



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Telephone service monitoring surveys: No. 6 Regulations, Further Education Sector



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This year, we have reviewed our arrangements for monitoring and regulating public organisation compliance with their language duties to ensure they are in line with the Strategic Plan goals and Regulatory Outcomes published in 2024-2025.
- 1.2 As part of this review, we considered what changes and alternative approaches were needed to make best use of our resources and to promote compliance in a more proactive manner.
- 1.3 We were eager to develop monitoring and promotion methods that would give us more certainty about organisational compliance. It was decided to plan for quarterly monitoring surveys, with results to be reported back to individual organisations within the same quarter.
- 1.4 A key benefit to this monitoring method is that organisations are notified of any compliance issues in a timely manner throughout the year, giving them the opportunity to implement prompt appropriate solutions.
- 1.5 Telephone services were monitored during this quarter following concerns raised about non-compliance in previous surveys. The difference this time was that all monitored organisations were informed in advance of our intention to monitor their telephone services.
- 1.6 This report provides an overview of the findings to the monitoring survey carried out with those further education sector organisations subject to Welsh Language Standards No. 6 Regulations, and identifies recommendations for consideration in order to support and improve compliance within your organisation.
- 1.7 Although the survey was carried out with only a sample of organisations, the findings of this report, together with the recommendations, are relevant to all further education sector organisations subject to the Welsh Language Standards No. 6 Regulations.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 Seven further education organisations subject to Welsh Language Standards No. 6 Regulations were monitored.
- 2.2 The following organisations were part of the sample:
 - Saint David's Catholic College
 - Coleg Gwent
 - Pembrokeshire College
 - Cardiff and Vale College
 - Gower College Swansea
 - Merthyr Tydfil College

- Bridgend College

- 2.3 The survey was carried out during the months of October and November 2025.
- 2.4 The No. 6 Regulations, which are the Welsh Language Standards Regulations that apply to the further education sector, contain specific standards for the provision of telephone services. We looked specifically at compliance with Standards 8, 9, 11, 13, 17 and 22.

Standard 8: When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must greet the person in Welsh.

Standard 9: When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must inform the person that a Welsh language service is available.

Standard 11: When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must deal with the call in Welsh if that is the person's wish until such point as —

(a) it is necessary to transfer the call to a member of staff who does not speak Welsh who can provide a service on a specific subject matter; and

(b) no Welsh speaking member of staff is available to provide a service on that specific subject matter.

Standard 13: If you offer a Welsh language service on your main telephone number (or numbers), on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, the telephone number for the Welsh language service must be the same as for the corresponding English language service.

Standard 17: When there is no Welsh language service available on your main telephone number (or numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must inform persons calling in Welsh (by way of an automated message or otherwise), when a Welsh language service will be available.

Standard 22: Any automated telephone systems that you have must provide the complete automated service in Welsh.

- 2.5 Resulting from previous monitoring work, a suspected failure to comply was identified in some organisations in relation to telephone services.

- 2.6 As part of the survey, three telephone calls were monitored for each organisation using the central telephone number promoted on the organisations' websites.

3 Findings

- 3.1 See below a selection of [Code of Practice No. 1 Regulations](#) relevant provisions, which explain some of the main requirements relating to telephone service provision.

Standard 8

4.2.2. A body must greet a person in Welsh when that person contacts the body on one of its relevant telephone numbers.

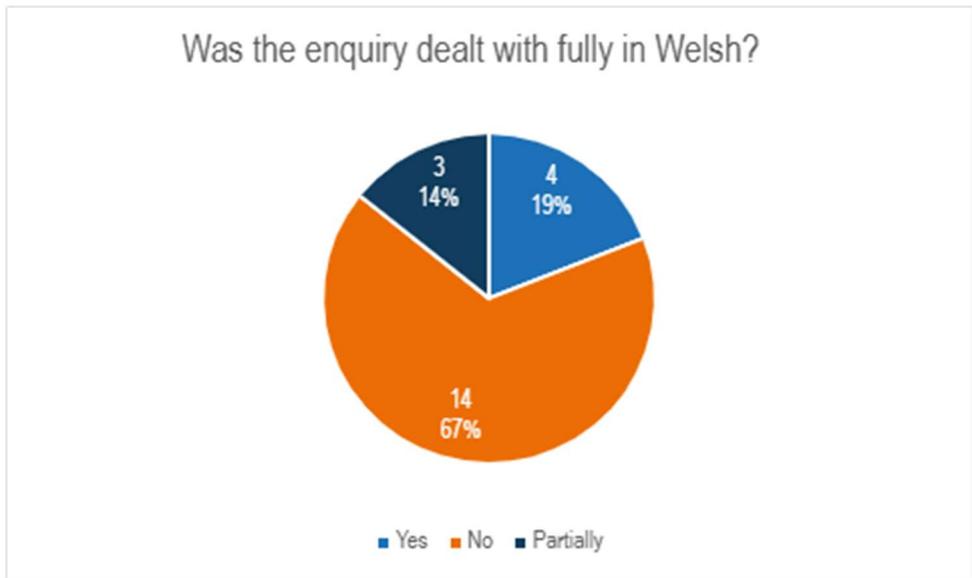
Standard 9

4.2.7. If a person contacts the body on one of its relevant telephone numbers, the body must inform that person that a Welsh language telephone service is available.

