

Welsh Language Standards – Standard 110

Enabling clinical consultations through medium of Welsh

Executive Summary

At Hywel Dda, we acknowledge and celebrate our diverse communities in West Wales. This includes that we have a high proportion of our population – whether patients, service users or carers - who wish to, and have a need to, communicate with the health service using their first language, through the medium of Welsh.

The Health Board takes its statutory duties towards the Welsh Language very seriously. As an organisation we have always tried to deliver our services in the service users' language of need. However, despite a commitment to deliver the Welsh Language Standards, we have not consistently achieved this.

We aim to improve further by ensuring the delivery of the active offer concept, so that members of the public don't need to ask for services in Welsh, but that they are automatically offered and provided.

We are committed not only to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, but to embrace their spirit, and to be the first Health Board where both languages are treated with equal status. Even though we are passionate, corporately, in terms of delivering our statutory duties, we recognise that the commitment is not always consistent across our sites, and that our awareness and culture will need to change for us to deliver a seamless bilingual service to our service users.

The Welsh language is an important factor in both the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. To meet both the spirit and the statutory requirements of the Acts, our Health Board will need to ensure that any needs identified in relation to Welsh language will be recognised and addressed through our proposed Integrated Impact Assessment Toolkit.

Standard 110 - background

Standard 110 of the Welsh Language Standards sets out an expectation that Health Boards are able to carry out clinical consultations through the medium of Welsh.

The standard embodies the principle that offering to carry out clinical consultations in Welsh to patients is a matter of quality and patient safety, as well as ensuring consistency and creating more opportunities for people to use the Welsh language. It puts the patient first, and highlights the practical importance of planning services

based on people's language needs. This is the standard that sets the foundations for a health service in a bilingual country.

As part of the Standard, the Health Board is asked to:

publish a plan for each five-year period setting out –

- a) the extent to which we are able to offer to carry out a clinical consultation in Welsh;
- b) the actions we intend to take to increase your ability to offer to carry out a clinical consultation in Welsh;
- c) a timetable for the actions that we have detailed in (b).

The Health Board believes it is relevant to note that the last five years have been difficult, and the situation remains so. The COVID-19 pandemic saw all services provided by NHS Wales under intense pressure and full focus was given to ensuring patients' clinical needs were met. Additionally, the Health Board, and NHS Wales in its totality, continues to endure service and financial pressure, with a number of fragile services. This cannot be used as justification for slower progress during the previous five years, but it is important to note the context in which all services are being delivered.

Particular focus has and will continue to be given to increase the offer of Welsh clinical consultation in services accessed by the 'vulnerable groups' noted in the 'More Than Just Words' strategy. These seven groups are:

- Children and Young People
- Older People
- People with Learning Disabilities
- Mental Health Service Users
- People living with Dementia
- People accessing Stroke services
- People accessing Speech and Language Therapy services

To support our learning process and enable us to scale up activity based on experience, we propose that our work in relation to Standard 110 will focus on a single service. Initially, all efforts will be focused on the Speech and Language Therapy Service across the Health Board. This service encompasses many of the vulnerable groups as listed in More than just words and will enable us to pilot and test our approach.

Aim

The aim of the action plan set out below outlines actions and initiatives in order to ensure that Health Board staff are able to conduct clinical consultations through the medium of Welsh, facilitating greater accessibility and inclusivity for Welsh speaking

patients. This plan aims to create an environment where Welsh speakers can receive high quality services in their language of need.

The following Plan is based on our initial internal discussions as to where we think efforts need to be concentrated on initially, however as the work progresses, further ideas and initiatives will develop and therefore this plan is subject to change during the five-year period.

The key objectives of this action plan includes:

- **Baseline assessment of the current situation**
Baseline audit of staff Welsh language skills; audit of material available e.g. forms, letters and patient information available bilingually
- **Training and development**
Implement a comprehensive Welsh language training plan for staff at all levels to improve staff Welsh language skills focusing on communication skills essential for effective patient interactions at all levels.
- **Recruitment and retention**
Increase the recruitment of Welsh speaking staff, with an emphasis on explaining the level of Welsh language skills required for each post.
- **Welsh language resources**
Provide and/or develop Welsh language resources from language glossaries to assessments, in order so support staff to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.
- **Patient awareness and engagement**
Raise awareness among Welsh speaking patients about their right to receive services through the medium of Welsh
- **Monitoring and evaluation**
Establish mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the plan, ensuring that Welsh language services are being provided effectively and that patient satisfaction is regularly assessed.

