# Welsh Language

## Annual Report

## 2024-2025

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale University Health Boar

Shaping Our Future Wellbeing

Meddwl Cymraeg Think Welsh

Tegwch a Chynhwysiant Equity & Inclusion

Shaping Our Future Workforce

Cymraeg

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

# Annual Welsh Language Standards Report 2024-2025

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# Introduction

On 30th May 2019, the Welsh Language Measure (2011) came into force placing legislative duties on Cardiff and Vale University Health Board with regards to the Welsh language. The specific duties that Health Boards are required to comply with, set by the Welsh Language Commissioner, are available here. As set out in the compliance notice, the Health Board must provide a service for patients, service users, and the general public in Welsh should that be their preferred language. Additionally, the Health Board is required to deliver a range of services for its staff through the medium of Welsh.

The story of the Welsh language in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan is unique. According to the latest Welsh Government statistics, when considering the percentage of the local population who speak Welsh, Cardiff came in as the 8th highest with 28% of residence speaking the language. The Vale of Glamorgan was ranked 19th, with 18.5% of people living in the area being Welsh speakers. When considering, the actual number of those who speak Welsh, Cardiff tops the list with 102,000 people, higher than any other region in Wales. The Vale of Glamorgan has 18,000 Welsh speakers, which is ranked as the 18th largest in the country.[1]

# Governance and structure

The Chief Executive is corporately responsible for the Welsh Language Standards, with the Executive Director for People and Culture responsible at Board level. The Assistant Director for Organisational Development, Wellbeing and Culture alongside the Equity and Inclusion Senior Manager provides strategic leadership.

The Welsh Language Officer, working within the Health Board's Equity and Inclusion Team, is responsible for the Standards on a day-to-day basis and acts as a point of contact for the Standards and other matters relating to the Welsh language.
The Health Board's receives assurances that its services are complying to the Welsh Language Standards through the People and Culture Committee.
Complaints received by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board are dealt with and responded to through one of two processes. All concerns regarding patient care and patient experience are dealt with through the Putting Things Right process, administered by the Health Board's Concerns Team. Concerns relating to compliance in corporate areas are dealt with directly by the Welsh Language Officer. The corporate concerns process is available on the Health Board's website

[1] Annual Population Survey – Ability to speak Welsh by local authority - https://statswales.gov.wales

# Culture and Practice Change

## Strategic Equality Plan and the Welsh Language

The Health Board's Strategic Equality Plan is central to advancing the Welsh language agenda, providing a clear framework that aligns with statutory

responsibilities and embeds the language throughout organisational activities. Rather than treating language as a separate issue, the Plan integrates the Welsh language with broader equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities, ensuring Welsh speakers can access high-quality services in their preferred language. The Plan supports staff in developing Welsh language skills through training, leadership, and recruitment practices, creating a work environment where bilingual service delivery is valued and encouraged.

Incorporating the Welsh language into its Strategic Equality Plan, the Health Board ensures compliance and fosters an accessible, equitable healthcare environment that meets the diverse language and cultural needs of its population.

## Awareness Days

Meddwl Cymraeg
Think Welsh

The Health Board has continued to use national awareness days to promote the importance of the Welsh language in healthcare. This includes St Dwynwen's Day, Welsh Language Music Day and Diwrnod Shw'mae Day.

Santes Dwynwen Day was promoted by the Health Board by highlighting our colleagues' passion for the Welsh language, which plays a vital role in fostering community connections and improving healthcare through the medium of Welsh.

Diwrnod Shw'mae was celebrated at the Health Board on October 15th. It was a day dedicated to encouraging the use of Welsh, particularly in healthcare settings. It emphasised the comfort and inclusivity patients feel when spoken to in their preferred language, which can be crucial for their wellbeing and recovery. Initiatives that took place on the day was

promoting Welsh language skills development sessions and other material to encourage staff members to greet in Welsh.

