

# **Annual Report on the Welsh Language in Estyn 2023-2024**

**This document is also available in Welsh**

This twelfth annual report includes a summary of progress made between March 2023 and April 2024 against the priorities that we identified in last year's report.

### **Priorities for 2023-2024**

- 1. Utilise staff voice in an inclusive and proactive manner when developing our Welsh language services and offer both internally and externally.**
- 2. Continue to refine our approach to measuring staff members' Welsh language competencies to inform future professional development requirements more efficiently.**
- 3. Develop a comprehensive training programme that aligns well with individuals' and organisational linguistic and professional needs.**
- 4. Implement, the ARFer toolkit from 2023 onwards, by offering it to all employees across the organisation, in order to utilise the Welsh language skills of fluent speakers and learners within the organisation and further normalise the use of the Welsh language. (See appendix 7 for definition of the ARFer project).**
- 5. Promote the use of the Welsh language with those we work with e.g. providers we inspect, our feedback to public consultations and in contracting with third-party agencies.**

### **Introduction**

We have made mixed progress this year, where practically possible, in terms of the above priorities during the year and this report is intended to reflect and exemplify that progress.

- 1. Utilise staff voice in an inclusive and proactive manner when developing our Welsh language services and offer both internally and externally**

We have made greater use of our internal communications publication Llais to inform staff of developments and to ask for any suggestions to better our service. In addition, we introduced an option on our intranet that enabled staff to draw attention to issues regarding the Welsh language internally and in our external dealings.

- 2. Continue to refine our approach to measuring staff members' Welsh language competencies to inform future professional development requirements more efficiently**

During the reporting year we, for the second year, distributed an online survey for all staff members to complete. The response rate was very good, and we received a total of 121 responses out of a possible 138. 53% of our staff members who responded expressed an interest in learning Welsh or improving their present Welsh language skills.

The survey contained a series of questions asking staff to self-assess their ability in Welsh regarding oracy (listening and speaking), reading and writing. They were asked to grade themselves on a six-point scale. The scale used was based on the

internationally accepted levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the levels used by the Welsh for Adults sector (Pre-entry or no Welsh, Entry, Foundation, Intermediate, Advance, Proficiency) which are also based on the CEFR.

In addition, we asked staff members if they used their Welsh language skills in work, and if so, how as well as if they would be interested in training in improving their Welsh language skills.

### **Oracy**

48 staff members self-assessed themselves as at 5 or 6 on the scale (i.e. Levels B2 – C1/C2 ar y CEFR) regarding oracy. This represents a total of 40% of those staff members that completed the survey.

### **Reading**

49 (41%) staff members self-assessed themselves at levels 5 and 6 on the scale

### **Writing**

45 staff members self-assessed themselves as at levels 5 and 6 on the scale.

We have a small number of staff who self-assess at Level 4 or B1 (roughly equivalent to GCSE second language)

Over half of our staff are at lower levels (below GCSE second language levels) and it would require significant time and investment to turn them into active fluent speakers.

### **3. Develop a comprehensive training programme that aligns well with individuals' and organisational linguistic and professional needs.**

Due to staffing issues this was not achieved during the reporting year and the number of staff learning Welsh decreased in comparison with previous years. We held one internal class and this was for Advanced 2 learners. Learners at this level are important to our aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers as they are at a level where they can use their language skills for work purposes.

### **4. Implement the ARFer toolkit from 2023 onwards in order to utilise the Welsh language skills of fluent speakers and learners within the organisation and further normalise the use of the Welsh language. (See appendix 7 for the definition of the ARFer project).**

Due to internal staffing issues we did not proceed with this during the reporting year. However, there was considerable interest from staff members wishing to take part in the scheme and it remains an aim in our Strategic Welsh Language Plan 2021-24.