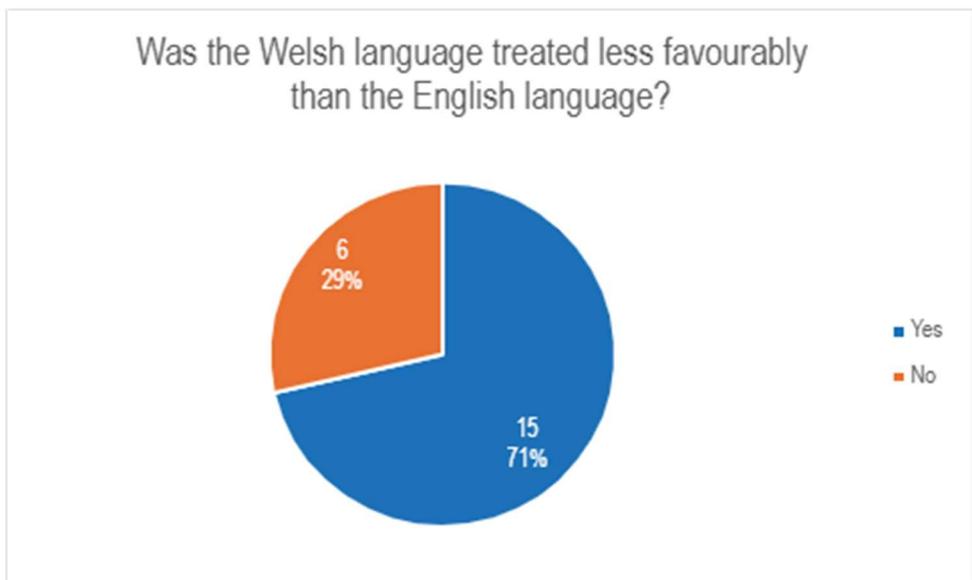
Standard 10

4.2.14. The body must deal with the call in Welsh in its entirety once it is aware that the person wishes to receive a Welsh language service over the telephone.

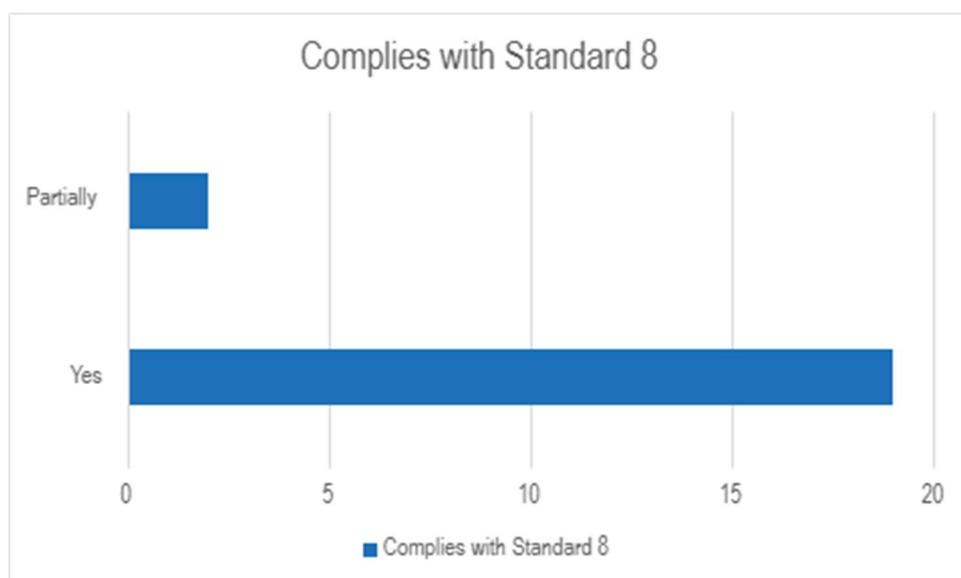
- 3.2 At present there is no specific Code of Practice for Welsh Language Standards (No. 6) Regulations. However, the principles and guidelines of the No. 1 Regulations Code of Practice were used as an appropriate point of reference when assessing arrangements and user experience.
- 3.3 Three telephone calls, over a period of time, were monitored for each of the seven organisations. From a total of 21 telephone calls, only four succeeded in dealing with the enquiry fully in Welsh.
- 3.4 The failures to deal with the enquiries fully in Welsh resulted from various reasons, including no answer on the Welsh line, or the individual who did answer was unable to speak Welsh and, as a result, was unable to deal with the enquiry through the medium of Welsh.



