

WALES & WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION

REPORT TO BOARD – 23 APRIL 2026

WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER – ANNUAL UPDATE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Wales & West Housing Group (WWHG) operates under a Welsh Language Scheme (WLS) approved by the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Scheme was developed under Section 21 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and sets out how the Group ensures Welsh and English are treated equally when delivering services in Wales.
- 1.2 The Scheme is not only a statutory requirement; it reflects the Group’s commitment to providing high-quality bilingual services, with clear expectations for consistency, accountability and service standards across all parts of the organisation.
- 1.3 Each year, the Board approves a Welsh Language annual action plan ([Appendix 1](#)), which covers nine areas with a series of associated tasks. This report covers activity from March 2025 to February 2026.
- 1.4 As the Group prepares for the Welsh Language Standards due to come into force, a revised transitional action plan will be implemented. The transitional plan will focus on aligning policies, services and processes with the new statutory Standards.
- 1.5 Overall, the report confirms that WWHG continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to the Welsh language through bilingual communication, service delivery and the promotion of Welsh use across the organisation.

2.0 Welsh language skills

- 2.1 Welsh language skills are captured for all new employees during induction, and existing staff have completed a self-assessment covering speaking, listening, reading and writing. These are recorded on the HR system and can be updated as skills develop. This approach aligns with Welsh Language Commissioner recruitment guidance and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- 2.2 There are currently 167 Welsh-speaking staff across the Group, including 62 first-language Welsh speakers. Data collection for 96 staff is ongoing and will be completed as part of the rollout of the new HR system, People XD, in July 2026. A full breakdown of fluency levels by department is included in this report.

Level	No skill	Beginner	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Fluent	Master	Sub Total	No Record
Department									
Chief Exec	2	1	1					4	0
Board	9	1	2					12	0
Operations	149	31	6	8	0	15	0	209	45

Corporate Strategy & Services	62	23	2	9	0	0	3	99	8
Finance, Assets & development	39	18	2	6	0	5	0	70	2
Cambria	96	19	3	2	2	10	0	132	38
Total	348	92	13	25	2	30	3	513	97

2.3 Several Board members also have Welsh language skills at varying levels (see [Appendix 2](#)).

2.4 Recruitment arrangements support the delivery of bilingual services by enabling appropriate assessment of Welsh language requirements for each role. Using the CEFR framework allows WWHG to specify language needs clearly and proportionately, rather than relying solely on the term ‘essential’, which can limit candidate pools. Further work is planned to strengthen how bilingual capacity is managed across the organisation.

3.0 Welsh language training

3.1 WWHG continues to support Welsh language learning through ‘Say Something in Welsh’, Duolingo and the ‘Work Welsh’ programme, with SSiW funded by the Group. However, there were no active learners during the reporting period, partly due to the cessation of internal taster sessions and the ongoing review of learning options.

3.2 To support a bilingual workplace, the ‘Learn Welsh’ SharePoint tile remains prominent and has been refreshed with updated resources. A wider review is underway, with the aim of developing a single, comprehensive bilingual Welsh language page in 2026.

3.3 Work has also begun to introduce a Welsh-language-specific induction, supported by a planned online community for learners and Welsh speakers on the new staff intranet. The Group is considering a wider package of learning options, including piloting the ARFer behavioural change app to encourage everyday use of Welsh.

3.4 In parallel, principles for the internal use of Welsh are being developed, setting out a clear organisational vision for using Welsh in day-to-day operations and how staff will be supported through training, resources and confidence-building opportunities.

4.0 Promotion of the Welsh language

4.1 Throughout the year, Welsh Language has been actively promoted through internal communications and cultural events including St David’s Day, Shwmae Su’mae Day, Eisteddfodau and Welsh Language Music Day. WWHG also supported the national ‘Defnyddia dy Gymraeg’ campaign to raise awareness of residents’ rights to use Welsh.

4.2 Monthly ‘Did you know?’ posts on SharePoint continued, featuring Welsh phrases, news, recipes, traditions and events. These posts received nearly 1,500 views during 2025/26.