The Health Board celebrated St. David's Day by highlighting the staff's passion for the Welsh language, showcasing their commitment to cultural heritage and language inclusivity in healthcare.

## Welsh Language Career Days

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board participated in the annual career's day organised by Cardiff Council in collaboration with Cardiff University. The event, held at the Cardiff University Union Hall, attracted over 500 students and provided an opportunity to highlight potential career paths for Welsh medium-educated students, demonstrating how their proficiency in the Welsh language can be utilised within the healthcare sector.

Staff have visited local schools to promote healthcare careers and emphasise the importance of Welsh language skills. These visits inspire students to consider healthcare careers, showing how Welsh proficiency is beneficial for providing inclusive care. Presentations highlighted diverse healthcare opportunities and the value of bilingualism, preparing future professionals to serve communities in both Welsh and English.

## Developing Welsh Language skills of the workforce

In line with its strategic objectives to advance bilingualism and foster a truly inclusive environment, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has strengthened its partnership with Learn Welsh Cardiff at Cardiff University. This collaborative relationship is designed to provide a diverse range of Welsh language learning pathways, catering to varying levels of proficiency and professional requirements. By offering bespoke programmes and workshops, the partnership not only addresses the immediate needs of staff seeking to improve their Welsh language skills but also establishes a supportive framework for ongoing linguistic development. These initiatives are carefully tailored to build staff confidence in both formal and informal settings, ensuring that employees are well-equipped to integrate Welsh into their daily interactions within the workplace and the wider community.

During the 2024/2025 period, the Health Board has further consolidated its commitment to promoting the Welsh language through a continued alliance with the National Centre for Learning Welsh. This partnership has enabled the expansion of targeted staff development

opportunities, notably through the introduction and enhancement of courses such as Croeso Cymraeg and Cwrs Codi Hyder. These courses are specifically structured to support staff at different stages of their language journey, from those embarking on learning Welsh for the first time to individuals seeking to refine and bolster their conversational abilities. The provision of these dedicated programmes not only facilitates compliance with Welsh Language Standards but also empowers staff to deliver patient-centred care that respects linguistic preferences and cultural identity.

Through these collaborative efforts, the Health Board demonstrates its proactive approach to workforce development, embedding the principles of equity, accessibility, and cultural competence at every level of the organisation. By investing in comprehensive Welsh language training, the Health Board ensures that all patients, service users, and their families can access services in their language of choice, thereby enhancing patient experience, improving communication, and supporting positive health outcomes. The sustained focus on partnership-driven language development underscores the Health Board's role as a leader in promoting linguistic diversity within the healthcare sector in Wales.

## Cwrs Croeso

The Health Board has continued to expand the delivery of the Cwrs Croeso course in partnership with Learn Welsh Cardiff, as part of its ongoing commitment to enhancing Welsh language provision within healthcare services. The Cwrs Croeso course is specifically tailored for colleagues who possess little or no prior knowledge of the Welsh language, providing them with an accessible and supportive introduction to Welsh. This foundational course is designed to equip staff with essential language skills, enabling them to deliver basic Welsh language services and fostering the ability for patients and service users to communicate in their preferred language.

To date, a total of 86 staff members have completed the Cwrs Croeso course, reflecting the Health Board's proactive approach to building a bilingual workforce. By empowering staff to engage with patients and service users in Welsh, even at a basic conversational level, the initiative significantly contributes to improving patient experience, promoting inclusivity, and supporting the Health Board's strategic objectives around linguistic diversity. The ability for staff to greet, assist, and respond to patients in Welsh can make a meaningful difference to the comfort and wellbeing of service users, particularly for those who feel more at ease communicating in their first language.

Furthermore, the Cwrs Croeso course serves as an important stepping stone for staff who wish to further develop their Welsh language abilities. Many participants have used the skills and confidence gained from this introductory programme as a foundation for pursuing more advanced Welsh language learning opportunities, demonstrating a growing culture of linguistic development within the Health Board. The ongoing success of the Cwrs Croeso

course underlines the Health Board's dedication to delivering equitable, patient-centred care and embedding Welsh language considerations into everyday practice across all levels of the organisation.

