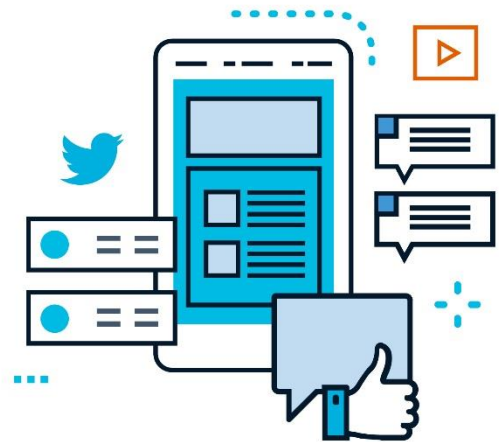Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Social Media Monitoring surveys: Higher Education Sector – Welsh Language Standards Regulations No.6
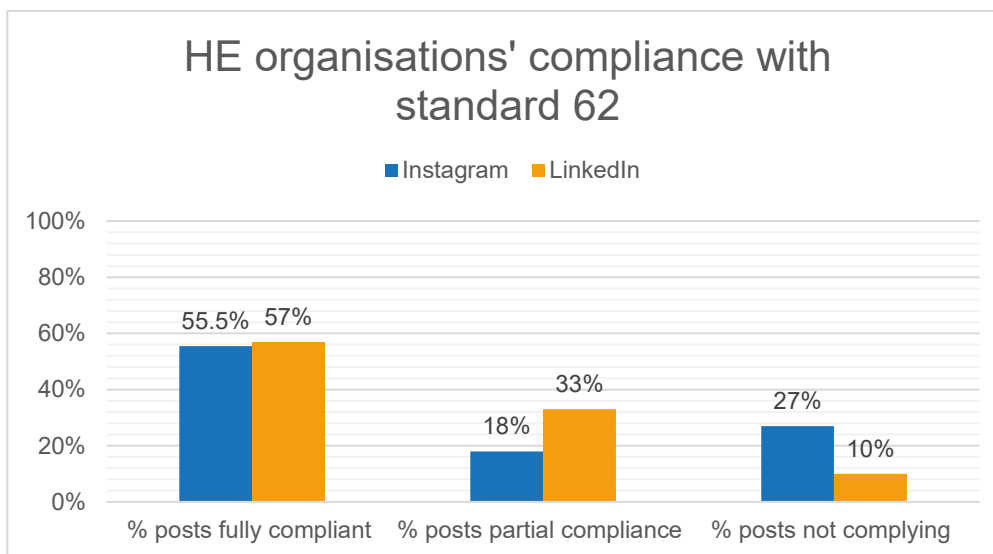
Content

1 Introduction

1.1 This year, we have reviewed our arrangements for monitoring and regulating public bodies' compliance with their language duties, to ensure that they align with the aims of the Strategic Plan and the Regulatory Outcomes published in 2024-2025.

1.2 As part of this review, we considered what changes and alternative approaches were needed to make the best use of our resources, and to promote compliance in a more proactive way.

1.3 We were keen to develop monitoring and promotion methods that would provide us greater assurance regarding organisations' compliance. It was decided to plan quarterly monitoring surveys, with results being reported back to the individual organisations within the same quarter.

1.4 One of the key advantages of this monitoring approach is that organisations are informed of any compliance issues in a timely manner throughout the year, giving them the opportunity to implement appropriate solutions promptly.

1.5 Social media has been identified as a priority area for all organisations this year. This is due to the fact that organisational practices in this area have evolved significantly over the past four years, with increasing use of a variety of platforms.

1.6 This report provides an overview of the findings from the monitoring surveys conducted with the Higher Education sector organisations subject to the Welsh Language Standards Regulations No.6 2017 and presents recommendations for you to consider to ensure better compliance within your organisation.

1.7 In addition to this report, individual findings will be discussed with each organisation to provide tailored feedback and support specific improvement actions.

2 Methodology

2.1   All Higher Education (HE) organisations were surveyed, namely 10 organisations subject to Welsh Language Standards Regulations Number 6. Further Education institutions were also surveyed, and a separate report was produced for those organisations. The surveys were conducted during July 2025.

2.2   Each of the organisations is required under Regulations Number 6 to comply with Standard 62 and Standard 63 in relation to their social media.