## **5. Promote the use of the Welsh language with those we work with e.g. providers we inspect, our feedback to public consultations and in contracting with third-party agencies.**

We continued to engage with a wide range of public consultations, for example the proposed Welsh Medium Education Bill. Our inspection and thematic reports consider the use of the Welsh language relevant to those educational contexts and recommendations to providers and settings are often made in those reports. In addition, our annual report highlights the strengths and areas for development regarding the Welsh language across all education settings inspected by us.

### **Impact of Welsh language training**

The availability of Welsh language training for all staff signals the importance of Welsh in our organisation. New staff are alerted to the opportunities for undertaking Welsh training in their Welsh language induction session or when they evaluate their developmental needs as part of their ongoing performance reviews.

However, the number of staff members taking part in lessons has decreased during the reporting year (see appendix 3) and we did not achieve Priority 3 to develop a comprehensive training programme during the reporting year. In response to our Welsh language questionnaire to staff, over half expressed an interest in learning Welsh or improving their present Welsh language skills. This will form the basis of one of our key priorities for 2024-2025.

### **Record keeping**

We keep a record, by following the financial year, of the number of complaints that relate to compliance with the Welsh language standards (whether the complaint is about the standards with which we have a duty to comply or not).

During 2023-2024, one complaint was received about our Welsh language services (down from 3 during 2022-2023). The complaint was made in June 2023 regarding a mis-spelling on the Welsh language version of our website. As the translation was externally provided we raised the issue with the web developers and the correction was made, with a response made to the complainant on 30/06/23.

We monitor the quality of our Welsh language services closely and keep a record of what we do to ensure that we comply with the policy-making standards. We keep a record (following an assessment of Welsh language skills) of the number of employees who have Welsh language skills (See appendices 1 and 2 below).

We also keep a record of the number and percentage of staff members who attended training courses through the medium of Welsh and/or language awareness courses.

We keep a record of the number of vacancies where Welsh language skills are assessed as being essential or desirable.

During 2023-2024, 24 new permanent members of staff joined Estyn in different posts (11 members of the inspection staff and 13 in Central Services).

Ten recruitment campaigns took place during 2023-24:

- Administrative Officers (Generic posts) - Welsh language skills desirable – 1 out of 4 appointees are Welsh speakers
- Executive Officer – (Inspection Coordination posts) - Welsh language skills essential (1), desirable (2) – 2 of 3 appointees are Welsh speakers
- Grade 7 – Head of Communications, Events and Stakeholder Engagement – Welsh language skills essential – no appointment
- Grade 7 – Head of Communications, Events and Stakeholder Engagement – Welsh language skills desirable – non Welsh speaker appointed
- Higher Executive Officer (Database Engineer) – Welsh language skills desirable – non Welsh speaker appointed
- Higher Executive Officer (Digital Communications Manager) – Welsh language skills essential – Welsh speaker appointed
- Higher Executive Officer (HR Manager) – Welsh language skills desirable – non Welsh speaker appointed
- His Majesty's Inspectors – Welsh language skills desirable – 1 of 11 appointees is a Welsh speaker
- Senior Executive Officer (Senior Planning and Deployment Officer) – Welsh language skills desirable – non Welsh speaker appointed
- Senior Executive Officer (Senior Stakeholder and Training Events Manager) – Welsh speaker appointed

### **Priorities for 2024-2025**

- 1. Develop a comprehensive training programme that aligns well with individuals' and organisational linguistic and professional needs.**
- 2. Increase the use of the Welsh language across the organisation, by utilising employees' language skills, wherever they are on the language continuum.**
- 3. Promote the use of the Welsh language with those we work with e.g. providers we inspect, our feedback to public consultations and in contracting with third-party agencies.**

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Number and percentage of staff in the organisation's services who are able to speak Welsh as at 31 March 2024 (full-time equivalent)

