



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Part 1 – Section 6

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Duty:

The Welsh Language Commissioner's Report 2025

Publication date: December 2025



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Gymraeg
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Background

The principal aim of the Welsh Language Commissioner, an independent body established by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, is to promote and facilitate use of the Welsh language. This entails raising awareness of the official status of the Welsh language in Wales and imposing standards on organisations. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers.

Two principles will underpin the work:

- In Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language
- Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose to do so

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1 Background and context

Welsh Language Commissioner

- 1.1 The principal aim of the Welsh Language Commissioner (the Commissioner), an independent body established by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, is to promote and facilitate use of the Welsh language. This entails raising awareness of the official status of the Welsh language in Wales and imposing standards on organisations. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers.
- 1.2 Two principles will underpin the work:
 - In Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language
 - Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose to do so

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

- 1.3 As a public authority under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Welsh Language Commissioner has a duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and to promote resilient ecosystems in Wales.
- 1.4 Under the Act, the Commissioner must issue a plan setting out the steps that are to be taken to comply with this duty.
- 1.5 In relation to biodiversity, the Commissioner occupies two offices as a tenant in Wales. The Commissioner's functions are not directly related to biodiversity and/or land management.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 1.6 Although the Welsh Language Commissioner is not a public body bound by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Commissioner is committed to the Sustainable Development Principle set out in Section 5 of the Act.
- 1.7 By operating in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle, the Commissioner will act in a way that seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2 The Commissioner's Sustainability Policy

- 2.1 As previously noted, in line with the requirements under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Commissioner has developed an action plan to accompany its Sustainability Policy. There was already an action plan in place to coincide with the first Policy published back in 2019. However, following the closure of the Commissioner's offices between March 2020 and September 2022 due to Covid-19, the Commissioner's ability to deliver on that action plan and report on environmental issues was significantly limited.
- 2.2 Since then, the Commissioner has reviewed the plan and Policy and, following staff engagement, has approved a new Sustainability Policy and action plan for the 2024-27 period. The new Policy and plan now reflect the new working practices adopted following the pandemic period and is based on the following principles:
- Complying with all relevant legislation, regulations and codes of practice, and doing more than is necessary where practicable.
 - Integrating sustainability considerations into our business decisions where possible.
 - Ensuring that all its officers are fully aware of the Sustainability Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it.
 - Minimising the impact of all office and travel activities on sustainability.
 - Ensuring suppliers are aware of its Sustainability Policy, and encouraging them to adopt sound sustainable management practices.
 - Reviewing, reporting annually, and continually striving to improve its sustainability performance.
- 2.3 As an organisation that occupies an office building as a tenant only (i.e. we do not own or manage property or land) and our functions are not directly related to biodiversity and/or land management, the Commissioner is categorised as a Group 1 organisation for the purposes of the duty. As a result, the organisation is required to work towards objectives no. 1, 4 and 6 of the Nature Restoration Action Plan (NRAP) for Wales. The new Policy and plan address those objectives through a series of activities related to specific themes as follows:

| Theme | Related NRAP objective |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educating officials about the importance of environmental awareness and biodiversity• Integrating environmental considerations into the selection of suppliers and services to provide products and/or services | 1: Engaging and supporting participation and understanding so that biodiversity is rooted in the decision-making process at all levels. |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>2.4 Working towards reducing electricity consumption each year (as a tenant in a shared building, the Commissioner does not have full control over the use of water, heat and light)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards an annual increase in the number of officials using low-carbon modes of travel (such as walking, cycling, car-sharing and public transport) by developing and promoting • Compliance with new recycling requirements in the workplace | <p>4: Tackling the main pressures on species and habitats</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing arrangements to comply with the Policy | <p>6: Putting a governance and support framework in place to achieve the objectives</p> |

Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030

- 2.5 The Commissioner is committed to using the actions set out in its Sustainability Policy and action plan to work towards the public sector goal of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

3 The Commissioner's environmental performance

- 3.1 The Commissioner is committed to protecting the environment, continuously improving its environmental management and performance, complying with environmental duties and requirements, and preventing pollution.
- 3.2 The Commissioner recognises that its main effects on the environment stem from the use of energy, transport, waste generation and the use of office materials. It is therefore committed to seeking to reduce its impacts on the environment by focusing on these areas, as set out below:
- **Energy consumption** - as one of several tenants in a block of old offices, it is not possible to have full control of water, heat and light facilities. However,

where possible, officers are encouraged to be frugal with their energy use by turning off computers and screens when not in use, turning off light when not needed and only printing material that is really needed.