2.3   Standard 62 states: '*When using social media, you must not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.*'

2.4   Standard 63 refers to responding to individuals on social media: '*If a person contacts you through social media in Welsh, you must reply in Welsh (if a reply is required).*'

2.5   These surveys focused on compliance with Standard 62.

2.6   The main accounts of the organisations on both LinkedIn and Instagram were reviewed. These platforms had not previously been examined as part of the Commissioner's monitoring surveys, so this was an opportunity to specifically assess organisational practices on these platforms.

2.7   Ten recent posts from each organisation were reviewed on their main accounts across both platforms. A total of 190 posts were checked across the two platforms. The main aim of the survey was to examine the following:

- Whether the post was available in Welsh?

- Whether the post complied with the requirements of the social media standards?

- Whether the Welsh language was treated less favourably than English?

2.8   In addition, compliance with Standard 87, which relates to corporate identity, was reviewed. Standard 87 states -

'*When you form, revise or present your corporate identity, you must not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.*'

3 Findings

HE organisations' compliance with standard 62

■ Instagram ■ LinkedIn

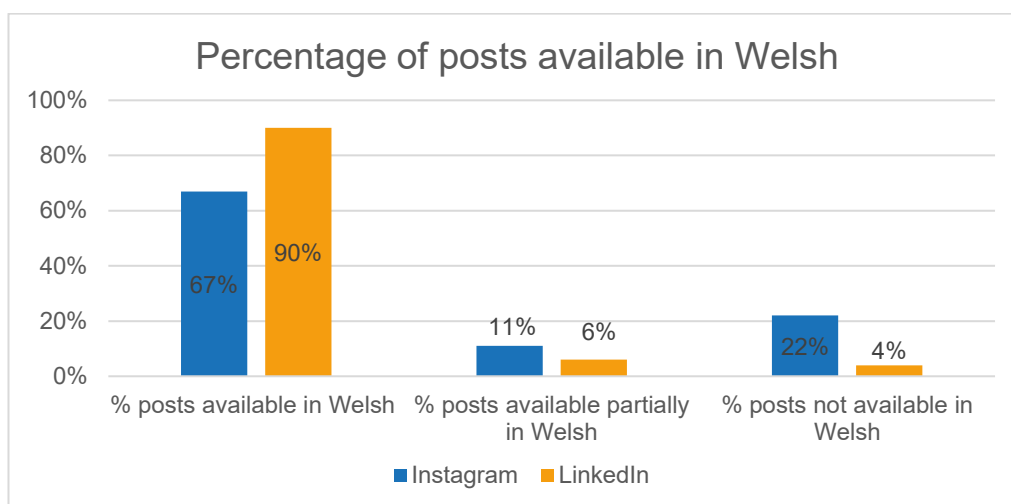|	% posts fully compliant	% posts partial compliance	% posts not complying
Instagram	55.5%	18%	27%
LinkedIn	57%	33%	10%

Instagram Accounts

3.1   Nine out of the ten higher education organisations had an account on the Instagram platform. Seven of them operated separate Welsh and English accounts, while one operated a bilingual account. One organisation had not included any Welsh-language content on its account.

