

Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report

1 April 2022—31 March 2023

About us

Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the independent regulator of more than 788,000 nursing and midwifery professionals, we have an important role to play in making this a reality.

Our core role is to **regulate**. First, we promote high education and professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England. Second, we maintain the register of professionals eligible to practise. Third, we investigate concerns about nurses, midwives and nursing associates – something that affects a tiny minority of professionals each year. We believe in giving professionals the chance to address concerns, but we'll always take action when needed.

To regulate well, we **support** our professions and the public. We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout people's careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address new challenges. We also support people involved in our investigations, and we're increasing our visibility so people feel engaged and empowered to shape our work.

Regulating and supporting our professions allows us to **influence** health and social care. We share intelligence from our regulatory activities and work with our partners to support workforce planning and sector-wide decision making. We use our voice to speak up for a healthy and inclusive working environment for our professions.

Our commitment to the Welsh language

In accordance with Section 21 of the Welsh Language Act 1993, we are clear about the need to treat Welsh and English equally in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, as far as is appropriate in the context of a UK regulator and where reasonably practicable. Our Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board in January 2011.

The aim of this annual monitoring report is to summarise our progress in implementing our Welsh language scheme during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, in compliance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Commissioner. A summary report (based on questions from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office) is set out in Annexe 1.

We are committed to consistent compliance with our Welsh language scheme, and engaging with the Welsh Language Commissioner and others to be responsive and informed in our approach to meeting the needs of Welsh speakers. This report sets out our work in this area and will be accessible to customers through public discussion at a Council session as well as being published on our website, in line with previous years.

A strategic priority

Our current Strategy, published in April 2020, is due to end in March 2025 and we are developing our 2025 – 2020 Strategy. We remain committed to the strong links across the four countries of the UK and have an appreciation of the diverse political, service delivery and workforce planning contexts; we are dedicated to ‘reviewing and developing our presence’ in Wales and other parts of the UK.

We have included the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards as one of our 22 corporate commitments.

Our accompanying values and behaviours underpin our approach to Welsh language compliance, as set out below:

Fair

We will ensure people interacting with our services will have fair opportunities to access information in Welsh, and can trust our commitment to the new Regulations.

Kind

We value people who use the Welsh language, and we will be respectful when dealing with Welsh language requests. We will strive to ensure Welsh language speakers feel included and confident to engage with us in Welsh.

Collaborative

We will invest in our existing relationships, including with the Welsh Language Commissioner, and engage with wider Welsh communities, recognising we’re at our best when we work well with others.

Ambitious

We will be open to new ways of meeting our Welsh language requirements, and will always aim to do our best for Welsh language speakers.

Governance of our Welsh language work

Members of the Council, the Executive team and all our colleagues play a part in delivering our Welsh language scheme.

In March 2023 Sam Foster joined the NMC as the Executive Director for Professional Practice and Sam also took on the role as Lead Director for Wales, taking over from Gerry Walters who left the NMC in November 2022. In this role, Sam oversees engagement with stakeholders in Wales at a strategic level and chairs our internal Wales working group.

Our internal Wales working group routinely meets to discuss key updates related to our regulatory role in Wales. They consider the perspective of people working and living in Wales on proposed NMC policy development and announcements. This group is made up of colleagues from across the NMC.

Recent activity

During the reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, the NMC held a number of meetings and events with key stakeholders in Wales, including:

