

# The Food Standards Agency's Annual Monitoring Report to the Welsh Language Commissioner

2022 - 2023

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## **1. Introduction**

This monitoring report provides a summary of the bilingual activity and services provided by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), which support the FSA's compliance with its Welsh Language Scheme. The report covers the period between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

The report highlights the FSA's efforts to offer effective and meaningful services to our bilingual users in Wales, offering provision that treats Welsh and English on the basis that they are equal. The internal Welsh Language Unit team is responsible for coordinating this provision, and the Unit works hard to ensure that the provision is continually reviewed and improved so that our bilingual audience in Wales have the best possible experience when engaging with the Agency. This would not be possible, however, without the support and willing cooperation of the Agency's staff, who all play their part in ensuring the bilingual culture and corporate identity of the FSA in Wales.

## **2. Welsh Language Unit objectives**

The key objectives of the Welsh Language Unit are as follows:

- Providing and coordinating bilingual services in accordance with the FSA's Welsh Language Scheme
- Giving advice and guidance to FSA staff on Welsh language policy and translation requirements
- Delivering an effective and high-quality translation service and managing all the FSA's Welsh language digital content, including its website and Welsh language social media accounts
- Promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language in the workplace and beyond, and supporting staff to undertake relevant Welsh training
- Monitoring and reporting on compliance with our Welsh Language Scheme

### 3. Key Projects 2022-23

It has been another busy year for the Welsh Language Unit, which is a reflection of the activity and productivity of the Agency as a whole, and the wider remit it has adopted since the UK's departure from the European Union. The Unit has collaborated on a variety of high-profile projects and workflows to ensure that bilingual information is shared with the public and our vital partners in local authorities. Projects include:

- the war in Ukraine and its impact on food supplies and labelling
- the cost of living crisis and the impact on food safety and security
- the new procedure for approving Regulated Products in the UK
- guidelines on prepacked products for direct sale (PPDS)
- responding to national outbreaks of Listeria and other foodborne diseases
- the safety of breast milk products
- the Recovery Plan for Local Authorities following COVID-19

All correspondence and publications for consumers in Wales are created bilingually and promoted through the relevant media to the public in Wales. This includes day-to-day correspondence, news stories, consumer information, guidance and advice, communication campaigns and content for the website and social media, as well as various reports, surveys and bulletins. On top of this project work, we have produced and promoted a number of bilingual corporate reports this year, including:

#### 3.1 Food Standards Report 2021

On 27 June 2022, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland published [Our Food: An annual review of food standards across the UK](#). This was the first in a series of reports which will be published annually, as part of our ongoing commitment to transparency, ensuring that parliamentarians, industry partners and consumers at home and abroad are aware of the changes to our food system and the challenges it faces. It was crucial to ensure that such a high-profile report with such a wide audience was available in Welsh, and the Welsh Language Unit contributed to this significant project from the outset. The report was launched at an event in the Senedd in July, and we shared live messages on our bilingual social media accounts.

#### 3.2 Annual Report 2021 - 2022

[The Food Standards Agency's Annual Report](#) for the year ending 31 March 2022 was published in January 2023. The report outlines the Agency's performance and its main activities during the year, and is available bilingually on our website.

#### 3.3 Food and You 2, Wave 4

[Food and You 2](#) is our flagship social research survey which gives us a detailed insight into consumer behaviours in relation to food. Our contractor, [Ipsos](#), conducts bilingual surveys twice a year to measure knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in terms of food safety and other food issues among adults in Wales,

England and Northern Ireland, as recorded by the consumers themselves. Once again this year, the Welsh Language Unit worked with Ipsos to create bilingual postal and online surveys, along with all related correspondence. The whole process is completely bilingual, and any Welsh responses received are translated into English and included in the data.

### **3.4 Gender Pay Gap Report 2022**

In 2017, the government introduced ground-breaking legislation that made it a statutory requirement for all organisations with 250 or more employees to report on the gender pay gap in their organisation each year. The FSA publishes its [Gender Pay Gap report](#) bilingually on the website each year.