By prioritising the roll-out of Welsh language training and fostering an environment in which staff are encouraged to continue their learning journey, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board is not only meeting statutory Welsh Language Standards but is also actively championing the principles of inclusion and respect for linguistic heritage within healthcare settings. This aligns with the broader objectives outlined in the Strategic Equality Plan and supports the vision of a healthcare system that is accessible, responsive, and culturally sensitive to the diverse needs of the communities it serves.

## Building Confidence

The Building Confidence course is specifically designed to support staff members who already possess a reasonable level of Welsh language ability but may feel hesitant or lack assurance when it comes to using Welsh in everyday conversations. Recognising that confidence is often a key barrier to speaking a second language in the workplace, the course provides participants with the chance to engage in one-to-one sessions with an experienced Welsh tutor. These personalised sessions are tailored to address individual challenges, allowing staff to work through their own obstacles, whether those are related to pronunciation, vocabulary, or simply overcoming nerves when speaking Welsh with colleagues or patients.

Throughout the course, participants are encouraged to practise real-life conversational scenarios that they may encounter during their daily work or social interactions. This practical approach ensures that the language skills acquired are directly applicable to the healthcare environment, such as greeting patients, holding basic discussions, or answering the telephone bilingually. The supportive atmosphere created by the tutor helps to build trust and motivation, making it easier for staff to step outside their comfort zone and use Welsh more naturally.

As a result of the Building Confidence course, there has been a marked improvement in the confidence levels of those who have attended. To date, 19 members of staff have successfully completed the programme, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Many attendees have reported that they now feel much more comfortable initiating conversations in Welsh, both at work and in their personal lives. The course has also fostered a sense of community among participants, as they share their experiences and progress, further encouraging the use of Welsh across different teams and departments.

The ongoing success of the Building Confidence course is evident in the growing number of staff who are not only enjoying the sessions but are also embracing the opportunity to use their Welsh language skills more frequently and with greater self-assurance. This initiative aligns with

the wider commitment of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to promote bilingualism, inclusivity, and patient-centred care, ensuring that both staff and service users benefit from a linguistically diverse and welcoming environment.

Here are some comments who have enjoyed the course:

*"Rwyf wedi mwynhau'r sesiynau hyn. Maen nhw wedi fy annog i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn fwy yn y gweithle, yn enwedig gyda fy nghydweithwyr."*

*"I really enjoy the sessions and find Nia really easy to chat to and helpful. They've given me the confidence to speak to staff and patients at work in Welsh."*

*"Tu allan i'r gwersi, dwi wedi dechrau gwrando ar bodlediadau Cymraeg, yn ogystal a darllen llyfrau Gymraeg. Dwi'n fwy hyderus yn siarad Cymraeg efo ffrindiau."*

*"The sessions have been very useful in building my confidence to speak Welsh again. Although I attended night classes from 2007-2009, I hadn't realised how much I had remembered and how much I had forgotten! My Welsh speaking colleagues have been speaking to me in Welsh everyday which enables me to practise as much as I can. I do answer the telephone bilingually, and I hope that if a caller is Welsh speaking I will do my best to speak to them in Welsh."*

## Residential Courses in Nant Gwrtheyrn

The Health Board had also been actively promoting the residential courses that were fully funded by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. These immersive courses, held at Nant Gwrtheyrn, offer staff a unique opportunity to spend several days in a Welsh-speaking environment, allowing them to develop their language skills intensively and gain greater confidence in using Welsh both inside and outside the workplace. As a direct result of this promotion, two members of staff were able to attend the residential programme. During their time on the course, they participated in structured lessons, cultural activities, and conversation sessions designed to enhance not only their linguistic abilities but also their understanding of Welsh heritage. Feedback from attendees was highly positive, with staff reporting that the experience increased their motivation to continue learning and to use Welsh more frequently when interacting with patients and colleagues. The Health Board remains committed to supporting such initiatives, recognising that developing staff Welsh language skills through residential courses contributes significantly to its aim of providing inclusive, patient-centred care in both Welsh and English.