4.3 Welsh learning opportunities promoted during the year included the Amdani festival, S4C’s ‘Iaith ar Daith’, Wythnos Dathlu Dysgu Cymraeg and Menter Iaith resources.

- 4.4 The Iaith Gwaith brand continues to be used to identify Welsh speakers and learners, supported by email footers, badges and lanyards. A review of these arrangements is underway to ensure consistency and readiness for future Standards.
- 4.5 WWHG also supported Welsh language promotion externally through partnerships with Menter Iaith, schools, Careers Wales, and community organisations, delivering a wide range of bilingual community events and investing over £29,000 in Welsh-language initiatives.
- 4.6 Signage audits have been completed across offices and extra care schemes, with actions underway to address inconsistencies and introduce standardised guidance.

5.0 Communication in Welsh

- 5.1 66 residents have formally requested communication in Welsh, while 619 receive bilingual copies of InTouch. The proportion of residents with a recorded language preference increased from 59% to 67% during the year. Where preferences are unknown, correspondence continues to be issued bilingually.
- 5.2 A review of how language choice is recorded and shared internally is underway to strengthen the active offer and support compliance with Welsh Language Standards.
- 5.3 Welsh-language telephone services remain available during office hours, with callers given a language choice at the first point of contact. During 2025/26, 935 Welsh-language calls were received. A review of the Welsh-language telephone service, including out-of-hours provision, is planned for 2026.
- 5.4 Translation services are delivered through trained internal translators, supported, when necessary, by an external provider. The introduction of the Freshdesk Helpdesk System in 2025 has improved coordination, transparency and demand management for translation requests.
- 5.5 The website and social media platforms remain fully bilingual, with mystery shopper exercises confirming parity between Welsh and English content.
- 5.6 Preparatory work has begun for mandatory Welsh Language Awareness Training, which will support staff understanding of legal duties, cultural context and the importance of language choice in service delivery.

6.0 Complaints

No complaints relating to the Welsh language were received during the reporting period. In preparation for the Welsh Language Standards, the Governance Manager attended Welsh Language Commissioner training on complaints procedures.

7.0 Welsh Language Commissioner communication and action plan

No recommendations or amendments were made following submission of the 2024/25 monitoring report. Subject to Board approval, the updated monitoring report and action plan will be submitted to the Commissioner in line with agreed processes.

8.0 Update on the implementation of Welsh Language Standards

- 8.1 The Welsh Language Standards (No. 10) Regulations 2026 were approved by the Senedd in March 2026 and came into force on 31 March 2026. Compliance Notices will be issued to Registered Social Landlords following an investigation process.
- 8.2 Indicative timescales include introductory meetings in June 2026, draft Compliance Notices in November 2026 and full compliance by October 2027.

June 2026	Introductory meetings with Commissioner + questionnaire issued
September 2026	Individual RSL responses submitted
November 2026	Draft Compliance Notice sent to each individual Housing Association. 12-week consultation period commences.
March 2027	Final Compliance Notice
October 2027	Compliance Day

- 8.3 WWHG will complete the Standards Investigation Questionnaire to support a fair and proportionate application of the Standards across the Group, including its subsidiaries.
- 8.4 Work is underway to develop a Welsh Language Assurance Framework to strengthen oversight, identify priorities and embed sustainable compliance. A further update will be presented to the Board in August 2026 alongside the transitional action plan.
- 8.5 Staff from WWH attended a number of events during 2025–26 in preparation for the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards. WWH will continue to participate in relevant sessions hosted by the Welsh Language Commissioner and Community Housing Cymru to remain well-informed, build connections, and adopt a proactive approach throughout the imposition stage. Engagement in these forums will also enable us to learn from organisations that have already implemented the Standards. CHC will establish a sector-wide working group and share best practice to support housing associations during the transition.

9.0 Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Board: -

- i. Notes this report; and
- ii. approves the action plan in [Appendix 1](#).

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16 April 2026