- Every six weeks, Andrea Sutcliffe (Chief Executive and Registrar), Gerry Walters (Executive Director for Professional Practise) or Sam Donohue (Assistant Director, Outreach at the NMC) met with Sue Tranka (Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) for Wales), to discuss key work for the NMC, including briefing Sue on key publications and annual data reports.
- Andrea Sutcliffe, Gerry Walters, and Sam Donohue attended the monthly four nations CNO and Chief Midwifery Officer (CMidO) meetings to gather and share updates with CNOs and CMidOs. Sue Tranka, Gill Knight (Nursing Officer) and Karen Jewel (Chief Midwifery Officer for Wales) attend these meetings.
- On 5 May 2022, Andrea Sutcliffe and Gerry Walters visited the World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre for Midwifery Development (WHO CC) and Women’s Unit, University Hospital Wales to celebrate international day of the midwife.
- On 17 July 2022, Andrea Sutcliffe, and David Warren (Chair of Council) met with the Minister for Health for Wales, Baroness Morgan of Ely to update her on key issues and priorities for the NMC.
- On 28 July 2022, Gerry Walters attended the Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) annual general meeting.
- On 4 August 2022, Gerry Walters presented information about band 4 nursing at the Royal College of Nursing Wales roundtable event.

- On 14 September 2022, Gerry Walters was a guest speaker at the RCN Nurse of the year awards ‘fireside chat’ in Wales.
- Jenny Collard, Head of Regulatory Policy, has met with GMC Wales and other regulators monthly since September 2022. They discussed the new Welsh Language Standards Regulations to ensure a consistent approach to implementation and to share learning.
- On 31 October 2022, Gerry Walters, Sam Donohue, and Sharon Clement-Thomas (Regulation Advisor) met with Sara Mosely, Head of the GMC Wales.
- On 1 February 2023, Andrea Sutcliffe and David Warren met with the Minister for Health for Wales, Baroness Morgan of Ely to provide further updates on our work.
- On 22 February 2023, Matt Hayday (Secretary for Council) and Alex Urquhart (Senior Stakeholder Engagement Officer) met with Gill Knight to discuss plans to hold an Open Council meeting in Cardiff on the 27 September 2023.
- On 20 March 2023, Andrea Sutcliffe wrote to Sue Tranka outlining our plans to hold an Open Council meeting on the 27 September 2023.

Progress on our previous actions

In our previous annual monitoring report, we committed to focusing on ensuring that we can effectively embed and demonstrate our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards (No.8) Regulations 2022¹ once these were introduced by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

We responded to the consultation on our draft compliance notice issued by the Welsh Commissioner on 13 December 2022. We were pleased to have our evidence accepted in our final notice for a variation and time extension for standard 20 – which requires us to produce our application forms to join the register in Welsh. This has been limited to the UK application route only and we have until December 2025 to implement.

We have established an internal project board to ensure effective delivery of the changes we need to make to ensure compliance with the new Regulations.

Progress on the implementation of the Regulations is reported through our Council's corporate plan, to provide visibility of the work and to demonstrate our support and commitment to meeting the Welsh Language Standards.

We are challenging ourselves to develop creative and engaging content to both raise awareness of the Standards and promote their benefits with our colleagues across the NMC. We are developing a comprehensive communication plan to ensure all colleagues are aware of our new obligations.

¹ The Welsh Language Standards (No. 8) Regulations 2022 (legislation.gov.uk)

Key actions for the next year

Our activity for 2023 – 2024 will be focused on effectively embedding and demonstrating our compliance with the new Welsh Language Standards Regulations by 6 December 2023. We are holding a Council meeting in Wales on 27 September 2023 and will be managing that meeting as if the Regulations were in force. This will give us an opportunity to refine our guidance and operating procedures for future events once the Regulations come into force.

We have identified Welsh language speakers in our organisation and there are already colleagues taking the opportunity to learn Welsh. We will be including the proactive offer to correspond with us in Welsh in our initial fitness to practise letters from the autumn, and we anticipate our automated telephone services being available in Welsh before the December deadline.

We will continue to engage with the other healthcare regulators to share learning and ensure consistency of approach for the benefit of people who use health and care services.

Annexe 1

Summary report of the implementation of the Welsh language scheme from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Policy impact assessment

Requested information

Number and percentage of policies (including those that were reviewed or revised) where consideration was given to the effects the policy would have on the use of the Welsh language.

Our work

We continue to undertake an equality impact assessment (EqIA) as part of the development of new policies and processes, and any review of our existing policies or standards. Our EqIA framework specifically requires colleagues to consider the effects of any changes to our policies, processes or standards, on Welsh speakers and the use of the Welsh language.