## **4. Social media**

The Welsh Language Unit manages the FSA's Welsh language accounts in Wales. We share messages, news, resources and important information with our followers through our accounts:

- Facebook: Asiantaeth Safonau Bwyd – <https://www.facebook.com/AsiantaethSafonauBwyd>
- Instagram: @foodgov – <https://www.instagram.com/foodgov/>
- X (Twitter): @FSACymru – <https://twitter.com/FSACymru>
- LinkedIn: @Food Standards Agency – <https://www.linkedin.com/company/food-standards-agency/>

We share content regularly, ensuring that Welsh messages are published at the same time as those on the corresponding English accounts, and we also create images or resources of the same professional standard so that both languages are treated equally. We use our accounts to support the Food Standards Agency's campaigns and policy activity on various food-related issues, and to share critical information with the public, stakeholders and partners, including allergy alerts and product recall and withdrawal notices for consumer protection.

### **4.1 'Always On' Campaigns**

During this reporting year, we also launched a new workflow: 'Always On' reactive campaigns on social media. These campaigns are carried out at least once a month with the intention of responding quickly to hot topics, current affairs or news stories that attract a lot of media interest. We share these reactive messages with users bilingually. Among the type of events and issues covered are bank holiday celebrations, barbecues and picnics, Christmas, food banks and the cost of living crisis. These short and snappy campaigns share important guidance on the basics of food safety, 'use by' and 'best before' dates, the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and Food Alerts amongst others.

During the reporting period in question, we have carried out a number of these campaigns. The first one in August involved outdoor cooking and camping. We shared messages on the importance of washing hands, cooking burgers

thoroughly, and safe practices when food is being kept outdoors. In September, at the start of the academic term, we shared a campaign aimed at students who were going to university and cooking and preparing food for the first time. We created two bilingual resource packs – one for [universities](#) and one for [local authorities](#) – encouraging organisations to share our food safety messages, and ensuring they had easy access to the campaign in both languages. Other campaigns during the period in question include food safety over Christmas, safe food hacks and food waste. We have paid to boost posts on Facebook as part of these campaigns, helping us to reach a wider audience and ensure that our messages and advice reach more people.

## **5. Food.gov website**

The Agency's comprehensive website, [food.gov/cy](#), is our main means of sharing our vital information and guidance on food safety and standards with consumers and businesses. The website is bilingual in accordance with the provisions of our language scheme. The structure of the website is consistent with best practice in the field, and allows users to toggle easily from one language to another. Users can see clearly which information is available in which language.

The Welsh language officers in the Welsh Language Unit are also web editors, and we use a daily rota to monitor and update the content management system. Every week, the digital and communications team shares a work plan with the Welsh Language Unit, specifying what content will be added or modified on the website and when. We can then proactively translate any content that is scheduled for uploading. Through this, we can ensure that the website complies with our obligations in terms of bilingualism and that Welsh content is published at the same time as the corresponding English content. Our effective working relationship with colleagues in the digital team and channels, and the planning processes in place, mean that uploading bilingually is an integral part of the content creation process for the website. Website work is now a large part of the Unit's work.

It should be noted that some of the website's more technical and scientific content is not translated because it is not consistent with the translation priorities outlined in the Welsh Language Scheme. Overall, the English-only content comes under the 'Science and Evidence' banner, but even in that section, we have ensured that the upper layers are available in Welsh.

## **6. Contacting us**

The main way for users to contact the Agency is now through the website, and it is possible to do so in both languages, using the [contact](#) page. There is also a separate section if a member of the public wants to [inform](#) the Agency of a problem with food, with comprehensive bilingual options that make it easy for users to share information with us in their preferred language.

If a member of the public wishes to call the FSA, we have one central helpline (0330 332 7149) which has a bilingual message offering the caller a language choice.

