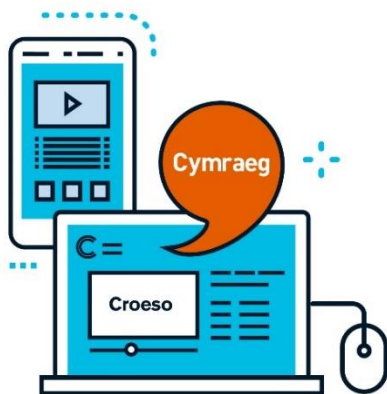Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Social Media
Monitoring Surveys:
Further 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 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 promotional methods that would provide us with greater assurance regarding organisations' compliance. It was decided to plan quarterly monitoring surveys, with results reported back to 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 organisations subject to the Welsh Language Standards Regulations No.6 and presents recommendations for you to consider in order to ensure better compliance within your organisation.

1.7 In addition to this report, individual finding will be discussed with each organisation to offer tailored feedback and support specific improvement steps.

2 Methodology

2.1   Fourteen organisations subject to Welsh Language Standards Regulations Number 6 were monitored. Higher Education organisations were also monitored, and a separate report was created for those organisations.

2.2   The organisations were monitored during July 2025.

2.3   Regulations Number 6, namely the Welsh Language Standards Regulations relevant to this sector, includes two standards, Standard 62 and Standard 63, which refer to organisations' use of social media.

2.4   Standard 62 notes '*When you use social media you must not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language*'.

2.5   Standard 63 refers to responding to people on social media '*If a person contacts you by social media in Welsh, you must reply in Welsh (if an answer is required)*'.

2.6   This monitoring work focused on compliance with Standard 62.

2.7   Instagram and LinkedIn platforms of the 14 organisations were reviewed. The Commissioner hasn't previously monitored these platforms. All 14 organisations were using Instagram while 13 organisations were using LinkedIn. This was because two colleges had merged to use a single LinkedIn account. These two colleges now also use one Welsh-language and one English-language account for Instagram. However, this change had not been completed at the time of the monitoring, and therefore 14 organisations were monitored on Instagram and 13 on LinkedIn.

2.8   Ten recent messages were reviewed from each organisation's main accounts on both platforms. A total of 270 messages were checked, assessing:
   - Whether the message was available in Welsh
   - Whether the message complied with the standards requirements relating to social media
   - Whether the Welsh Language was treated less favourably than the English Language.

2.9   In addition, compliance with Standard 87 relating to corporate identity was monitored. 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

3.1 The Code of Practice for Regulation Number 1 states that an organisation's use of social media includes the way "… an organisation appears, publishes material, sends and responds to messages, and communicates with individuals on social media." There is currently no Code of Practice for Regulation Number 6.

3.2 The Code of Practice states that an organisation may operate two separate accounts or a bilingual account.

Instagram Account

3.3 Ten of the 14 organisations were using a bilingual account, while four were using separate Welsh and English accounts for Instagram.