## Collaborating with other public services in the Cardiff and Vale Area

The Health Board works with Cardiff City Council's 'Bilingual Cardiff' Strategy to increase awareness and use of Welsh in the city.

In collaboration with Learn Welsh Cardiff, staff have participated in initiatives to use Welsh at work and home, aligning with the strategy's objectives.

Staff enrolled in the Cwrs Croeso course have opportunities to use Welsh with friends, family, and the community. The Health Board took part in the Cardiff Careers Fair, which promoted Welsh-language careers and supported Health Board recruitment activities.

## Fforwm Caerdydd

The Health Board has continued in its role in being an active member of the Welsh Language Forum for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The forum has enabled the Health Board to liaise with other major organisations and institutions in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, including Menter Iaith Caerdydd and Menter Y Fro (The Welsh Language Enterprise in the Vale of Glamorgan). This has led to the Health Board working with other local organisations on projects including the Welsh Language in Careers conference for students.

## Rhwyd-Iaith

Rhwydiaith, the Health Board's Welsh language staff network, has continued to grow since its establishment over two years ago. We now have over 100 members, with numbers consistently increasing as more staff become aware of the network and its opportunities. We have a lively Teams channel and Viva Engage page, which includes regular messages about events involving the Welsh language across the Health Board and in Cardiff and Vale. Information is shared about opportunities to practice Welsh, prompt cards, which are available for areas to assist members of staff to use Welsh whilst answering the phone, and promote important days, such as Diwrnod Shw'mae.

These communication channels are also used to find volunteers to participate in external events and opportunities for Welsh speakers to participate in trials, such as the new ESR system. Members of the Rhwyd-iaith were also encouraged participate in the Builng Confidence course offered by Learn Welsh. Information about Welsh courses at Nant Gwrtheyrn has also been shared with members.

Rhwyd-iaith

# Providing bilingual information for the patient and the public

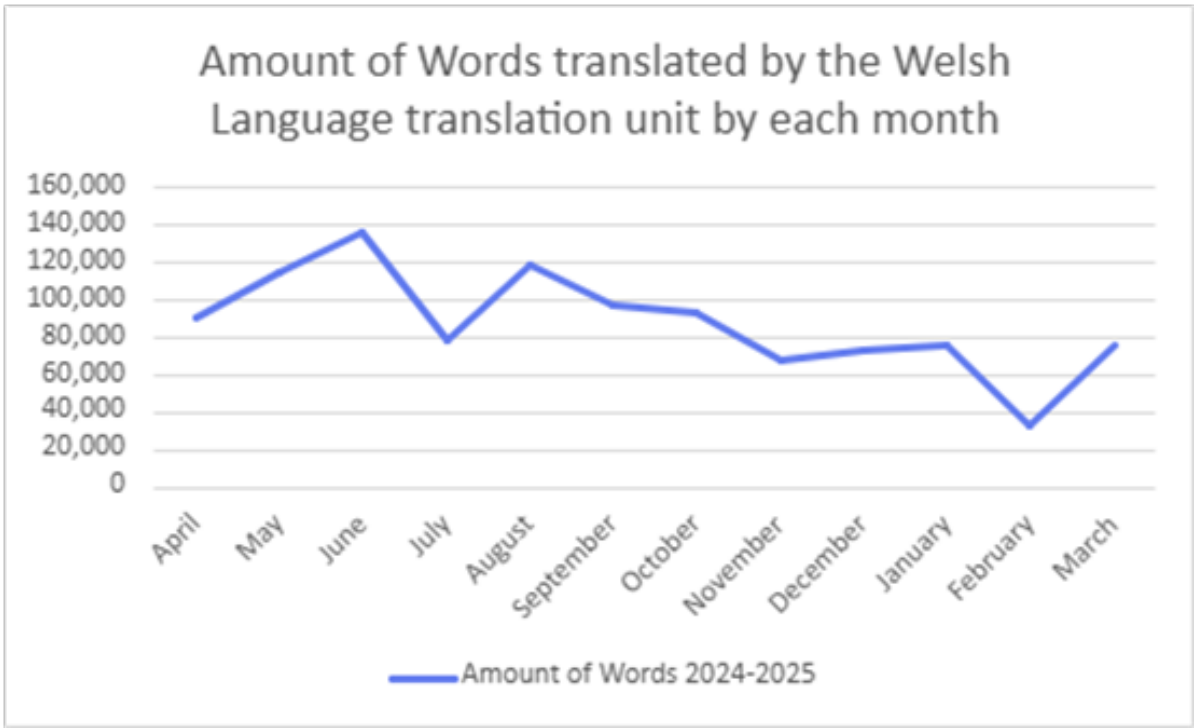
## Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Translation Unit

