
Ofcom's Annual Report for the Welsh Language Commissioner

Our progress complying with the Welsh language
Standards 2020-21

[Read the Welsh version of this report](#)

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1. Overview

This document sets out our annual progress on complying with Welsh language legislation, over the course of 2020-2021. ¹

Known as 'The Welsh language Standards', this legislation was issued to Ofcom in a compliance notice by the Welsh Language Commissioner in January 2017. ² This included 141 Standards, which enabled us to increase our work in Welsh, such as producing more consumer research and information about our work.

We remain committed to promoting the Welsh language and enabling people to interact with Ofcom in their preferred language – whether that is Welsh or English. We've achieved this in a way that's proportionate and consistent with our existing duties.

Ofcom's Welsh language progress

Ofcom is committed to meeting our Welsh language obligations. We are proud of the way we seamlessly integrate the Welsh language into our work. Our work in Welsh has continued without interruption during the challenging Covid-19 pandemic.

Like most people, the team has been impacted by Covid-19, including those who have sadly lost close family members during the pandemic. Our colleagues across the UK provided extensive support throughout, to ensure we continued to comply with our Welsh language obligations during an unprecedented national crisis.

We've continued to adapt our events programme successfully to the restrictions of Covid-19 to ensure we remain compliant with the legislation. We've held two virtual events in the past year, using simultaneous translation technology to ensure contributors can use the Welsh language with no impediment.

Ofcom's final compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner has Ofcom's full authority, support, and approval. We have a Senior Welsh Language Advisor and a new Welsh language Associate in place to manage Ofcom's Welsh language activities. This includes compliance work, translation requirements, social media, print and online production.

When producing our Welsh language communications, we tailor our approach to ensure that content is relevant to our audiences in Wales and communicated in an engaging way. Our key activities working in the Welsh language over the past year include:

- Appointing a Welsh language Associate in October 2020 to support our Senior Welsh language Advisor.
- Translating over 500,000 words into Welsh including key publications such as [Media Nations Wales](#), looking at changes in how audiences are served by video and audio services in Wales.

¹ From September 2020-September 2021.

² https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0026/96920/Hysbysiad-Cydydffurfio44-Y-Swyddfa-Gyfathrebiadau-en.pdf

- Producing several Welsh language videos, which we've shared on social media, including our [Diversity in Broadcasting](#) video, with contributions from Welsh speaking sector leaders.
- Launching our [Welsh language matters online hub](#), including a new video promoting our services to Welsh speakers.
- Launching a [bilingual monthly consumer e-newsletter](#) for subscribers.

Full details of our Welsh language activities over the past year are available in Section 3.

2. About Ofcom

- 2.1 Ofcom is the independent communications regulator in the UK. Headquartered in London, with offices in each UK nation, we regulate the TV, radio and video on demand sectors, fixed line and mobile telecoms, postal services, plus the airwaves over which wireless devices operate. Earlier this year, the UK Government published [its draft Online Safety Bill](#), setting out Ofcom's new responsibilities that will help to keep people safe when they are online. We're also taking on new responsibilities related to telecoms security.
- 2.2 Ofcom makes sure that people in the UK get the best from their communications services and are protected from scams and sharp practices, while ensuring that competition can thrive. Our powers and duties are set out in several Acts of Parliament.

Ofcom in Wales

- 2.3 While Ofcom's headquarters are in London, we ensure that we have a perspective across the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. We have a statutory duty to have regard to, among other things, the views, and interests of those who live in different parts of the UK. Our operations in the nations are led by senior Directors in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, and London. Ofcom [recently announced](#) it will open a new tech hub in Manchester which will soon be operational. Our National offices can draw on the full resources of the whole organisation to tackle issues that affect one part of the UK.
- 2.4 The Ofcom Wales office is based in Cardiff, employing five full-time staff who are fluent Welsh speakers and one part-time staff member who is not. Ofcom provides information to encourage staff to learn Welsh on the staff intranet. Welsh lessons for staff are also funded by the organisation.

Engaging with the Welsh language Commissioner

- 2.5 Ofcom has engaged constructively with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office for many years, ensuring that we have a thorough understanding of the Commissioner's requirements.
- 2.6 We have attended briefing sessions arranged by the Commissioner and responded in a timely manner to all queries with the Welsh language. We were pleased to contribute to the Welsh Language Commissioner's recent Consultation on a Draft Code of Practice. We welcome further opportunities to engage with the Commissioner and his team.

3. Our approach

3.1 Ofcom seeks to treat the Welsh and English languages equally. When providing a service in the Welsh language, we ensure that the Welsh language is treated on the same basis as English in Wales. This applies to:

- the visual presentation of material
- when and how the material is published, provided or exhibited
- the size, position and prominence of the material in any public place and its publication format.