3.4 Ten messages were monitored for each organisation.

3.5 While monitoring messages on the Instagram platform, 54 out of 140 were fully compliant, that is 38.6%. 55% were partially compliant, and 6.4% of messages were non-compliant.
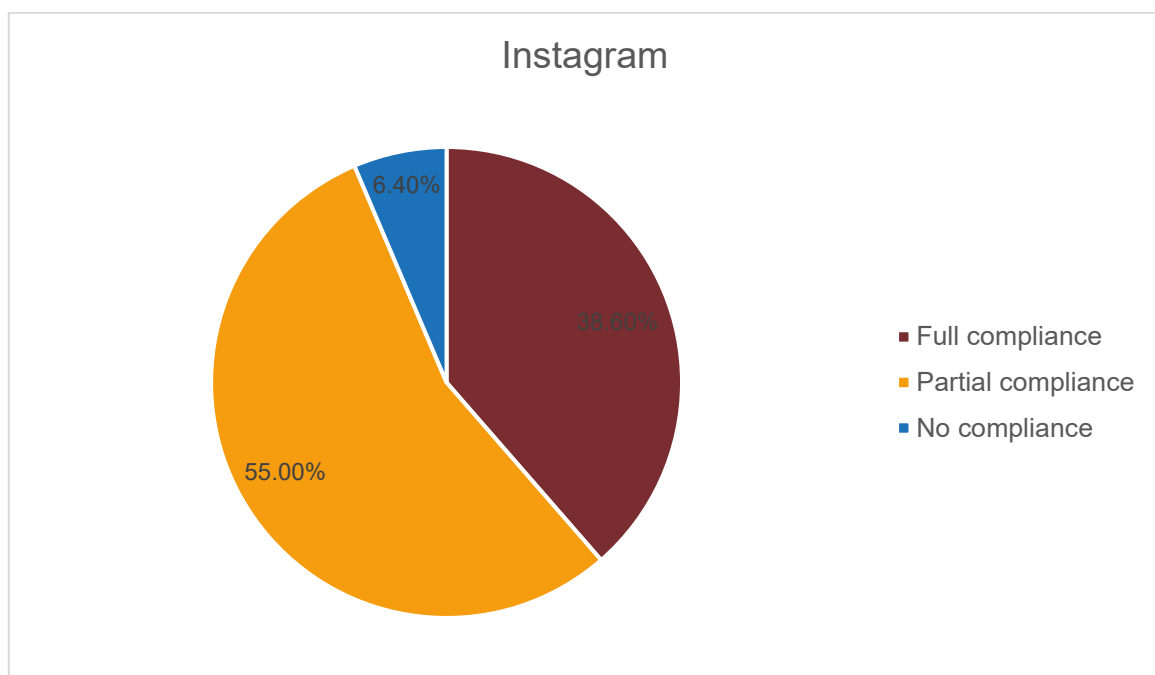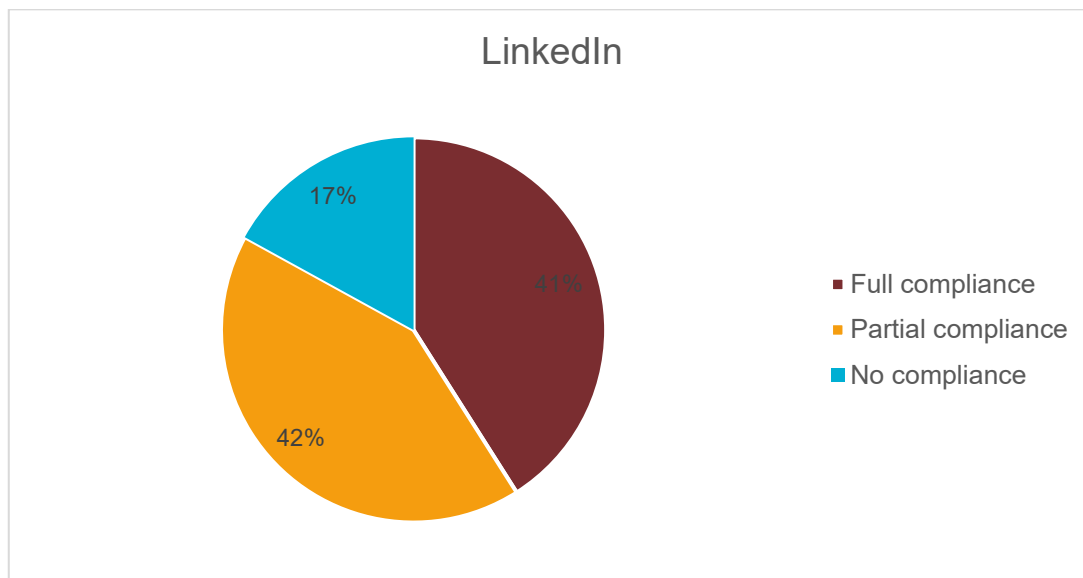

3.6 Of the messages reviewed, 79% were available in Welsh while 5% were not provided in Welsh at all, and 16% were partially available in Welsh. It was noted that 66% of the messages treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

3.7 Only four of the accounts reviewed were fully compliant with the requirements relating to corporate identity. The remaining 10 accounts treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, with non-compliance arising from various reasons, such as profile descriptions (bios) in English only, less information provided in the Welsh text compared to the English version, or the use if the organisation's English name for the account or it's 'handle'.

3.8   Inconsistencies were observed between separate Welsh and English accounts, including a higher number of 'Story' logos on English accounts, a lack of saved 'Stories' on the Welsh account, or the absence of equivalent 'Stories' on Welsh accounts. On bilingual accounts, it was noted that the titles of the 'Story' rows were often in English only.