- By department
- By job grade

| Staff                         | Number of staff as at 31/03/2024 | Number of Welsh speakers as at 31/03/2024 | Percentage                        |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| HMCI                          | 1                                | 1   | 100%                              |
| Strategic Directors           | 2                                | 1   | 50%                               |
| <b>Inspection staff</b>       |                                  |   |                                   |
| Assistant Directors           | 6                                | 4   | 67%                               |
| HMI                           | 72                               | 24  | 33%                               |
| Als (Secondments)             | 15                               | 5   | 33%                               |
| Total inspection staff        | 93                               | 33  | 35%                               |
| <b>Central Services staff</b> |                                  |   |                                   |
| Assistant Director            | 2                                | 2   | 100%                              |
| Grade 7                       | 4                                | 2   | 50%                               |
| Senior Executive Officers     | 5                                | 1   | 20%                               |
| Higher Executive Officers     | 9                                | 3   | 33%                               |
| Executive Officers            | 22                               | 4   | 18%                               |
| Administrative Officers       | 14                               | 2   | 14%                               |
| Total CS Staff                | 56                               | 14  | 25%                               |
| Total Estyn staff             | 138                              | 44  | 32% (36% in 22-23 & 34% in 21/22) |

**Appendix 2: Inspection staff able to inspect through the medium of Welsh as a percentage of all inspection staff (full-time equivalent)**

|  | 31<br>March<br>2018 | 31<br>March<br>2019 | 31<br>March<br>2020 | 31<br>March<br>2021 | 31<br>March<br>2022 | 31<br>March<br>2023 | 31<br>March<br>2024 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Inspection staff able to inspect through the medium of Welsh | 25                  | 25                  | 25                  | 26                  | 29                  | 28                  | 33                  |
| Total inspection staff                                       | 60                  | 64                  | 65                  | 64                  | 72                  | 68                  | 93                  |
| Percentage   | 42%                 | 39%                 | 38%                 | 41%                 | 40%                 | 41%                 | 35%                 |

Due in part to the recruitment of 11 of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and the secondment of an unusually large number (15) of Additional Inspectors (AI) the percentage of inspection staff who can speak Welsh has decreased significantly to the lowest level since 2017(34%).

The number of Central Services staff who speak Welsh has also fallen to 25% down from 28% in 2022-23 and 2021-2022 and 30% in 2020-21.

**Appendix 3: Welsh language training 2023-24**

| Type                    | Number of staff | Provider              | Location | Days |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------|------|
| <b>External courses</b> |                 |                       |          |      |
| Uwch 2                  | 3               | Learn Welsh Glamorgan | Virtual  | 36   |

Total: 3 members of staff and 36 days (4 members of staff and 49.5 days in 2022-2023)

**Appendix 4: Number of staff who received Welsh language induction training and specific training through the medium of Welsh**

All staff, including temporary staff or agency staff, receive Welsh language awareness induction training as part of their induction programme by the HMI who is responsible for the Welsh language. This is scheduled by the human resources department as part of the induction programme for new staff. This training includes raising a broad awareness of the history of the language and its place in the history of Wales, understanding the requirements of the Welsh language standards and an understanding of the way in which Welsh can be used in the workplace. During 2023-24, 24 new permanent members of staff joined Estyn in different posts (11 members of the inspection staff and 13 in Central Services). In addition, 12 Additional Inspectors joined on secondment.

10 new staff (1 secondee and 9 Central Services staff) received the training through the medium of Welsh.

18 agency staff were employed and received training (0 through the medium of Welsh)

### **Appendix 5: Analysis of how external training/stakeholder engagement meets delegates' Welsh language requirements**

This year we ran 46 events overall; 17 online and 29 in person. For the online events we used Zoom and Teams to provide simultaneous translation where it was needed, and used Microsoft Teams to run single-language sessions. In person, we either held single-language sessions or used simultaneous translation, e.g. at our Annual Report Launch event.

587 delegates answered our question on whether we met their language needs. 583 (99.4%) of these said that we did. Four people (0.6%) answered 'no' to this question, which is very slightly up on last year's figure of 0.5%.