The Unit continues to provide an effective translation service for the Health Board.

Over the 2024-2025, the unit translated nearly 1.4 million words, including a wide range of documents such as patient information, public information and corporate documents.

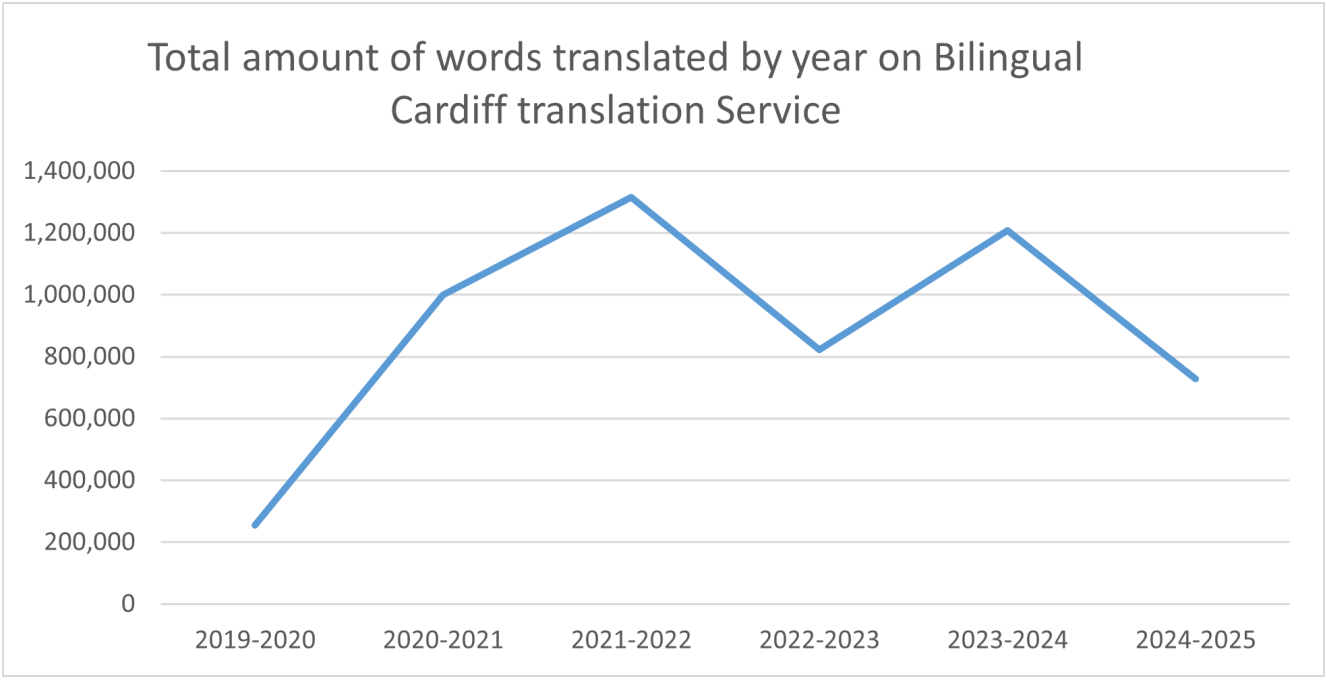
The graph below shows how many words were translated by the Unit during 2024-2025. The graph demonstrates an increase in the number of words translated during this two-year period.