3.5 Of the 21 telephone calls made, four succeeded in dealing with the enquiry fully in Welsh. These four telephone calls were made to three organisations. One organisation succeeded in dealing with two of the three telephone calls made in Welsh. No organisation succeeded in dealing with all three calls in Welsh.



3.6 It was noted that the Welsh language was treated less favourably than English in 15 of the telephone calls monitored. Four organisations treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language when responding to the three telephone calls, while one organisation had responded to the three calls without treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.



3.7 Five of the seven organisations fully complied with Standard 8, greeting callers in Welsh when answering the telephone. Of a total of 21 telephone calls made, 19 were greeted in Welsh.

3.8 Standard 11 relates to the organisation's ability to deal with a telephone call in Welsh when the caller so wishes. The standard states:

"When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline or call centre numbers, you must deal with the call in Welsh if the person so wishes—

(a) until it is necessary to transfer the call to a non-Welsh-speaking member of staff who can provide a service on a specific subject; and

(b) until there is no Welsh-speaking member of staff available to provide a service on the subject in question."

3.9 Of the 21 telephone calls monitored, four telephone calls succeeded in fully complying with Standard 11 by dealing with the enquiry in Welsh. Two calls succeeded in partially complying, while 15 calls failed to comply with the standard as they failed to deal with the enquiry in Welsh.

3.10 In addition, 17 of the telephone calls fully complied with Standard 22, which requires any automated telephone system to provide an entire automated service in Welsh. The other four calls partially complied with this standard.

3.11 All organisations used the same telephone number for both Welsh and English services. As a result, all organisations were fully compliant with Standard 13.

3.12 Where a Welsh language telephone service was not available, not one of the organisations gave information with respect to when a Welsh language service would be available. In one instance, an organisation stated that the College was closed and that its opening hours were between 8:30am and 3:30pm, even though the call was made at 10:30am.

3.13 In another instance, an organisation had several options to press different numbers for various English services. However, no equivalent options were offered for the Welsh language service, and there was no answer on the Welsh language line.

- 3.14 It was noted that some members of staff were learning Welsh. In some cases, a positive effort was made to communicate in Welsh and to try to deal with the enquiry in Welsh.
- 3.15 However, other responses asked the caller to switch to English. In these cases, no offer was made to transfer the call to another member of staff who could provide a service in Welsh.
- 3.16 In one specific instance, it was noted that the member of staff who answered the call was unable to provide a service through the medium of Welsh at that time, even though there was an expectation that calls would be answered in Welsh. When the caller indicated his wish to receive a service in Welsh, an alternative arrangement was offered. The call was put on hold for a while, before the caller's name and telephone number were then requested. Subsequently, another member of staff called back, and a service was provided fully through the medium of Welsh.
- 3.17 When answering one call, a member of staff indicated in English that the call would be transferred. However, the second member of staff who answered was unable to provide a service through the medium of Welsh, and the caller was informed that there was no Welsh-speaking member of staff available at the time. An offer was made to arrange for a return call, or, alternatively, to continue the call in English.
- 3.18 In another instance, a bilingual automatic message was noted at the start of the call, with instructions to press number 1 for the Welsh language service. The remainder of the automated message was in Welsh, and offered different options to students and other callers. However, upon selecting the relevant option, a monolingual English automated message was provided, requesting the caller to leave a message. There was no corresponding automatic message available in Welsh for leaving a message.
- 3.19 In another case, callers were greeted in English first and then in Welsh with an automated message. Although this does not, in itself, constitute non-compliance, the message asked the caller to press a specific number to receive a Welsh language service, while English callers remained on the line. After selecting the option for a Welsh language service, the call was not answered.

4 Trends

- 4.1 In general, there is no guarantee of compliance with regard to receiving a Welsh language service when using further education organisation telephone services.
- 4.2 A total of **21 telephone calls** were made across **seven organisations** (three calls per organisation). Of these calls, only **four** from across three different organisations dealt with the enquiry fully in Welsh. This suggests that receiving a Welsh language service through the telephone service happens inconsistently, and that there are no systematic arrangements in place to ensure a Welsh language service is reliably available at all times.
- 4.3 One organisation succeeded in dealing with two of the three calls in Welsh. However, not one of the sample organisations succeeded in dealing with all three calls in Welsh, highlighting a lack of consistency when it comes to service arrangements.
- 4.4 It was noted that the Welsh language was treated less favourably than English in 15 of the telephone calls monitored. Only one organisation succeeded in responding to calls without treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language,

suggesting that firm and consistent arrangements for providing a Welsh language telephone service remain the exception rather than the rule.