As a Health Board, we anticipate that by ensuring Welsh speaking patients can access care in their language of need, that this action plan enhances patient care, aligns with national actions and strategies that prioritise the Welsh language within public services, and enhances our Welsh language and culture within the Health Board

Objective	Actions	How we measure success	Timescale	Responsible Officer
Baseline assessment of the current situation Baseline audit of staff Welsh language skills; forms, letters and patient information available bilingually	Ascertain WL skills of the teams across the three counties	Baseline assessment of WL skills via ESR. Ensure that compliance is above 95%	Completed by March 2025	Welsh Language Service Manager / ESR Team
	Audit of all patient information (including form, letters and patient leaflets)	Ensure that all information is available bilingually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit completed – September 2025 Translation – depending on work required – timeline to be agreed after audit 	SLT Team Welsh Language Services Team / Translation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit – what assessments are available in Welsh Audit – what %/No. of patients require assessments in Welsh Audit – what %/No. of staff are available to provide assessments through the medium of Welsh Create actions in order to be able to respond to the need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what is available and what the gaps are Identify any Welsh Language Audits that are needed Work with partners – internal and external - to explore possibilities of creating Welsh Language Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025 – 2030 (Long term project that may not be completed within the 5 year time frame). 	SLT Senior Team & Welsh Language Services Team

	<p>The efficient use, and ease of access to, technology, systems and data in order to record language need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asses how this is currently being done – ascertain current percentage of information held. Ensure uniform approach across 3 counties • Explore ways of increasing data held • Explore how to ensure that the recorded language preference is used efficiently when rostering staff for services • Cynnig Rhagweithiol – how can this be implemented and recorded? 	<p>Initial Assesment completed – July 2025.</p>	<p>SLT Senior Team</p>

<p>Training and development</p> <p>Implement a comprehensive Welsh language training plan for staff at all levels to improve staff Welsh language skills focusing on communication skills essential for effective patient interactions at all levels.</p>	<p>Improve WL skills of the teams across the three counties – set targets based on ESR Welsh language levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WL skills levels assessment – before and after training • Staff usage questionnaire - before and after training 	<p>Timeline to be agreed with individuals – monitor quarterly. Review bi- annually to reflect any staff turnover.</p>	<p>Welsh Language Services Team SLT Senior Team</p>
	<p>Maintain WL skills of the teams across the three counties – set targets based on Action 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WL skills levels assessment • Various courses available • Building confidence course • Mentoring 	<p>Bi-annually</p>	<p>Welsh Language Services Team SLT Senior Team</p>
	<p>Ensure all Health Board staff attain Level 1 Welsh Language Skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff to improve Welsh language skills • Number of Welsh speaking staff appointed 	<p>Monitor annually to ensure increase in skills levels.</p>	<p>Welsh Language Services Team SLT Senior Team</p>
	<p>Ensure directorate wide (100%) compliance with the all new Welsh Language e-learning course. Further details</p>	<p>Compliance % recorded on ESR – 100% completion</p>	<p>100% September 2025 – maintain. Monitor biannually.</p>	<p>Welsh Language Services Team SLT Senior Team</p>

	can be found at New Mandatory Training - 000 NHS Wales Welsh Language Awareness (sharepoint.com)			
	Welsh Language Awareness – Any new staff to undertake the short course There will also be an option for existing staff to enrol on the course.	Attendance on the course will be recorded on ESR.	Monitor quarterly	Welsh Language Services Team SLT Senior Team
	Welsh Language session at whole team day		Spring/Summer 2025	SLT Senior Team Welsh Language Services Manager
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Recruitment and retention Increase the recruitment of Welsh speaking staff, with an emphasis on explaining the level of	Support managers to recruit Welsh speakers and support staff to learn/improve staff Welsh Language skills in order to achieve our 10 year target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of posts advertised as Welsh essential • Number of Welsh speaking staff appointed • Increase in the number of staff at each WL 	Ongoing Monitor quarterly	Workforce & OD / Welsh Language Services Team & SLT Senior Team

Welsh language skills required for each post.		<p>level (as recorded on ESR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor number of posts advertised as WL essential and what levels. Monitor if posts are filled with the required Welsh Language skills 		
	Assess each new and vacant post for Welsh language level requirement	Increase in the number of posts advertised as Welsh essential (including appropriate levels)	Ongoing Monitor quarterly	Workforce & OD / Welsh Language Services Team & SLT Senior Team
Welsh language resources	Ensure all staff have access to merchandise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mail outs / Team meetings to ensure that all staff are aware of resources available to them 	Quarterly	Welsh Language Services Team SLT Senior Team
Provide and/or develop Welsh language resources from language glossaries to assessments, in order so support staff to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.	If need identified, create new resources that are service specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with members of the SLT team to identify need / any gaps 	2026/27	Welsh Language Services Team

<p>Patient Awareness and engagement</p> <p>Raise awareness among Welsh speaking patients about their right to receive services through the medium of Welsh</p>	<p>Engage with patients and raise awareness of their right to receive services through the medium of Welsh and raise awareness of the active offer</p>	<p>Improved patient experience</p>	<p>Monitor bi-annually</p>	<p>Welsh Language Services Team SLT Senior Team Patient Experience Team</p>
<p>Monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>Establish mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the plan, ensuring that Welsh language services are being provided effectively and that patient satisfaction is regularly assessed.</p>	<p>Collate the views of Welsh speaking patients</p>	<p>Create a patient feedback form on the experiences of being able to access the services through the medium of Welsh</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Welsh Language Services Team SLT Senior Team Patient Experience Team</p>