Those who answered 'no' gave the following reasons:

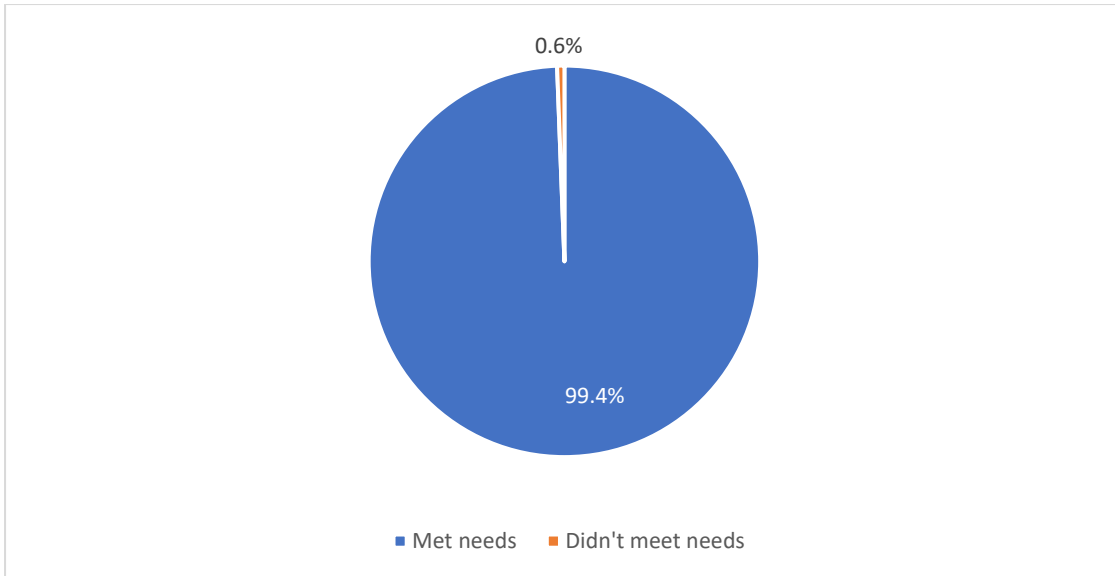
- No Welsh places were left by the time the delegate booked their place (annual update training)
- Welsh session was cancelled due to low numbers and no other places in Welsh were available (annual update training)
- Two delegates left no context or reasons for their answer and may have clicked the wrong answer (annual update training, initial PI training)

### **Live streams**

This year, continued to run live streamed Q&A sessions online through a custom-made web page using a production company. We provided Welsh to English translation on each session and encouraged the HMI panel to use as much Welsh as possible. However, this varied depending on the panel members.

We continued to experience problems with producing the fully subtitled versions of the video in each language after the event. However, the Communications team has recently expanded and now includes more members with more experience of video editing, as well as more Welsh speakers, which should help ensure a quicker turnaround.