The Unit has had a hugely positive impact on the Health Board, with many colleagues praising the work and support they have provided in front line areas to ensure they offer bilingual information for patients and service users.



## Service Level Agreement with Cardiff City Council

The Health Board continued to work with Bilingual Cardiff, the Welsh Language translation service managed by Cardiff City Council, in line with the service level agreement in place, to increase organisational translation capacity. During the 2024-2025 Bilingual Cardiff translated over 727,127 words for the Health Board; having translated a just over 5 million words since 2019.



# Service Delivery Standards

## Progress by the Clinical Boards

The Clinical Boards are enhancing the Health Board's Welsh language services by providing communications and patient information in Welsh to improve service quality for patients and families.

In addition to expanding the provision of written and verbal communication in Welsh, the Clinical Boards are ensuring that patient materials are culturally relevant and accessible. By promoting bilingualism and encouraging staff to participate in Welsh language learning opportunities, they strive to foster a welcoming environment where patients and their families feel respected and understood. These efforts are designed not only to improve access to medical information but also to strengthen trust and satisfaction among the Welsh-speaking population, contributing to more positive healthcare experiences overall.

The Clinical Boards continue to require their staff to register their Welsh Language skills. This has led to increased participation in Welsh language learning opportunities among staff. The intention is to build bilingual service provision, support communication with Welsh-speaking patients, and provide a healthcare environment that accommodates speakers of both languages.

## Progress from other areas

The Health Boards' Communications and Engagement Team has been working to ensure that it fully complies with the Welsh Language Standards. For example, it has been working to ensure that its website is available fully bilingual. The existing approval system managed by the Communications and Engagement Team has meant that all newly created or updated pages on the website cannot be published unless they are available fully bilingual. With this process, the Health Board can now ensure all website information is available in both languages.

## Communication and Engagement Team

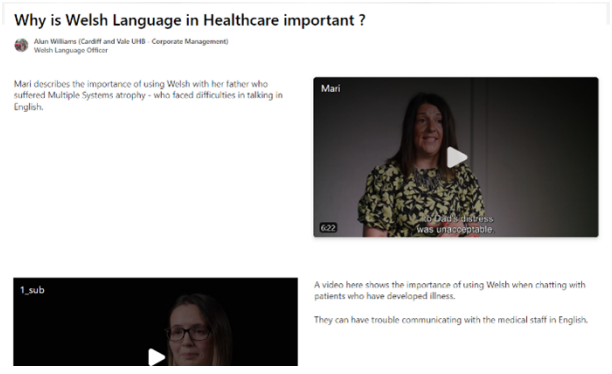
As part of the Welsh Language agenda, the Health Board has been using existing communication channels to promote the importance of the Welsh language when it comes to healthcare. On 6th June 2024, as part of Ask Suzanne, the monthly staff forum hosted by the Chief Executive, the Welsh Language Officer delivered a session on the importance of the Welsh language in healthcare and how our staff can improve their Welsh language skills. This emotive presentation, including staff stories, enjoyed a positive response and as a result, the Ask Suzanne session is now available bilingually each month so that Welsh-speaking colleagues can listen in their preferred language.

The team uses internal communications within the Health Board to promote the Welsh language agenda and inform staff about available Welsh language learning opportunities.