3.9   Among the separate Welsh and English accounts, it was observed that some videos had not been published on the Welsh account. There was extensive use of videos on Instagram, and compliance was assessed at medium assurance for most of them. A lack of Welsh speaking contributors was noted, as well as the use of English text on the videos.

3.10   For videos where specific individuals were speaking English, such as former students in particular roles or ex-football players, Welsh subtitles were included. In such cases, the Commissioner acknowledges that it may not always be possible to secure Welsh speaking contributors.

3.11   Although a number of students, tutors and staff members contributed to the videos, Welsh speaking contributors were very limited. While Welsh text and subtitles were available most of the time, increasing the number of Welsh speaking contributors would help ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language.

3.12   In addition, some videos raised concerns about potential non-compliance with other standards, such as those relating to signage, temporary signage, and the publication of documents.

LinkedIn Accounts

3.13   Thirteen organisations were monitored on LinkedIn as two colleges had merged to use a single account on this platform. These two colleges now also use one Welsh language and one English language account for Instagram, but this arrangement had not been completed at the time of the monitoring work. As a result, 14 organisations were reviewed on Instagram and 13 on LinkedIn.

3.14   Eleven of the 13 organisations were using a bilingual account on LinkedIn, while two organisations operated separate Welsh and English accounts. Ten messages were monitored for each organisation.

3.15   When assessing corporate identity on LinkedIn, it was noted that 12 of the 13 accounts treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

3.16   The reasons varied, including a lack of Welsh text in the 'Overview' section, the absence of a short Welsh sentence under the title despite having one being present in English, and the use of an English name or title for the account.

3.17   In addition, it was observed that only a small number of lines from the organisation's description appeared on the account's homepage if the 'Overview' box had been filled in. If the Welsh text appears after the English, it is not immediately visible an requires clicking the 'See more' button or scrolling down to view it. The same issue applies to messages where Welsh text follows the English text, reducing its visibility and accessibility.

3.18 While monitoring messages on the LinkedIn platform, 53 out of 130 were fully compliant, that is 41%. 42% were partially compliant, and 17% were non-compliant.

3.19 Of the messages monitored on LinkedIn, 83% were available in Welsh, while 11% were not provided in Welsh at all, and 6.2% were partially available in Welsh. It was noted that 59.2% of the messages treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

Combining Instagram and LinkedIn results

3.20 Of the 270 messages that were monitored across Instagram and LinkedIn, 219 were available in Welsh, but only 107 of them (39.6%) were fully compliant with the requirements of Standard 62. Although 81% of messages were available in Welsh, fewer than half were fully compliant.

3.21 A total of 132 messages (48.9%) were partially compliant, although Welsh was present, the messages did not fully meet the requirements. This was due to various reasons, including

- the message appearing in English first
- links included only in the English text
- English only hashtags
- errors in the Welsh text
- visual context (e.g. images, posters, signs) in English only
- links in the Welsh text leading to English language pages

3.22 Of the 270 messages that were monitored across Instagram and LinkedIn, 31 (11.5%) did not comply with the requirements of standard 62. Nine of these messages were published on Instagram, and 22 on LinkedIn. Additionally, it was noted that 169 messages (63%), treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language. This included cases where the English text appeared first, or where linke were present in only the English version.

3.23 On Instagram, 71 videos were monitored, while video use on LinkedIn was much lower, with only 13 videos posted. However, it was not noted that one platform performed better than the other in terms of not treating the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language.

4 Trends

4.1 Overall, the sector requires considerable improvement to enhance compliance with the standards relevant to social media and corporate identity, particularly in terms of ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language.

Not treating the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language

4.2 Most organisations used Welsh when publishing messages, either by posting a single bilingual message (with Welsh and English as part of the same message) or by publishing separate messages in both languages. However, within the bilingual messages, a variety of practices were observed that affected the visibility of the Welsh language.

4.3 In some cases, organisations placed the message title in Welsh but followed it with the English text first and positioned the Welsh text below. This meant that the reader had to scroll past the English text to reach the Welsh message, reducing its accessibility. In other cases, the title was in English with the Welsh text appearing first.