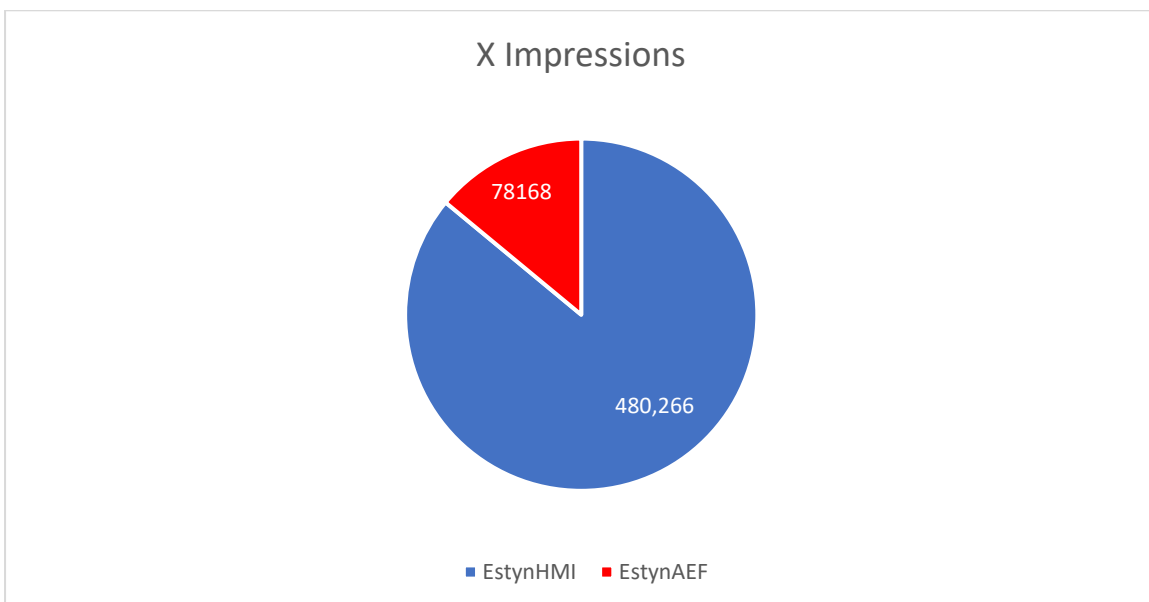
### Appendix 6: Social media engagement through the medium of Welsh

Estyn communicates bilingually on social media. The charts below show the percentage who view messages in English (EstynHMI) and Welsh (EstynAEF).

**X Impressions** - (Impressions include the number of times any content from X was displayed on a person's screen)

During 2023-2024 the total number of Welsh language (EstynAEF) X impressions was 78,168, which is an 36% increase from the previous year which totalled 57,475 impressions.

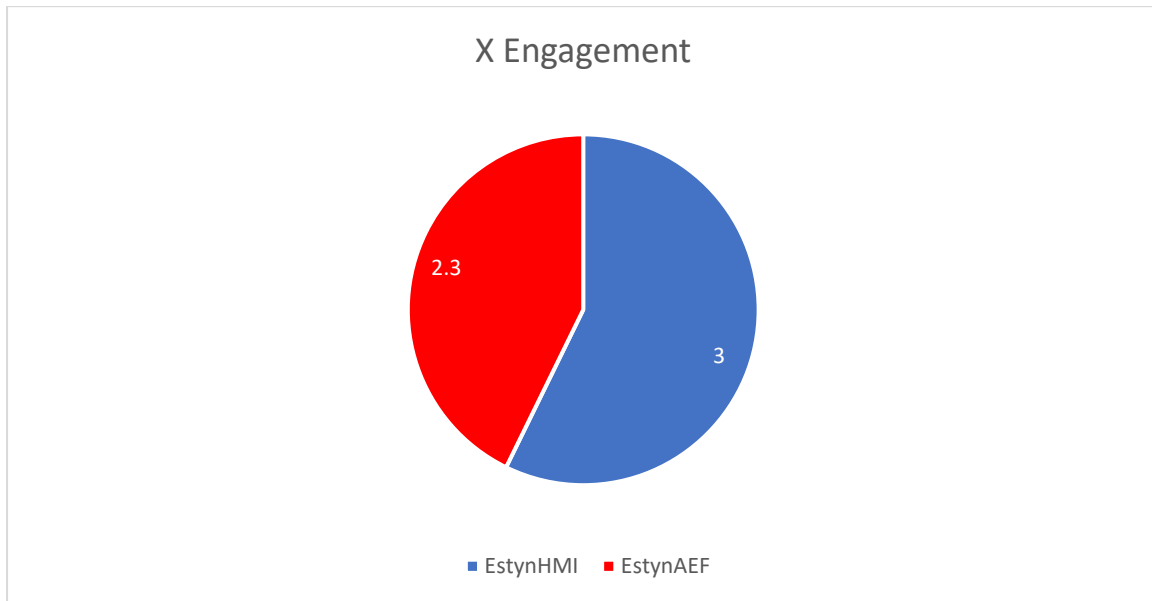
During 2023-2024 the total number of English language (EstynHMI) X impressions was 480,266 which is a 27.3% increase from the previous year which totalled 377,232.