Our approach is designed to allow people to engage with our work through the Welsh language.

3.2 We innovate in our communications, and always encourage greater engagement from Welsh speakers. This includes inviting a range of external Welsh speaking contributors to take part in our public events, producing Welsh language interactive content and engaging Wales related content on social media.

3.3 In deciding when to provide a Welsh language service, we apply a consistent criterion. If the issue in question relates to matters that affect – or is likely to be of relevance to citizens and businesses in Wales, then we will provide a Welsh language service as standard practice.

Our progress over the past year

3.4 Our new Welsh language Associate has been in post since October 2020. The Welsh Associate is a professional Translator which has enabled us to refine our translation processes and establish an internal Translation Memory Management System. This new Welsh essential role has also enabled us to further develop our Welsh language output and provide support for our Senior Welsh language Advisor.

3.5 In June 2021 we advertised three vacancies for our Advisory Committee Wales where speaking Welsh was a desirable criterion. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the interviews were held online using simultaneous translation to ensure candidates could use the Welsh language with no impediment. Recruitment for these posts is ongoing.

3.6 In August 2021, we advertised a vacancy for a new Ofcom Content Board member for Wales where speaking Welsh was a desirable criterion. Recruitment for this post is ongoing.

3.7 Ofcom advertised a new Welsh essential post, Regulatory Affairs Associate Wales, in September 2021. This new role will be the main point of contact in Wales as Ofcom takes on responsibility for online safety. As a 'Welsh essential' role, this will ensure the individual will have the skills and knowledge needed to factor in the Welsh language from the start.

- 3.8 In total, Ofcom translated around 500,000 words into Welsh over the past year including reports, newsletters, news releases, update emails and webpages³.
- 3.9 We've produced Welsh language videos which we've shared on Social Media and our website on a variety of themes including [Diversity and broadcasting in Wales](#), [Online Nation](#) and our [Consumer information video](#)
- 3.10 In September 2021 we launched [our new online Hub](#). The Hub promotes our work in Welsh and provides information about our Welsh language commitments in one place. It has prominence on our website as it can be accessed via our website footer. It also features a new animated video providing information to the public about the services we provide in Welsh.
- 3.11 Our pan UK English Twitter account [promotes our Welsh account regularly](#). An English [tweet highlighting the popularity of learning Welsh on Duolingo](#) during lockdown attracted the highest engagement for our Online Nation campaign.
- 3.12 We launched a new iteration of our [mobile and broadband checker](#) earlier this year. The checker provides information to consumers on broadband and mobile services so that they can make more informed choices. The Welsh version was updated at the same time as the English version.
- 3.13 [Our new consumer e-newsletter](#) is published monthly and available in Welsh and English for email subscribers.
- 3.14 Our Wales events include bilingual participants and presentations, with stakeholders choosing to speak Welsh in the Q and A sessions. We provide simultaneous translation at our Wales events allowing participants to contribute using the language in which they are most comfortable. Our Wales online events over the past year include our Small Screen, Big Debate event in November 2020 and our Ofcom Annual Plan event in February 2021. Simultaneous translation was provided in these virtual events demonstrating our ability to adapt successfully to the Covid-19 restrictions on live events and remain compliant with Welsh language legislation.
- 3.15 We produced a range of major publications recently in the Welsh language, including Small Screen: Big Debate Review Statement⁴; Ofcom's Annual Report 2020-21⁵; Ofcom's Annual Report on the BBC 2020⁶; Connected Nations Wales 2020⁷ and Media Nations Wales 2021⁸.
- 3.16 Our major consultations⁹ include a Welsh language response form, to ensure Welsh speakers can provide feedback and comments in the language of their choice.

³ From July 2020 to July 2021

⁴ <https://www.smallscreenbigdebate.co.uk/cymru/statement>

⁵ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/cymru/about-ofcom/annual-reports-and-plans/2020-21-annual-report>

⁶ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/cymru/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/bbc-operating-framework/performance/bbc-annual-report>

⁷ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0026/209465/connected-nations-2020-wales-cym.pdf

⁸ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/222915/wales-report-2021-cym.pdf

⁹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/cymru/consultations-and-statements>