Reasons for the inability to handle calls in Welsh

4.5 It was noted that failures to deal with calls in Welsh resulted mainly from a lack of effective arrangements, including cases where there was no answer on the Welsh line for the three calls made, as well as instances where the individual who answered the call was unable to provide a service through the medium of Welsh. In addition, where a Welsh language service was not available, no information was provided to the caller regarding when the service would be available.

Compliance with standards

4.6 Five of the seven organisations fully complied with Standard 8, greeting callers in Welsh when answering the telephone. In general, 19 of the 21 telephone calls made were greeted in Welsh.

4.7 In terms of Standard 11, four telephone calls fully complied by dealing with the calls in Welsh, while two calls partially complied. However, 15 of the calls failed to comply with the standard as they failed to deal with the enquiry through the medium of Welsh.

4.8 All organisations fully complied with Standard 13, using the same telephone number for Welsh and English services.

4.9 In terms of Standard 22, 17 of the telephone calls succeeded in fully complying by providing an automated service in Welsh. The other four calls were partially compliant, providing part of the service through an automated Welsh language telephone system.

4.10 Nevertheless, examples were noted where an automatic message was available in Welsh but only a monolingual English message was available for leaving a message. In addition, the automated English service offered in some cases had more options than the Welsh service, which meant an unequal experience for Welsh users.

Staff capacity and robustness of telephone service arrangements

4.11 It was noted that the way staff responded to calls in Welsh varied. In some organisations it was noted that members of staff were learning Welsh and making an effort to communicate through the medium of Welsh. However, in other cases, callers were asked to switch to English with no Welsh service offered, or the call was not transferred to a member of staff who could provide the said service. These findings suggest a lack of ability or confidence among some members of staff to provide a Welsh language service, resulting in non-compliance with regard to the standards and a less positive experience for Welsh language users.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 5.1 The monitoring work demonstrates that the provision of a Welsh telephone service in the further education sector is inconsistent and unreliable. In general, the current arrangements are not sufficiently robust to ensure a Welsh telephone service is consistently available, thus highlighting the need for significant improvements in order to raise the level of compliance across the sector.
- 5.2 Lack of staff capacity, insufficient arrangements within automated telephone systems, and the practice of requesting that callers switch to English undermines the experiences of Welsh callers and leads to a less favourable experience. We are not confident that sufficient steps have been put in place by some organisations to remedy the deficiencies identified nor to ensure continued compliance.
- 5.3 Consequently, organisations are expected to act promptly to strengthen their arrangements (including training, staffing arrangements and the robustness of automated systems) in order to ensure a full Welsh service is consistently available. Also, in some cases, and with regard to individual organisations, the Commissioner, will write to request an action plan to address these issues.

Recommendation 1

In accordance with Standard 11 requirements, organisations should develop and implement clear arrangements, which are documented and formally approved, to ensure a Welsh telephone service is consistently available and reliable. These arrangements should clearly state how sufficient capacity will be ensured, and include back-up arrangements when certain members of staff are unavailable.

Recommendation 2

Organisations should ensure that all staff responsible for answering telephone calls receive appropriate and regular training, including:

- training to deal with Welsh telephone calls in practice
- language-awareness training
- to gain a clear understanding of the arrangements for transferring calls or organizing a Welsh language service when necessary.

Recommendation 3

Organisations should review their automated telephone systems to ensure that:

- the same range of options is available in Welsh as in English, regardless of the chosen route
- automated messages, including those concerning leaving a message, are available in Welsh

- the Welsh automated service is complete and operative at every stage of the process.

Recommendation 4

Organisations should establish regular arrangements to monitor and evaluate compliance with the Welsh Standards that apply to telephone services, in order to satisfy themselves that the arrangements in place are sufficiently robust. These arrangements should include clear mechanisms to identify and correct any identified failures.

Given that similar feedback has been given in the past, which did not lead to sufficient improvement, organisations are expected to demonstrate clear evidence that these arrangements are being implemented. The telephone call monitoring template provided on the Commissioner's website can be used to support this work.

Appendices

Survey Data

	Yes	No	Partially
Was the enquiry dealt with fully in Welsh?	4	14	3
Was the Welsh language treated less favourably than the English language?	15	6	

	Yes	No	Partially
Complying with Standard 8	19		2
Complying with Standard 9	19		2
Complying with Standard 11	4	15	2
Complying with Standard 13	21		
Complying with Standard 17		12	
Complying with Standard 22	17		4

A list of the organisations that were part of the survey

The following organisations were part of the sample:

- Saint David's Catholic College
- Coleg Gwent
- Pembrokeshire College
- Cardiff and Vale College
- Gower College Swansea
- Merthyr Tydfil College
- Bridgend College