3.2   Of the 90 posts surveyed, 60 (67%) were fully available in Welsh. However, only 50 posts (55.5%) fully complied with the requirements of Standard 62. Ten messages (11%) were partially available in Welsh and therefore failed to comply with the standard. Additionally, it was noted that 40 posts (44%) treated the Welsh language less favourably than English, and 20 posts (22%) were English-only – with some appearing solely on the English account
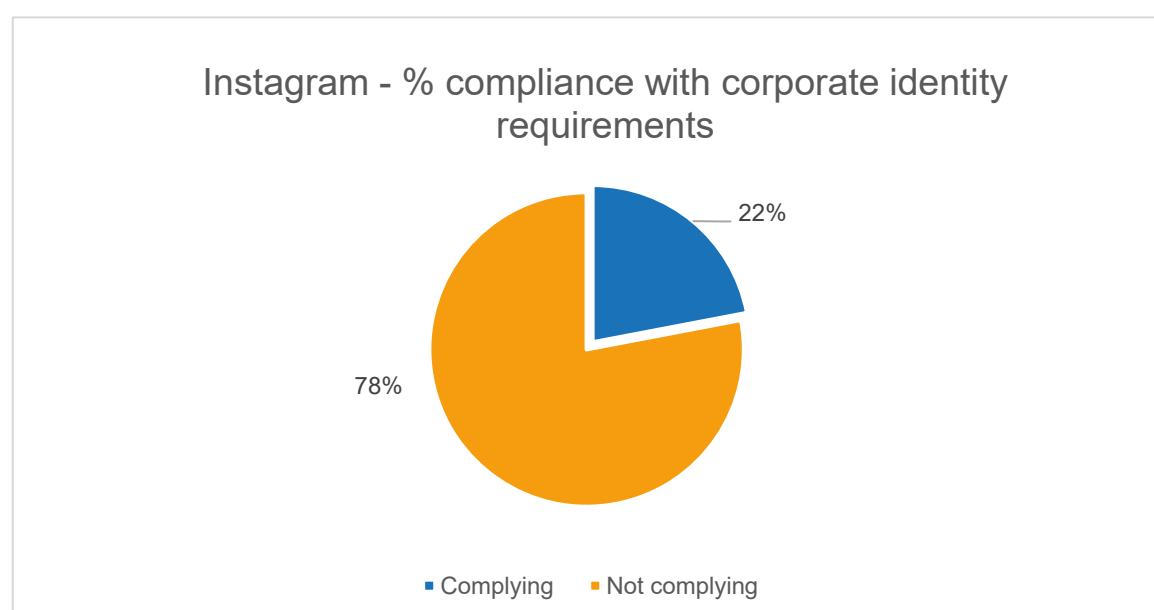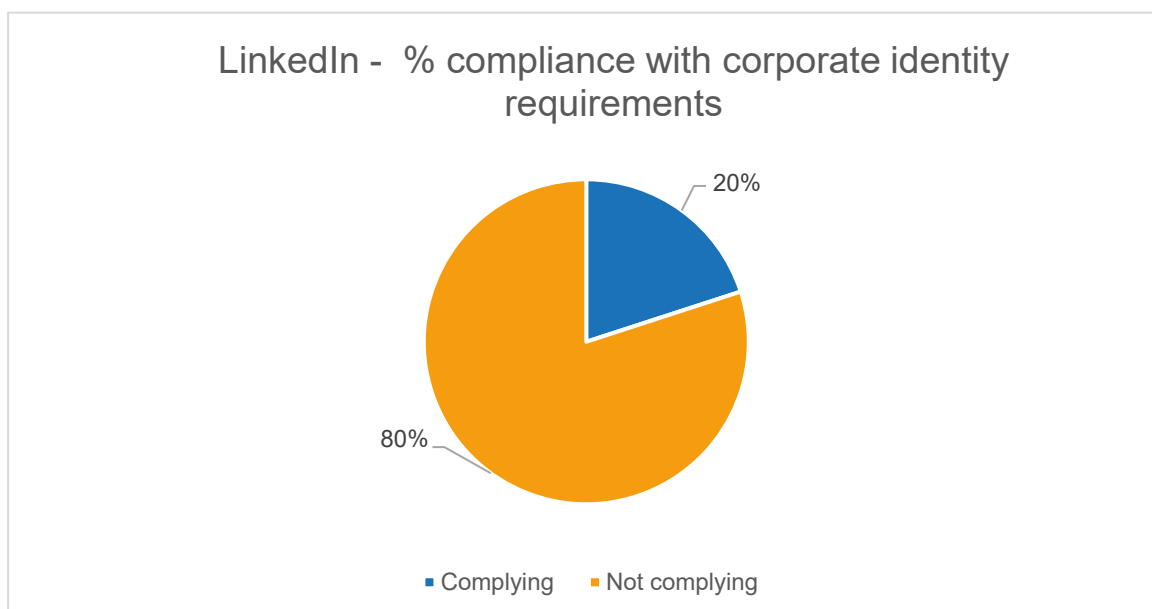
LinkedIn Accounts

3.3   Each of the organisations surveyed had an account on the LinkedIn platform. Seven of them had bilingual accounts, while three operated separate Welsh and English accounts

3.4   A total of 100 individual LinkedIn posts were reviewed, and 90 were fully available in Welsh. However, only 57 of the posts (57%) fully complied with the requirements of Standard 62.