- 3.17 As recommended by the Welsh language Commissioner's best practice guidelines, we established a Welsh language Champions group in March 2021. Ofcom is a UK wide organisation with over 1000 members of staff. Our aim, by having Champions embedded in key teams across the organisation, is to ensure the Welsh language legislation is considered in the early stages of project planning. The Champions have also taken part in a review of Welsh language processes in their teams in August 2021.
- 3.18 We recently launched a new internal project management tool, PPM Anywhere. This includes a compulsory Welsh language field for policy project managers to notify the Welsh language team of any projects that require its input in the early planning stages.
- 3.19 Our new Staff intranet features new Welsh content. This includes videos explaining more about the Welsh language, its history and development, our translation procedures, additional resources for learners and information about our legal commitments.
- 3.20 An introduction to our work in Welsh has been an integral part of our induction process to new staff in Wales for many years. We also include the Welsh language and information about our statutory obligations in an 'Intro to Nations' session which is held quarterly for new staff based across the UK. This session has continued to be presented virtually during the pandemic period. In early 2021 we refreshed our presentation on the Welsh language to all new staff that join Ofcom as part of the central UK induction process. This session has also been presented online during the pandemic period.
- 3.21 In March 2021, our Senior Welsh language Advisor presented a session on our work in Welsh as part of an online 'Spotlight' event for all Ofcom staff members across the UK.
- 3.22 In September 2021, our Welsh language team presented an online session on Welsh language awareness to Corporate staff members across Ofcom. Our Welsh language team also hold bespoke Language Awareness training for specific teams within the organisation when needed.
- 3.23 We're currently developing a compulsory interactive training module on the Welsh language which all staff will complete via our Intranet Learning and Development online portal.
- 3.24 Finally, Ofcom audits how we take the interests of Welsh language speakers into account when we make regulatory decisions. As outlined in Ofcom's compliance notice, we have adopted a formal process of identifying the outcomes for Welsh speakers in a more structured and measurable manner when making policy decisions. We do this through our Welsh Language Standards Implementation Plan.¹⁰ This is modelled on a framework used across Ofcom to evaluate outcomes for customers.

Complaints

- 3.25 Ofcom received one complaint related to our compliance with the service delivery standards in February 2021. The complaint related to correspondence about an Ofcom

¹⁰ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/103023/welsh-language-standards-implementation-plan.pdf

survey. The complaint was assessed by the Welsh language Commissioner who noted that he did not intend to investigate the complaint further as Ofcom had taken satisfactory steps to address the matter.

- 3.26 In May 2021 a complaint was sent to the Welsh language Commissioner regarding Ofcom's Small Scale DAB Radio licence awards in the Cardiff area. Ofcom is co-operating with the Commissioner's investigation into the complaint.
- 3.27 Ofcom's Complaints Procedure explains how we aim to deal with complaints about our service delivery standards. The Complaints Procedure can be viewed on our website¹¹ and is also available as a hard copy in the Ofcom Wales office. Members of the public can contact us at any time to discuss Welsh language matters or related complaints, and we encourage them to do so on the website.

Contact Details

If you wish to contact us regarding our Welsh language Standards or the content of this annual report, please email us at: welshenquiries@ofcom.org.uk

¹¹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/how-ofcom-is-run/nations-and-regions/wales/welsh-language>

A1. Our standard procedure for translating documents

- A.1.1 **Assessing the need for translation.** If a document, (for example a consultation, report, executive summary, news release, web page, tweet or stakeholder-update email), relates to matters that affect – or are likely to be of particular relevance to – consumers and citizens in Wales, then we will publish a Welsh language version of the document simultaneously with the English.
- A.1.2 **Regular discussion about translation requirements.** Decisions regarding Welsh translation are discussed and agreed through regular meetings between Ofcom's Nations teams, including our Welsh language team, and our main communications team based in London.
- A.1.3 **Working closely with policy teams.** The person leading a project is informed by the communications team, and the Welsh language team, of the need to publish a Welsh language version of the document. Policy teams can also highlight the Welsh language requirement in the new PPM Anywhere Project Management tool. This requirement is then incorporated into our publication schedule, to ensure the Welsh version is treated on an equal basis and published simultaneously with the English version.
- A.1.4 **Working closely with translators.** Ofcom has a very positive working relationship with our translators. They are alerted as far as possible in advance of forthcoming translation requirements, and a timetable for turnaround is agreed to coincide with the publication date. An approximate word count is also provided when possible. Our translators consistently translate Ofcom documents to the highest standard on a timely basis. They also maintain a glossary of complex Ofcom terms, to ensure consistency across translations. They seek to ensure that Welsh translations are as clear and comprehensible as possible, by following "Cymraeg Clir" ("Clear Welsh") principles.
- A.1.5 **Checking for quality.** Ofcom's Welsh language team proof-reads and edits documents translated externally to ensure consistency, style and tone appropriate to the organisation as well as technical accuracy. The documents are then forwarded to the digital team for simultaneous publication alongside the English versions.