### X Engagement Rate -

In 2023-2024 Estyn AEF saw an engagement rate of 2.3% which is an increase of 33% from 2022-2023 where the engagement rate was 1.73%

In 2023-2024 EstynHMI saw an engagement rate of 3.08% which is an increase of 31% from 2021-2022 where the engagement rate was 2.34%



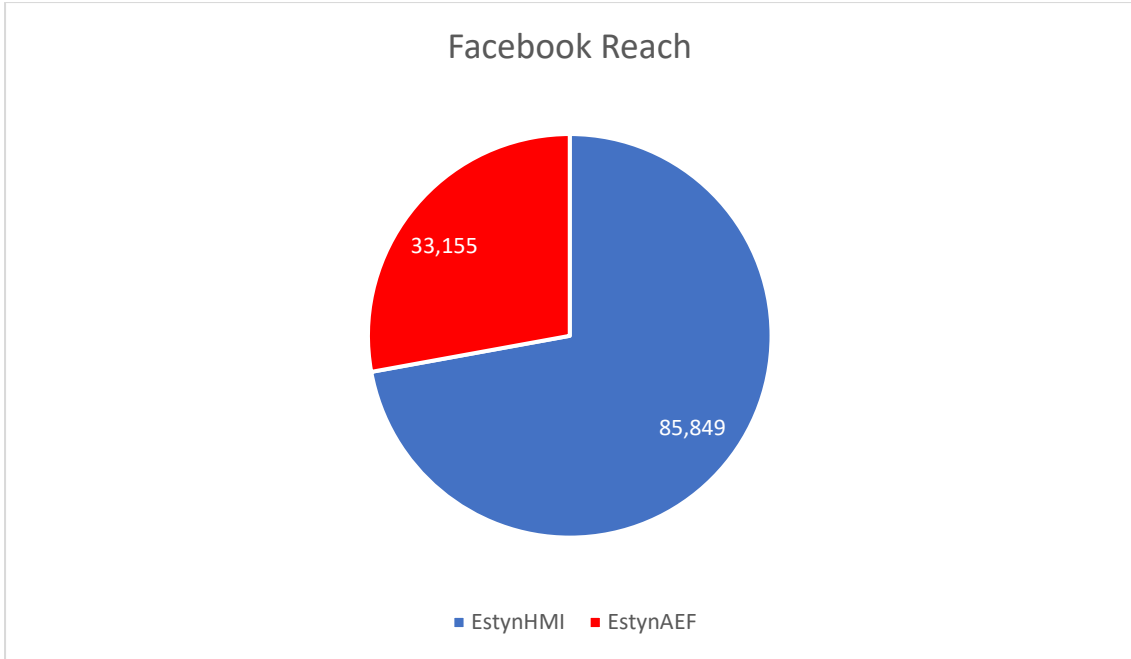
Although EstynHMI is out performing EstynAEF, the engagement rate on EstynAEF is above industry standard. According to Hootsuite (2024) the average engagement rate for the education sector is 1.10%. This shows that although in comparison to our English channel it isn't getting the same engagement rate, across the industry as a whole it is still out performing the average.

### Facebook

Estyn HMI received a 9.49% engagement rate in this period, 85,849 impressions and reached 80892 users.

Estyn AEF received a 2.69% engagement rate in this period & 33,155 impressions and reached 35,842 users.

Although lower than the English Facebook page, this engagement rate has increased since 2021-2022 by 40% when the engagement rate was 1.92% which is a positive increase.



## Youtube

All videos are published bilingually on Estyn's Youtube channel. In 2023-2024 we saw a total of 32 out of 65 videos published in the Welsh Language (this includes English videos with Welsh subtitles only).

Welsh language views were 2294 out of a total of 18,300.

Welsh language impressions were 19366 out of a total of 103,200.