3.5   Six posts (6%) were available partially in Welsh and therefore did not comply with Standard 62.

3.6   The surveys showed that 45 of the posts (45%) treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

Percentage of posts available in Welsh

	% posts available in Welsh	% posts available partially in Welsh	% posts not available in Welsh
Instagram	67%	11%	22%
LinkedIn	90%	6%	4%

Corporate identity (standard 87)

3.7 In terms of the requirements of Standard 87, which relates to the duty not to treat the Welsh language less favourably than English when presenting corporate identity, it was observed that all the organisations operating separate Welsh and English accounts on Instagram used the Welsh name and logo of their organisation on their accounts. However, it was noted that one organisation with a bilingual Instagram account displayed only the English name of the organisation on their profile.

3.8 Only 22% of Instagram accounts promoted the Welsh corporate identity of their organisation. This was mainly because the profile contained English-only information, or due to the description in the profile treating the Welsh language less favourably than the corresponding English language text.

3.9 In relation to LinkedIn, several organisations were seen to use only the English name of the organisation on their bilingual accounts. Only 20% of the organisations used a Welsh corporate identity or provided a Welsh-language description on their profile.

Instagram - % compliance with corporate identity requirements

- Complying: 22%
- Not complying: 78%

LinkedIn - % compliance with corporate identity requirements

20%

80%

- Complying - Not complying

Raising awareness of Welsh accounts

3.10 The Code of Practice for Welsh Language Standards Regulations Number 1 states:

"If a body decides to operate separate Welsh and English accounts, it must raise awareness of the Welsh account on the corresponding English account in accordance with standards [   ]. This may include the body providing a direct link to the Welsh account on the corresponding English account."

3.11 It was observed that five out of the seven Instagram accounts operating separate Welsh and English accounts raised awareness of their Welsh account by including a link from the English account to the corresponding Welsh account.

3.12 Of the three organisations operating separate Welsh and English accounts on LinkedIn, only one included a direct link from the English account to the corresponding Welsh account. Two other organisations referred to the Welsh account but did not include a direct link to facilitate easy access – something that it would be reasonable to expect organisations to do.

Other Materials on Social Media Platforms

3.13 Several examples were seen where organisations used additional materials on their platforms to convey information, including videos or images with text.

3.14 In some of these cases, the use of Welsh was inconsistent. Although some good practices were evident, the overall picture suggests that the Welsh language was treated less favourably than English and was less accessible than the English-language material or information shared on the accounts.

4 Trends

Not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English

4.1   A trend was observed among organisations to operate separate accounts on Instagram for Welsh and English content, while more organisations chose to operate a single bilingual account on LinkedIn.

4.2   Where separate accounts were used, inconsistencies were found between the content on the Welsh and English feeds. In some cases, posts were available only on the English account. In fact, 22% of the posts reviewed appeared in only one language, resulting in Welsh account followers missing out on information and being treated less favourably.

4.3   Additionally, the data shows that English accounts on Instagram contained significantly more posts than the Welsh ones – with 6,570 more. Although some of these posts are likely to have been created before the standards were introduced, the substantial difference raises questions about linguistic equality. See Appendix 2 at the end of the report, which shows a comparison between the number of posts on organisations' Welsh and English accounts at the time of the survey.

4.4   Although LinkedIn showed a higher percentage of Welsh-language posts, instances of less favourable treatment of the Welsh language were observed on both platforms. These trends are concerning and deserve further attention.

4.5   Some cases were observed where organisations included the post in Welsh but failed to include appropriate links to the Welsh-language information. In some instances, the link directed users to the organisation's English-language page or included only on the English-language post.

4.6   Inconsistencies were found in the use of Welsh and English hashtag. Some Welsh-language posts included English hashtags or no hashtags at all, resulting in less favourable treatment of the Welsh language. Since hashtags are important for promoting information and raising awareness, organisations should ensure they use Welsh terms where possible, especially for place names, courses, or events. Even when using third-party content, Welsh versions of hashtags should be included where available. Our Code of Practice emphasises the need not to treat the Welsh language less favourably by using Welsh or bilingual hashtags in Welsh-language posts.

4.7   It was observed that a significant proportion of bilingual messages treated the Welsh language less favourably due to the placement of the text, with English often appearing above Welsh. As a result, the Welsh content was less accessible, as it often required an additional step such as clicking 'more' to view it in full. However, some positive examples were noted where organisations posted both languages separately on bilingual accounts, ensuring that Welsh was treated equally, as in the example below:"

Bwriadu dod i un o'n Diwrnodau Agored yr haf hwn? Cofrestrwch heddiw i gael blas ar fywyd prifysgol ein campysau.

