briefing papers and glossaries. Any training or presentations given to new Members will emphasise the bilingual nature of Senedd business, and will also include an introduction to practical considerations, such as how to use equipment to access simultaneous interpretation. We will also implement a recommendation of the Chairs' Forum in its report on committee effectiveness during the Sixth Senedd that the Senedd Commission should investigate options for improving the technology that supports simultaneous interpretation early in the Seventh Senedd term.

Themes

Language skills

Wide-ranging provision of support and training opportunities for those who wish to learn Welsh or improve their skills continues, and this year many new speakers have taken exams set by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Following last year's pilot, a Language Skills Certificate was offered again this year, in conjunction with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Four candidates are working towards this qualification this year, and all of last year's candidates were successful. Furthermore, the team has also adopted a Welsh Language Confidence Module developed last year. The module offers Welsh speakers an opportunity to improve their oral Welsh skills, and to boost their confidence in using these skills in the workplace. Following last year's pilot, the module was evaluated and the 11 individuals who had completed the training were asked for their views. All participants felt more confident in using their Welsh language skills, not just with other colleagues but also in less familiar surroundings. Around two thirds of participants felt that they had achieved level 4 skills by the end of the module, as compared to just two at the beginning. This is an encouraging result and demonstrates that the module has achieved its primary objectives. Moreover, a few of the participants also noted that they now feel more confident to apply for positions that have a higher language skills requirement.

The organisation's bilingual ethos

Over the past few years, the Official Language Team has updated the contents of its induction sessions for new Commission staff and for Members' support staff. The team has also been preparing for the Seventh Senedd, working with the Election Transition Team to ensure that the ability to work bilingually is an intrinsic part of induction and training sessions for Members and their support staff. Not only will the Official Languages Team have an opportunity to provide its own sessions, but bilingual working, and the support available to work bilingually, will be discussed as part of other teams' sessions across the Commission; for example, guidance on how to use equipment to access simultaneous interpretation and how to table business in a Member's preferred language. As previously mentioned, we will gather information on the language skills and preferences of Members and their support staff as part of the onboarding process. This will enable us to tailor their experiences at the Senedd from the very beginning.

Learning and improving

Sharing expertise continues to be a priority for the Senedd Commission, and the Official Languages Team has welcomed a number of parliamentary and international visitors over the past year including a visit from representatives of the Norwegian Parliament. The Translation and Reporting Service was particularly pleased to host a joint visit by Northern Ireland's Irish Language Commissioner, Ulster University and Queen's University, Belfast in February 2026. This was an opportunity to share information about the Service's work and about working bilingually at the Senedd in general. Our relationship with the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner and the National Centre for Learning Welsh also provides regular opportunities for us to benchmark and improve our services, particularly when it comes to the use of Welsh in the workplace.

In addition to all of the practical preparatory work, the past year has also been a period of strategic preparation as we look ahead to the Seventh Senedd. There is no doubt that the changes made as a result of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 have motivated us to look again at the Official Languages framework. We are eager to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that we are, despite a significant increase in demand for services, able to continue to provide bilingual services of the highest standard by default. As part of a survey undertaken during the Sixth Senedd, Members and support staff were asked about the current framework, and we will undertake further consultation at the beginning of the Seventh Senedd. The team will continue to work on developing a new Official Languages Scheme for the Seventh Senedd and will continue to consult stakeholders, and engage with them, to ensure that the Scheme reflects the needs of the organisation and the people whom we serve. The coming year offers an opportunity to strengthen our commitment to bilingualism, and we are determined to continue to lead the way as a fully bilingual legislature.



Monitoring and compliance

Regrettably, in the closing months of 2025, due to a number of considerations, not least being staff well-being, an unprecedented but conscious decision was taken to breach the Official Languages Scheme. To this effect, internal briefing documents for Members in committee meetings were provided in English only, with bilingual versions of the questions. The decision was made based on several factors, including:

- unavoidable staff absence;
- an unprecedented number of Bills all concluding their legislative journey through the Senedd before the election;
- an exponential increase in the volume of text translation work emanating from the Business Directorate with very limited turnaround time for translation;
- the fact that these documents are not widely circulated, and have limited use following the committee meeting as a new briefing document is prepared for the next meeting;
- a lack of capacity within the external translation companies on our call-off contract.

This decision was conveyed to the Committee Members, with the opportunity to discuss further with members of the integrated teams who support the committees if required.

As part of plans for the Seventh Senedd, the Translation and Reporting Service has already started to put measures in place to mitigate the risk of another instance of failure to provide text translation in the future. Discussions are ongoing with other services across the organisation to ensure that they are aware of the increasing pressure on the Service, and in order to emphasise the need to plan ahead in order to allow for effective planning of the text translation workload.

Two complaints were received this year, and both were resolved informally without the need for escalation to a formal complaints process. The complaints were as follows:

Providing Welsh-medium training for Members' support staff

A request for training through the medium of Welsh was made by a member of support staff. Unfortunately, when the training was advertised, no Welsh-medium provision was available. The Official Languages Team was asked to investigate the matter by the Member employing the member of support staff in question. After receiving the complaint, the Member Learning and Engagement Team immediately sought to resolve the issue by arranging a Welsh-medium session and advertising it on the intranet. The member of support staff who had made the original request was also notified of this new provision. The team evaluated its processes for arranging and advertising courses and training opportunities, and sought solutions in advance for those occasions when training providers are unable to provide training in Welsh or bilingually.

Language-related complaint

A complaint was received from a member of the public regarding a page on the Senedd's website, on which the letters *ŵ* and *ŷ* were incorrectly displayed. It was noted that the Senedd should ensure that any software or fonts used by the Commission to create websites should be able to display correctly all characters used in the Welsh alphabet. It was suggested that we were not treating both languages equally by publishing a page on which the characters were incorrectly displayed. The page in question was investigated, and an issue with publication was discovered. The errors were corrected, thereby ensuring that the characters appeared correctly, and committee staff responsible for publishing on the website were reminded of the need to check all materials published after completing the publication process.

Also, as part of the same complaint, it was noted that we had received and published a letter in English only from an organisation that is subject to the Welsh Language Standards. We drew the complainant's attention to Service Standard 2.12, which notes:

"All content produced by the Senedd Commission for the Senedd website must be bilingual. Third party documents (with the exception of documents outlined in 1.4 above), or documents published for information that were produced in a third party's preferred language, are published in that language only."

It was confirmed that the Welsh Parliament is not responsible for monitoring other organisations' standards requirements nor for ensuring compliance.



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