



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Correspondence verification surveys:

The Welsh Language Standards Regulations No. 2



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This year, we have reviewed our arrangements for monitoring and regulating the compliance of public organisations with their language duties, to ensure that they are in line 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 manner.
 - 1.3 We were keen to develop monitoring and promotional methods that would give us more certainty about organisations' compliance. It was decided that monitoring surveys were to be carried out every quarter, with results reported back to the individual organisations within the same quarter.
 - 1.4 One of the key benefits of this monitoring approach is that organisations are notified of any compliance issues in a timely manner throughout the year, giving them the opportunity to promptly implement appropriate solutions.
 - 1.5 Organisations' compliance with Regulations No. 2 concerning correspondence standards has been identified as a priority area this year. Correspondence is one of the main methods organisations use to communicate with the public. The surveys of recent years show that there is variation in the levels of compliance of organisations with these standards.
 - 1.6 This report provides an overview of the findings from the verification surveys conducted with organisations subject to the Welsh Language Standards Regulations No.2 and presents recommendations for consideration to support and strengthen compliance within your organisation.
 - 1.7 In addition to this report, the individual findings of the surveys will be discussed with each organisation that took part, to provide tailored feedback and support specific improvement actions.
 - 1.8 Although the survey was conducted with a sample of organisations only, the findings of this report, together with the recommendations presented, are relevant to all organisations subject to the Welsh Language Standards Regulations No. 2.
 - 1.9 Following the publication of the report and sharing the findings with the individual organisations, each organisation will be expected to report to us within three months, indicating the steps that have been taken to respond to these recommendations.
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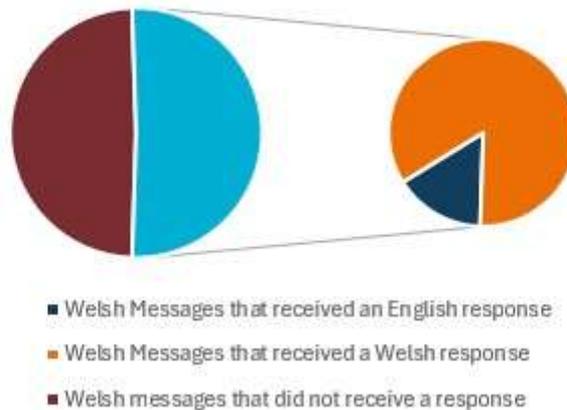
2 Methodology

- 2.1 A sample of 13 organisations subject to the Welsh Language Standards Regulations No. 2 was surveyed. The surveys were conducted during October and November 2025.
 - 2.2 Regulations No. 2, which apply to a wide range of national organisations in Wales, as well as some organisations operating across the UK, include seven standards (1–7) that set out the requirements for correspondence sent by a body.
 - 2.3 For the purposes of these surveys, compliance with Standards 1 and 7 was checked.
 - 2.4 Standard 1 states: *‘If you receive correspondence from a person in Welsh you must reply in Welsh (if an answer is required), unless the person has indicated that there is no need to reply in Welsh.’*
 - 2.5 Standard 7 states: *‘You must state—(a) in correspondence, and (b) in publications and notices that invite persons to respond to you or to send correspondence to you—that you welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh, that you will respond to correspondence in Welsh, and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.’*
 - 2.6 General email addresses advertised on the organisations’ websites were checked. Where possible, up to three email addresses were tested, and up to three English messages were sent to each address for regulatory purposes. In cases where only one email address was available, more than one message was sent to the same address. In some cases, only web contact forms were available.
 - 2.7 A total of 69 messages were sent to test organisations’ compliance with the relevant standards. For messages sent in Welsh, the extent to which responses complied with Standard 1 was assessed, including whether replies were provided in Welsh as required, and whether any element of the Welsh language was treated less favourably in those responses.
 - 2.8 At the same time, it was checked whether the responses included the required statement under Standard 7, confirming that the organisation welcomes correspondence in Welsh, will reply in Welsh, and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.
 - 2.9 For messages sent in English, the focus was on checking compliance with Standard 7, assessing whether the responses included the statutory statement that should be available regardless of the language in which correspondence is received.
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3 Findings