Caerdydd: 20 Mehefin
Abertawe: 29 Mehefin
Caerfyrddin: 5 Gorffennaf

https://lnkd.in/eJKcZGiv

Will you be at one of our Open Days this summer? Book your place today and get a taste of uni life on our campuses

Cardiff: 20 June
Swansea: 29 June
Carmarthen: 5 July

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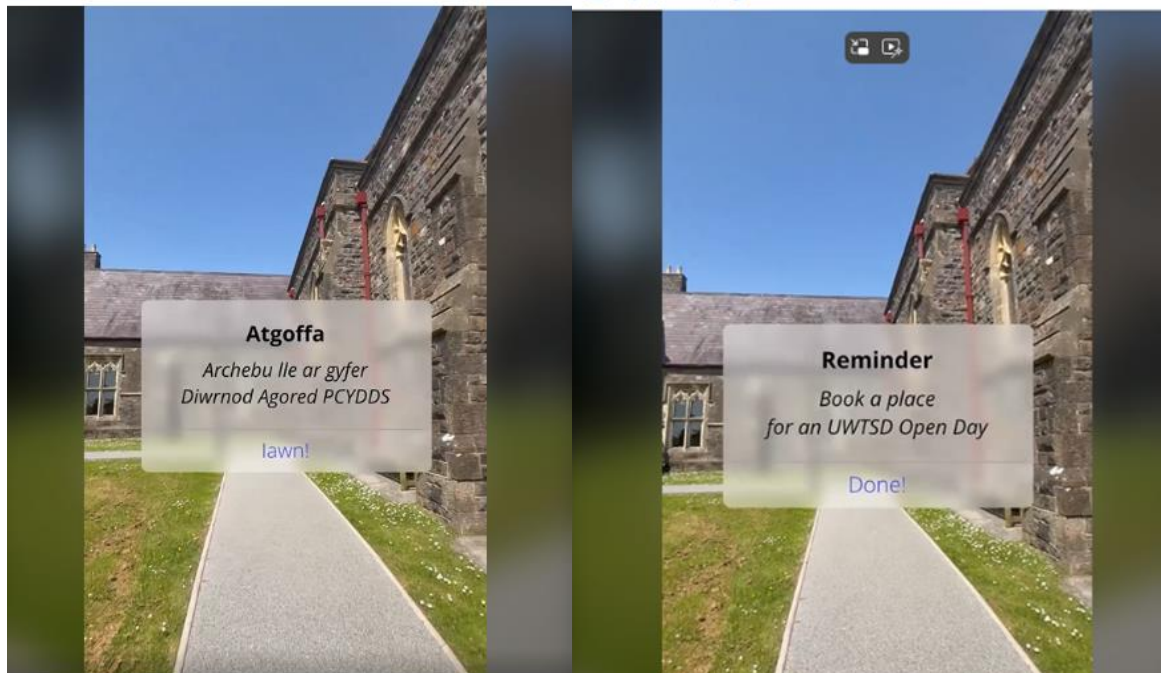
Videos and audio clips

4.8   Examples were observed where organisations did not treat both languages equally on supplementary materials such as videos and images. Some videos or images on the Welsh-language feed contained information in English only, without translation or equivalent Welsh provision.

4.9   In one case, although a Welsh-language video was provided, the English-language video was more accessible because English subtitles were available for the spoken content, whereas Welsh subtitles were not available for the Welsh video. This poses a compliance risk in relation to Standard 37, which is in relation to advertising and publicity material.

4.10 Some organisations successfully conveyed information equally in both languages. For example, cases were observed where the Welsh language was used on a Welsh video, or the same speakers on the Welsh and English language video.