During the reporting period, we've developed and continued to update an EqIA covering all the policy development workstreams of our regulatory reform programme of work. This EqIA considered the use of Welsh on the public register post-regulatory reform in light of the new Welsh Language Standards Regulations. We undertook an EqIA when we developed our policies on forcibly displaced persons, and we committed to translating all guidance into Welsh upon request.

We also continued to consider the impact on Welsh language as we updated the EqIA for our review of our English language requirements. In summer 2022, we translated our consultation document and survey into Welsh, and we received six responses in Welsh. Of the 34,000 responses we received almost 900 (three percent) were from respondents in Wales, compared with our overall register where over 38,000 registrants (five percent) are in Wales. We have not identified any adverse implications on the Welsh language in any of these EqIAs.

We completed reviews of our Standards of proficiency for community nursing specialist practice qualifications (SPQ) and Standards of proficiency for specialist community public health nurses (SCPHN) and Standards for post-registration programmes. We approved these new standards and moved into implementation, which involved the completion of an EqIA and consideration of potential impacts of changes to our standards on Welsh speakers. The EqIAs undertaken did not find any potential unintended impacts or consequences for Welsh speakers, but we will continue to liaise with stakeholders from across the UK, including Wales, as we consider the implementation of these new standards.

Requested information

Example of an assessment deemed to have an impact on the use of the Welsh language and details of how the policy was amended as a result.

Our work

We have not undertaken any EqlA which resulted in an amendment to a proposed or existing policy during this reporting period.

Publications

Requested information

Number of publications available to the public.

Our work

There are a total number of 4,097 documents currently published on our website. 1,093 of these publications are aimed at the public, and 2,159 are Fitness to Practise outcomes documents.

Requested information

Number of publications available to the public in Welsh.

Our work

There are 154 documents on our website which are available in Welsh, including annual reports, standards documents, revalidation documents and education standards documents.

This is in line with our Welsh language scheme that says information aimed at patients and members of the public will be available in English and Welsh.

Standards, guidance and other technical or specialised material aimed at professionals and not directly at the public are published in English.

However, we offer a translation into Welsh on request. In addition to our scheme requirements, we translate materials when we engage with the Welsh-speaking public, for example our consultation materials and documents for engagement events in Wales.

Complaints

Requested information

Number of all complaints received about the conduct of practitioners in Wales.

Our work

We had 192 referrals in relation to a registered nurse, midwife, or nursing associate with a registered address in Wales from April 2022 to March 2023. This made up six percent of all total concerns.

Requested information

Number of complaints received in Welsh about the conduct of practitioners in Wales.

Our work

We did not receive any referrals in Welsh which related to a registered nurse, midwife, or nursing associate with a registered address in Wales from April 2022 to March 2023.

Requested information

Number of complaints received related to the Council's compliance with its Welsh language scheme.

Our work

The Customer Enquiries and Complaints team received no corporate complaints in relation to the NMC's compliance with the Welsh language scheme in the reporting period 2022-2023.

Requested information

Explain the nature of any complaints relating to the Council's compliance with its Welsh language scheme.

Our work

Not applicable - no complaints in respect of compliance with the Welsh language scheme have been received during the reporting period 2022-2023.

Website

Requested information

Percentage of the organisation's website that is available in Welsh.

Our work

Less than one percent of our website is available in Welsh.

We have a single information page in Welsh on the website explaining our organisation's remit and directing Welsh speakers to other services.

In addition to this, we have over 154 publications available in Welsh on our website, including annual reports, standards documents and revalidation guidance. This increases the presence of the Welsh language on our website.

We also offer a translation into Welsh on request.

Requested information

Evidence relating to improvements or increase in Welsh Language provision on the website.

Our work

We are working to translate public facing forms and information into Welsh in Autumn 2023 in compliance with the Welsh language regulations.