4.4 One of the main weaknesses identified was a lack of consistency between the Welsh and English text in terms of including links to partner accounts, other organisations, or individuals. Often, the Welsh text did not include the relevant links. While this may reflect a reluctance to link to organisations with English only accounts (e.g. WorldSkills UK), omitting the link means that Welsh speaking readers do not receive the same level of information, resulting in less favourable treatment.

4.5 Examples of incorrect Welsh and literal translations from English were also observed, although these were relatively rare. However, when the Welsh text is unclear or inadequate, it means that the English text must be read to fully understand the message, which undermines the status of the Welsh language.

4.6 In addition, several organisations used hashtags as part of their messages, but in some cases, the hashtags were not present in the Welsh text and were in English only. When messages are bilingual or published separately in both languages, hashtags should also be available in Welsh to avoid unequal treatment between the two languages.

Corporate Identity

4.7 The results of the monitoring work in relation to corporate identity were the weakest among the areas reviewed. The lack of compliance stemmed mainly from how account titles and organisational descriptions were presented on the platforms' home pages. Often, the information was in English only or contained fewer details in Welsh.

Videos and audio clips

4.8 An extensive use of videos was observed on Instagram, but many did not fully comply. There was a lack of Welsh speaking contributors in the videos, and some featured English text on screen along with English language music in the background. One example showed a student wearing the Welsh Language Commissioner's Working Welsh badge, but they contributed in English except for one sentence at the end.

4.9 We acknowledge that ensuring Welsh speakers are available on every occasion can be challenging, and in some exceptional circumstances, it may be inappropriate, particularly where it is deemed necessary for the message to be delivered directly by a person who does not speak Welsh (e.g. a Chief Executive or Vice-Chancellor making urgent official announcements).

4.10 Although the nature of some videos was highly specific and specialised in content, a few examples were seen where organisations successfully published videos in Welsh. One such example was a video by Coleg Cambria, which featured a Welsh voiceover and fully complied with the standards.
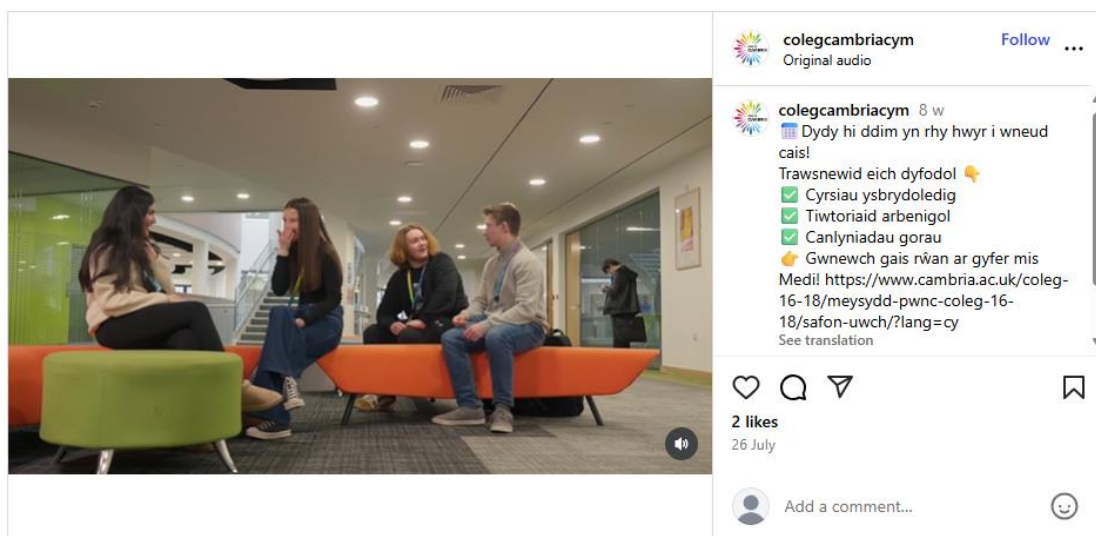
4.11 Examples were also seen of organisations publishing videos without dialogue, featuring instrumental music only. In other sectors, examples were noted where such videos included Welsh or bilingual text. These are considered effective methods of conveying messages in Welsh where it may be challenging to secure find Welsh speaking contributors.