4.11 Another example was seen of conveying messages in video through on-screen text in the language of the video, as shown below, or using different speakers for Welsh and English videos, ensuring that the content was consistent and accessible in both languages."
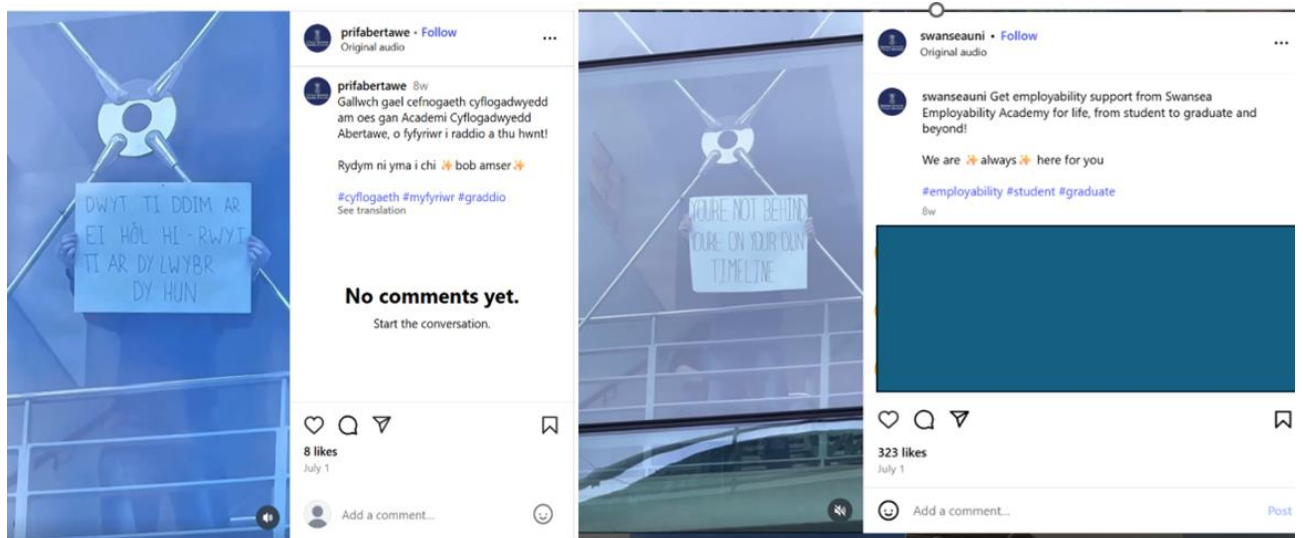
Corporate identity

4.12 It was encouraging to see that a high percentage of organisations used a Welsh name and logo on Instagram. However, on LinkedIn, there was a tendency to use only the English name only, although some organisations displayed bilingual logos. This poses a risk for users searching for accounts using the organisation's Welsh name, as Welsh information is not always visible or complete.

4.13 In addition, several cases were noted where Welsh was treated less favourably in account descriptions, 'taglines', and detailed information such as organisation type or contact details. The same level of information should be available in Welsh as in English, including the use of Welsh account settings where possible. Welsh should also be visible and prominent on bilingual accounts, and where possible, a link to the organisation's Welsh-language homepage should be included.

4.14 On bilingual accounts, organisations should also consider whether the Welsh account is visible, and if not, take steps to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably in terms of the placement of descriptive text. One positive example was seen where the Welsh description was positioned first on the platform:

Overview

Croeso i Brifysgol Aberystwyth
Nid oes unman tebyg i Aberystwyth: nid oes yr un Brifysgol arall a all gynnig y cyfuniad unigryw o draddodiad hir, lleoliad eithriadol o hardd, a champws sy'n cyfuno'r adnoddau diweddaraf, gan gynnwys Canolfan i'r Celfyddydau, ac sydd o fewn tafliad carreg i un o'r chwe llyfrgell hawlfraint ym Mhrydain. Wrth odre'r mynyddoedd ac ar lan y môr, mae Aberystwyth yn ganolfan o bwys diwylliannol a masnachol i'r fro a'r genedl.

Welcome to Aberystwyth University!
There is nowhere quite like Aberystwyth: no other University offers the unique combination of long academic tradition, outstandingly beautiful location, and a campus that brings together state-of-the-art facilities, an Arts Centre, and provides easy access to one of the six copyright libraries in Britain. Beneath the mountains and beside the sea, Aberystwyth is a centre of national and regional, as well as cultural and commercial, importance.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1   As noted above, the level of organisations' compliance with their social media platforms was mixed. While some organisations performed well on certain platforms, this performance was not consistent across all of them.   This leads to an inconsistent experience for those who wish to use these platforms through the medium of Welsh. Overall, compliance levels on Instagram and LinkedIn were found to be similar, with just over half of the posts reviewed fully meeting the requirements.

5.2   High levels of less favourable treatment of the Welsh language were observed on these platforms. Although Welsh language content was available in most cases, situations were identified where Welsh was treated less favourably, and in some cases, omitted entirely.

5.3   The findings show that further work is needed to ensure consistency in Welsh-language available to users, in order to improve the visibility and accessibility of Welsh-language platforms, and to ensure that Welsh-language accounts are appropriately promoted.