Requested information

Evidence relating to the process used to ensure that existing content, updates and new content, complies with the requirements of the Welsh language scheme.

Our work

Whenever we publish a public facing document (such as a consultation background document) we make sure the Welsh language version is also made available.

Promotion of Welsh language services

Requested information

Information about methods used to promote the organisation's Welsh language services and evidence of any subsequent increase in the public's use of the services.

Our work

We publish 'packages' of materials on our website, which for important public-facing documents, will usually include an English version of a publication, a Welsh version and an easy-read version. We signpost to these packages of materials through our newsletters and email communications, meaning that people are directed to landing pages which have all the available versions presented together for ease of access. Welsh language versions of documents are always presented clearly alongside the English language versions. This year, we have also started including Welsh captions for newly created animations and video content. For our public newsletter, from October 2023, we will be including the option to read each newsletter in Welsh.

There is a page on our website dedicated to giving details of our Welsh language scheme and the services we offer. This is accessed through a 'Cymraeg' button at the top of our navigation bar and is presented in Welsh as the default.

We have not received any requests to our contact centre for information or services in Welsh, or any complaints relating to our failure to provide items translated into Welsh.

Requested information

Information about methods used to assess the quality of the organisation's Welsh language services (e.g., by assessing the experience of existing/potential service users).

Our work

While we haven't had any customer feedback mentioning Welsh language, we assess the experience of existing users by invitation to our customer feedback surveys. Customers rate their satisfaction and have the opportunity to leave additional comments on any topic they wish, such as feedback on Welsh language communications. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses are captured in customer satisfaction reviews, which form the bedrock to improving our customer's experience.

Fitness to practise cases

Requested information

Number of hearings held in Wales.

Our work

During 2022 – 2023 we held four separate Fitness to Practise (FtP) Committee hearings in Wales, all in Cardiff. Three of these were substantive hearings (one of which was a joint case for two different registrants) and one was a Fitness to Practise Committee Interim Order review hearing.

Requested information

Number of hearings where a witness wished to speak Welsh.

Our work

We did not hold any hearings during the reporting period where a witness expressed a wish to speak Welsh.

Requested information

Number of hearings in which evidence was presented in Welsh.

Our work

We did not hold any hearings during the reporting period where evidence was presented in Welsh.

Requested information

Number of hearings held in Welsh.

Our work

We did not hold any hearings during the reporting period which were held in Welsh.

Language awareness training

Requested information

Number and percentage of the organisation's staff that has received Welsh language awareness training.

Our work

Our colleagues have access to an optional online training course on building awareness of our Welsh language scheme and its importance. This is part of a suite of online courses designed to support colleagues to develop in their knowledge about our work and our role as a regulator.

There were 25 completions during the reporting period, which accounts for two percent of our workforce. This is broadly the same as the reporting period 2021 – 2022, where there were 21 completions, accounting for two percent of our workforce at the time.

Self-regulation

Requested information

Details of the arrangements and procedures the organisation has adopted to enable it to self-regulate effectively.

Our work

We have continued to operate in accordance with Section 21 of the Welsh Language Act 1993, and with our own Welsh language scheme which was approved by the Welsh Language Board in January 2011.

Separately, we have continued to make preparations ahead of the introduction of the Welsh Language Standards Regulations by the Welsh Language Commissioner. We responded to the Welsh government's consultation in October 2020 and have monitored the progress made and its likely impact on us since then.

Part of our preparations for ensuring compliance with the new Regulations includes developing processes and guidance so we can self-regulate more effectively. We are developing a single document which will both raise the profile of our obligations under the Regulations and also promote the benefits. This will include promoting the ability for colleagues to learn Welsh and the benefits that will bring to Welsh speaking members of the public.

We are developing a robust process to review our compliance with the standards on an annual basis and ensure that any changes are recorded on our online compliance report (standard 64).

We will also be making senior colleagues responsible for monitoring compliance with specific standards to ensure we continue to meet the compliance requirements.

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