Other Standards

4.12 Some images used from events raised concerns about non-compliance with other standards, for example, standards relating to documents, signage, and temporary signs.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

5.1   The monitoring work has highlighted several areas where organisations need significant improvement in complying with Welsh Language Standards on social media and corporate identity. While there were some examples of good practice, such as bilingual accounts and videos with Welsh voiceovers, the majority of messages showed a tendency to treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

5.2   Although the proportion of messages available in Welsh was relatively high (81%), only 39.6% of the messages fully complied with the standards. The compliance of posts on both platforms was higher than compliance with corporate identity requirements, but it was noted that nearly two out of every three messages treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

5.3   In the past, Facebook and Twitter/X were the platforms monitored by the Commissioner, and sector compliance was higher on those platforms. The current findings suggest that organisations need to review their communication methods on Instagram and LinkedIn specifically.

5.4   Among the main areas of concern were:

- Prioritising English in terms of text arrangement, titles, links, and hashtags
- Lack of Welsh-speaking contributors in videos, and the use of English only music
- Missing links in the Welsh text, resulting in incomplete information
- Lack of Welsh descriptions on accounts
- Linguistic errors
- Non-compliance with other standards such as signage

5.5   Although some organisations have succeeded in publishing effective bilingual content, the results indicate that more robust arrangements are needed to ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language.

5.6   Based on the findings of the monitoring work, we present the following recommendations to the Further Education organisations subject to Welsh Language Standards Regulations Number 6:

Recommendation 1: Corporate identity
Organisations should use a Welsh or bilingual name for bilingual accounts, including the handle. Organisations are encouraged to review all profile information—such as descriptions, bios, and the 'Overview' section—across all platforms to ensure the content is available in Welsh and that Welsh appears first. Welsh text should also be checked for accuracy in meaning and expression.

Recommendation 2: Use of hashtags
If organisations use hashtags, they should ensure that Welsh versions are available and follow the Welsh message, in the same way they are used in the English message.

Recommendation 3: Sharing messages from external bodies

If links are included in the English message, a corresponding link should be included in the Welsh message. If the partner organisation does not have a Welsh account or website, it is recommended to use the same link as the English version to ensure an equal experience for Welsh readers.

Recommendation 4: Consistency when posting on social media

Before publishing messages, organisations should check that the Welsh text appears first, and that the Welsh text is accurate in meaning and expression, conveying the same message as the English text.

Recommendation 5: Videos

When publishing videos, organisations should consider the involvement of Welsh speaking contributors and ensure that the Welsh language is communicated clearly and equally. Alternative methods of creating Welsh language videos, such as voiceovers, text or videos without speech, should be explored to maintain compliance with the standards when there is a lack of Welsh speaking contributors.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Monitoring data

	Instagram	LinkedIn	Total and percentage
Number of organisations using the platform	**14**	**13**	**27**
Number and percentage of organisations with a separate Welsh account	4 (28.5%)	2 (15.4%)	**6 (22.2%)**
Number and percentage of organisations with a bilingual account	10 (71.4%)	11 (84.6%)	**21 (77.8%)**
Number and percentage of organisations with an English only account	0	0	**0**
Percentage complying with the corporate identity requirements	4 (28.6%)	1 (7.7%)	**5 (18.5%)**
Number of posts monitored	**140**	**130**	**270**
Number and percentage of posts available in Welsh	111 (79.3%)	108 (83%)	**219 (81.1%)**
Number and percentage of posts fully complying	54 (38.6%)	53 (40.8%)	**107 (39.6%)**
Number and percentage of posts partially complying	77 (55%)	55 (42.3%)	**132 (48.9%)**
Number and percentage of posts that treated the Welsh Language less favourably than the English language	92 (65.7%)	77 (59.2%)	**169 (62.6%)**

Number and percentage of posts that didn't comply	9 (6.43%)	22 (16.9%)	**31** **(11.5%)**
Number and percentage of posts that were not available in Welsh	7 (5%)	14 (10.8%)	**21** **(7.7%)**
Number and percentage% of posts that were partially available in Welsh.	22 (15.7%)	8 (6.2%)	**30** **(11.1%)**

Appendix 2: List of Organisations Included in the Survey

- Adult Learning Wales
- Bridgend College
- Cardiff and Vale College
- Coleg Cambria
- Coleg Ceredigion
- Coleg Gwent
- Coleg Sir Gâr
- Coleg y Cymoedd
- Gower College Swansea
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
- NPTC Group of Colleges
- Pembrokeshire College
- Saint David's Catholic Sixth Form College
- The College Merthyr