5.4   Based on the findings of the survey, we present the following recommendations to Higher Education organisations subject to Welsh Language Standards Regulations Number 6:

Recommendation 1: Consistency when posting on social media

Organisations should take steps to ensure that content is not lost on their Welsh-language accounts. Any posts published on the English account should also be available on the Welsh account, with consideration given to how best to present any supplementary information – such as videos or other materials – in Welsh as well.

Recommendation 2: Hashtags and links

Organisations should take steps to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably in relation to hashtags and links.   When hashtags are included in English-language posts, equivalent Welsh hashtags should be included in the Welsh-language post.   Similarly, where links to supplementary information are available, the appropriate links should be included in the Welsh-language post.

Recommendation 3: Videos

When organisations use videos or images to share information, all content should be made available in Welsh. Steps should be taken to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English in these materials, including in relation to text, subtitles and accessibility.

Organisations should review their methods of presenting information through videos, audio, and images, ensuring compliance with Welsh language requirements. It is recommended to use Welsh-speaking contributors where practicable, especially in videos featuring discussions or student contributions.

Welsh-language videos should be just as accessible as English ones. If English subtitles are available on an English-language video, Welsh subtitles should also be available on the Welsh-language video, to ensure equal treatment between the two languages.

Recommendation 4: Bilingual accounts

When bilingual accounts are used, organisations should ensure that Welsh is presented equally alongside English. Situations where the Welsh version of a post is less accessible— for example, if scrolling or clicking an additional link is required to view it – should be avoided. Consideration should be given to how content appears on different devices, such as mobile phones, and steps should be taken to ensure that Welsh is accessible without additional actions.

Placing Welsh above or to the left of English can help avoid less favourable treatment. Organisations should consider how visible Welsh-language posts are on their bilingual platforms, and the placement of Welsh content within posts, to ensure that the Welsh language is not positioned in a way that results in it being treated less favourably than English.

Recommendation 5: Promoting Welsh language accounts

Organisations should take steps to promote a Welsh identity on their social media accounts. The same level of information should be available in Welsh versions of organisation details – such as name, description, type of organisation, and contact information.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Survey data

	Instagram	LinkedIn	Total and percentage
Number of organisations using the platform	**9**	**10**	**19**
Number and % of organisations with a separate Welsh account	7/9 (78%)	3/10 (30%)	**10/19 (53%)**
Number and % of organisations with a bilingual account	1/9 (11%)	7/10 (70%)	**8/19 (42%)**
Number and % of organisations with an English-only account	1/9 (11%)	0/10 (0%)	**1/19 (5%)**
Number and % of organisations complying with the corporate identity requirements	2 /9 (22%)	2 /10 (20%)	**4/19 (21%)**
Number of posts checked	90	100	**190**
Number and % of posts that were available entirely in Welsh	60/90 (67%)	90/100 (90%)	**150/190 (79%)**

Number and % of posts that were partially available in Welsh	10/90 (11%)	6/100 (6%)	**16/190 (8%)**
Number and % of posts that were not available in Welsh	20/90 (20%)	4/100 (4%)	**24/190 (13%)**
Number and % of posts that were fully compliant	50/90 (55.5%)	57/100 (57%)	**106/190 (56%)**
Number and % of posts that complied partially	16/90 (18%)	33/100 (33%)	**49/190 (26%)**
Number and % of posts that did not comply	24/90 (27%)	10/100 (10%)	**34/190 (18%)**
The number of posts treating the Welsh language less favourably than English *(including in full or in part)*	40/90 (44%)	45/100 (45%)	**85/190 (45%)**
The number of accounts that included a link to the Welsh account on the English account (where there are separate Welsh and English accounts)	5/7 (71%)	1/3 (33%)	**7/10 (70%)**

Appendix 2: Data of Instagram Platform posts

Number of posts from organisations operating separate Welsh and English Accounts on Instagram

Organisation	Total posts on the Welsh account	Total posts on the English account
A	803	2128
B	1770	2927
C	1313	2602
CH	545	1994
D	1310	1744
DD	588	596
E	784	1692
Total posts for all organisations	7113	13683

Appendix 3: List of organisations included in the Survey:

- Aberystwyth University

- Bangor University

- Cardiff Metropolitan University

- Cardiff University

- Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama

- Swansea University

- The Open University

- University of South Wales

- University of Wales Trinity Saint David

- Wrexham University