- **Use of vehicles** - the office does not own any vehicles, but encourages the hiring of vehicles for long journeys to ensure better efficiency; this includes electric vehicles where they will be available. Officers are encouraged to share vehicles for official journeys when practicable. Where appropriate, the use of public transport is encouraged as the first option for all necessary travel.
- **Meetings** - Avoiding physically travelling to meetings when alternatives are available and practical, such as using Teams or video conferencing tools, and scheduling meetings efficiently to avoid multiple trips.
- **Paper management** - all officers have access to email and the internet, and paperless meetings and work are encouraged. Papers for meetings are no longer routinely printed.
- **Procurement** - the Commissioner's procedures include requirements to be mindful of sustainability issues when procuring services and goods from external providers.
- **Waste Disposal** - procedures are used for recycling all types of waste including paper, cardboard, plastic, metal, glass and food. Paper containing sensitive information is disposed of using confidential waste recycling facilities. Water machines have been provided in the offices to eliminate the need for water in plastic bottles.
- **Teaching** - the Commissioner is committed to raising their officials' awareness of sustainability and biodiversity issues. This includes how officers can contribute within and outside the workplace.
- **Work practices** - through the Hybrid Working Guide, staff are enabled to make decisions about their place of work, where possible and appropriate. This guidance allows staff to work remotely, which reduces the organisation's overall carbon footprint.

4 Implementation Report

- 4.1 Under Section 6(7) of the Act, the Commissioner is required to publish a report "*At the end of every third year after 2019, publish a report on what it has done to comply with subsection (1)*". The last report was published in December 2022 and therefore it is timely to report again on what has been done to comply with the duty over the past three years.
- 4.2 Since the last report in 2022, a new Sustainability Policy and action plan was published in April 2024. That Policy clarifies that the duty to report on progress has

been developed to be proportionate to the size and function of the organisation, giving due regard to the actions for sustainability and biodiversity that can be taken. The mechanism for doing so is within the Commissioner's Annual Report where progress against the Policy and action plan is identified.

4.3 Each of the Commissioner's Annual Reports covering the 2022-2025 reporting period can be viewed here:

- [Annual Report 2022-23](#)
- [Annual Report 2023-24](#)
- [Annual Report 2024-25](#)

4.4 For the purposes of this report, the highlights can be summarised as follows:

- The introduction of a Hybrid Working Guide reduces office occupancy and gives staff more freedom to choose their working environment which means commuting to the office, and the resulting carbon footprint, remains lower than the pre-pandemic period.
- A significant reduction in use and waste disposal in the office as a result of moving to a more paperless way of working.
- Opting to meet virtually first where possible has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of business trips compared to the pre-pandemic period.
- Reducing the number of offices we occupy from 4 to 2 by changing the status of staff based in the offices that have closed to become 'home workers'. We moved to a smaller office in Cardiff which has also resulted in being able to share resources and operate more efficiently.
- Establishing an internal Group to inform the implementation of the new policy and plan which now meets quarterly under the leadership of the Director of Governance and Corporate Services.
- Separating dedicated bins for recycling all types of waste, and installing new signage to raise awareness of the requirements and encourage waste reduction.
- Providing training on climate change to everyone in the organisation and advanced training on carbon literacy for members of the internal Group.
- Introducing a green option when booking hire cars.
- Researching the green car scheme and paying for an annual train ticket.
- Submitting an item relating to an environmental issue in the internal staff newsletter on a quarterly basis.

5 Revision

- 5.1 The Commissioner's plan is embedded in the form of an action plan within its Sustainability Policy and is reviewed every three years. The latest Plan and Policy was published in April 2024 and will therefore be reviewed next in April 2027.