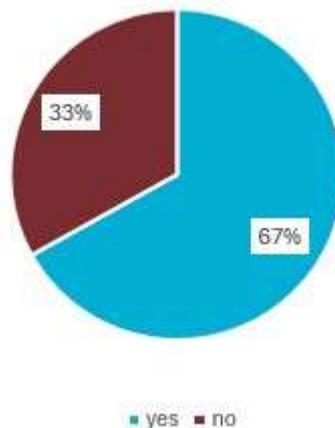
Responses to emails and compliance with Standard 1

% Welsh messages that received a reply, and in which language



3.1 The surveys this year showed that 51% of the Welsh messages sent received a response. Of those responses, 84% were provided in Welsh, which is an important confirmation that many organisations are meeting the requirements of Standard 1 when replying. However, the initial figure of 51% highlights that there is significant room for improvement in ensuring that every Welsh message receives a timely and standards-compliant response.

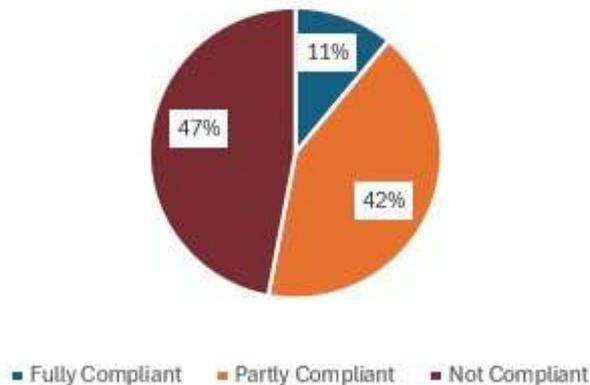
% English messages that received a reply



3.2 In the case of messages sent in English, 67% received a response, a notable increase compared with the response rate for Welsh messages. The difference between the two response rates suggests inconsistency in the way organisations handle correspondence depending on the language in which it is received.

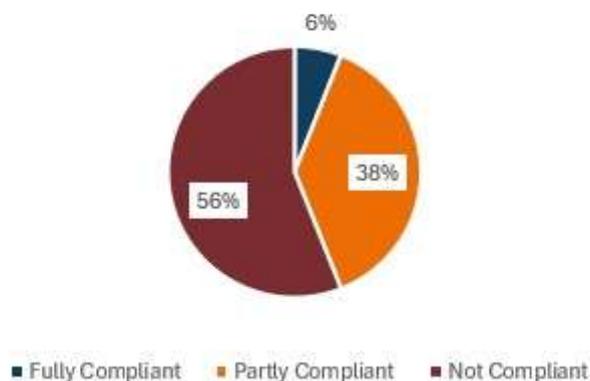
Responses to emails and compliance with Standard 7

Compliance of responses to the Welsh messages with Standard 7



- 3.3 Of the responses received to Welsh messages, 47% did not comply at all with the requirements of Standard 7. Forty-two percent were partially compliant, while only 11% of responses were fully compliant, including all the required elements of Standard 7: declaring that the organisation welcomes correspondence in Welsh, will reply in Welsh, and that corresponding in Welsh will not cause delay.

Compliance of responses to the English messages with Standard 7



- 3.4 In the case of responses to English messages, compliance levels were even lower: 56% did not comply with the standard's requirement, 38% were partially compliant, and only 6% were fully compliant. This suggests that the required statutory statement is not being communicated consistently, even when an English response is provided — even though it is supposed to appear in every response, regardless of the language in which the correspondence is received.

4 Trends

Compliance with standard 1

- 4.1 Overall response levels from organisations were low, regardless of the original language of the message. This suggests that fundamental challenges remain in consistently managing and processing correspondence.
- 4.2 A slightly higher percentage of messages sent in English received a response. This raises a fair question about whether the original language of a message influences whether it is replied to — something that is not consistent with the principle of treating both languages equally.
- 4.3 Where a response was provided to a message sent in Welsh, 84% of those responses complied with the requirements of Standard 1. This shows that compliance is strong when a response is made, but the biggest challenge remains ensuring that a response is provided in the first place.

Compliance with standard 7

- 4.4 The responses received showed that around half of them did not comply at all with the requirements of Standard 7. In these cases, no statutory statement was present in the response.
- 4.5 Full compliance with Standard 7 requirements was particularly low, suggesting that these requirements have not been consistently incorporated into organisations' communication arrangements.
- 4.6 Among the partially compliant responses, the main issue was incomplete or insufficient wording within the statements. Specifically, a number of statements failed to include the essential element clearly indicating that correspondence in Welsh would receive a reply in Welsh. As a result, even when a response was provided in some form, it did not meet the full requirements of the standard.