# Organisational Standards

## SharePoint

Additionally, the updated section provides comprehensive resources for staff, including best practices for communicating with patients in Welsh and training modules designed to build language skills across teams. Regular newsletters and announcements keep staff aware of upcoming Welsh language workshops, community outreach initiatives, and opportunities for further learning. By focusing on real-life experiences and professional development, the team aims to foster a more inclusive environment that respects linguistic diversity and improves patient outcomes. This ongoing commitment not only aligns with regulatory requirements but also demonstrates the Health Board's dedication to making services accessible and welcoming for all members of the community.




The Equity, Inclusion and Welsh Language Team has expanded the Welsh language section on the SharePoint site in 2024/2025, adding guidelines and highlighting the value of offering healthcare in Welsh. New content includes patient and family stories illustrating the importance of Welsh in effective care. The SharePoint now features up-to-date information on Welsh language events and developments within the Health Board.

# Recruitment

*(Information required as per the Standards)*

The table below provides information on the number of vacancies advertised during 2024-2025 and the type of Welsh language skills that were requested:

| Cardiff and Vale UHB 2024-2025 | |
|---|---|
| Total number of vacancies advertised as: | |
| Welsh language skills are essential | 3 |
| Welsh language skills are desirable | 2487 |
| Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post | 0 |
| Welsh language skills are not necessary | 49 |
| Total Number of vacancies advertised | 2539 |

# Welsh Language Concerns

*(Information required as per the Standards)*

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has two formal complaints systems to handle complaints and concerns in relation to the Welsh language.

The 'Putting Things Right' concern system handles concerns around patient and service user care. The Concerns Team liaises closely with the Equity and Inclusion Team to ensure that any concerns in relation to the Welsh language are managed appropriately. The Patient Experience Team did not receive a concern around the compliance of the Welsh Language Standards from members of the public during the 2023-2024 reporting period.

A separate corporate concerns process is available for non-clinical and corporate concerns. A copy of the process is available on the Health Board's website. The Health Board did not receive any concerns through this route during 2024-2025.

# Welsh Language Skills of Staff

*(Information required as per the Standards)*

The table below provides information on the registration of Welsh language skills of staff as at 31st March 2025:

| Listening/Speaking Welsh | Headcount |
|---|---|
| 0 - No Skills / Dim Sgiliau | 7044 |
| 1 - Entry/ Mynediad | 1489 |
| 2 - Foundation / Sylfaen | 335 |
| 3 - Intermediate / Canolradd | 217 |
| 4 - Higher / Uwch | 262 |
| 5 - Proficiency / Hyfedredd | 391 |
| Not Assessed | 8637 |
| Grand Total | 18375 |

# Conclusion and Vision for 2025-2026

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board is committed to making Welsh an integral part of staff life and service delivery. This approach ensures inclusive, culturally sensitive communication and supports our aim to provide excellent care, respect Wales' linguistic heritage, and promote a sense of community among those we serve.

The *'Meddwl Cymraeg – Think Welsh'* campaign supported the Health Board in establishing a cultural change through highlighting the importance of the Welsh language. The campaign has enjoyed positive feedback and helps to promote and encourage staff to use Welsh in the workplace.

However, it is recognised that there is more to do in building a bilingual culture and providing a bilingual service for patients and service users. Cardiff and Vale UHB look forward to the year ahead and taking forward our vision for 2025-2026:

The Health Board has ensured that the Welsh language agenda is mainstreamed and incorporated into organisational strategy, such as the People and Culture Plan.

As part of the Welsh Language Commissioner's approach of co-regulating with health services, the Health Board will continue to collaborate with the Welsh Language Commissioner and enhance the use of the Welsh language in its services by working on the following aims in 2025/2026:

- Continue to register staff members' Welsh language skills.
- Continue to integrate Welsh language skills into the recruitment process
- Widen the availability of Welsh language training for staff members across the health board
- Widen the use of the Welsh language amongst the staff members
- Continue to work with Clinical and Service Boards to improve the level of Welsh language services for patients and services users.