Additional remarks

- 4.7 An automatic email was received from one organisation requesting feedback on the service provided. This email was English-only and did not include any statement in line with the requirements of Standard 7, raising concerns about the treatment of Welsh in standardised communications likely to be sent to a large number of users.
 - 4.8 Several automatic responses were received from organisations (as well as follow-up responses from staff). Within these automatic responses, some common issues were noted:
 - Bilingual messages were received, but with English placed above Welsh, treating Welsh less favourably.
 - Some automatic messages did not include any Standard 7 statement.
 - In cases where statements were present, the wording was incomplete, meaning they did not fully comply with Standard
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5 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 Overall, compliance with the requirements of Standard 1 is high **when a response is provided**. This reflects a strong commitment to and understanding of the requirements of Standard 1.
- 5.2 However, the substantial number of messages that do not receive any response at all is a cause for concern — particularly given that a slightly higher percentage of English messages receive a reply compared with Welsh ones. This raises an important question as to whether the original language of a message has an unfair or unintended effect on the likelihood of a response, and organisations need to investigate this further to ensure equal treatment of both languages.
- 5.3 Compliance levels with Standard 7 are significantly lower than acceptable, and much lower than those observed for Standard 1. This suggests that the requirements of Standard 7 have not been consistently incorporated into organisational correspondence processes. When determining email signatures and any automatic responses, it is essential that organisations fully consider the requirements of Standard 7 and ensure they are accurately reflected in every instance.
- 5.4 Based on the survey findings, we present the following recommendations for organisations subject to the Welsh Language Standards Regulations No. 2:

Recommendation 1: Arrangements for responding to Welsh correspondence

- 5.5 Organisations should systematically review their response arrangements to ensure that all correspondence received in Welsh is replied to promptly and in accordance with the standards. Clear and consistent guidance should be provided to all staff handling correspondence, ensuring they are fully aware of the standards' requirements and confident in responding in Welsh. Consideration should also be given to whether additional training or safeguards (e.g., checklists, templates) are needed to ensure consistency.

Recommendation 2: Arrangements for organisational automatic responses

- 5.6 Organisations should carry out regular audits based on a representative sample of all automatic responses sent on behalf of the organisation. These audits should check that:
 - they comply with the requirements of the correspondence standards,
 - Welsh is not treated less favourably in any way (e.g., language order, presentation, content),
 - and the Standard 7 statement is included accurately and in full.

Recommendation 3: Compliance with the requirements of Standard 7

- 5.7 Organisations should review their processes to ensure that all external correspondence includes a clear, complete, and appropriate statement that complies with the requirements of Standard 7. The statement does not need to use the exact

wording of the standard, but it must reflect the organisation's commitment not to treat Welsh less favourably than English when handling correspondence and to meet the full requirements of the standard clearly. The wording in the code of practice provides a clear, bilingual example, which is recommended as a basis for all organisations.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey data

Total Welsh messages sent	37
Number of responses received to Welsh messages	19
Number of Welsh responses received to Welsh messages	16
Number of Welsh messages that received no response at all	18

Total English messages sent	24
Number of responses received to English messages	16
Number of English messages that received no response at all	8

Number of responses received to Welsh messages	19
Number of responses received to Welsh messages that fully complied with the requirements of Standard 7	2
Number of responses received to Welsh messages that partially complied with the requirements of Standard 7	8
Number of responses received to Welsh messages that did not comply at all with the requirements of Standard 7	9

Number of responses received to English messages	16
Number of responses received to English messages that fully complied with the requirements of Standard 7	1
Number of responses received to English messages that partially complied with the requirements of Standard 7	6
Number of responses received to English messages that did not comply at all with the requirements of Standard 7	9

Appendix 2: List of organisations that took part in the survey

- Arts Council of Wales
 - Books Council of Wales
 - Sport Wales
 - National Library of Wales
 - National Opera of Wales
 - BBC
 - OFCOM
 - National Museum Wales
 - Wales Millennium Centre
 - National Botanic Garden of Wales
 - Equality and Human Rights Commission
 - The Electoral Commission
 - National Theatre of Wales
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