There is no longer a direct telephone number for the FSA in Wales, but if we receive a call from a Welsh speaker on the central line, the call will be directed to a bilingual officer in the Business Support team who will answer with a bilingual greeting. If users want to discuss their inquiry in Welsh, they can do so either with the Welsh speaking Business Support Team officer, or by being directed to Welsh speakers in the relevant team. While continuing to recruit in accordance with our Welsh Skills Strategy, we have succeeded in ensuring that we have fluent Welsh speakers in 6 out of 8 of the Food Standards Agency's teams in Wales. This means that the caller can be directed to a Welsh-speaking officer who has policy expertise in almost all of the Agency's policy areas. The two teams that do not have a Welsh speaker at the moment are the Legislative Strategy team and the Incidents team. When vacant positions come up in these teams, language requirements will be considered alongside the other requirements of the positions.

## **7. Engaging externally**

During 2022-23, we had two external contracts with third parties, offering services to the public in Wales on behalf of the FSA.

### **7.1 Theatre in Education provision**

An external provider, Bollo, undertook this contract. The 'Pirates of the Chilli-bean / Miri'r Môr-ladron a'r Ffa Ffiaidd' educational show was performed in Welsh in Welsh language primary schools, and then the cast held educational workshops with the children in the classroom. The contract stipulated that all correspondence sent in connection with the show must always be bilingual. The Welsh Language Unit worked with the contractor to provide all the bilingual resources, including the show's script and any revisions, leaflets and related teaching materials. The Unit also helped to cast and approve the actors, and monitored the quality of the provision. During the reporting year, the Welsh language show was performed in 108 schools across Wales. 2022-2023 will be the last full year of this provision due to budgetary pressures facing the FSA. The provision ended at the end of June this year.

### **7.2 An educational resource that tours 'Crucial Crew' events in Wales**

'Crucial Crew' events share vital safety messages with primary school children in Wales. Usually, the children take part in workshops held by the FSA, alongside other organisations such as the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service to learn about safety in a practical and interactive way.

The same external contractor, Bollo, hosts these events on behalf of the FSA in Wales, and the staff employed to work on the events are aware of their obligations regarding the Welsh language. For the Welsh-medium events, the contractor ensures that the facilitator is a fluent Welsh speaker and that the sessions are conducted through the medium of Welsh throughout. All the paper and electronic resources used on the stand are fully bilingual. The Welsh Language Unit was involved in the casting of the performers who represent the Agency in these

events. Those chosen had language skills and awareness consistent with the requirements of the Welsh language policy, so that these sessions could be conducted entirely in Welsh. During this period, 52 days' worth of Welsh language Crucial Crew sessions were provided.

## **8. Internal procedures**

The FSA continues to implement a number of corporate measures to improve our culture, our bilingual corporate identity and our Welsh language provision internally.

### **8.1 Bilingual hubs on the intranet**

One of the biggest developments in terms of our internal procedures during the reporting year was the establishment of Hubs on our intranet, which are small 'websites' for individual FSA teams. Staff can refer to the hubs for information and news about the team, its staff members, how to get in touch, the team's remit and any useful resources. As part of this, a Hub was established for the FSA in Wales. It was decided from the outset that the Hub would be completely bilingual, in order to respect the bilingual corporate identity of the team, normalise elements of bilingual working internally and offer staff a language choice.

As one of the Agency's key corporate teams that provide services to staff across the Agency, it was also decided that the Welsh Language Unit should have its own Hub. We have taken this opportunity to bring all the Welsh Language Unit's resources together in one place and promote them to staff. The bilingual Hub explains how to contact the Unit to make a translation request and outlines our service standards. It includes the Welsh Language Scheme, the associated Action Plan, the Bilingual Skills Strategy, a Cysgliad (Welsh spell-checker and dictionary) pack, useful bilingual phrases, including e-mail signatures and out of office messages, along with other useful terminology. We have also included a short video, introducing the team, our work and the reasons for providing bilingual services in Wales. Furthermore, there is a section outlining the Welsh learning provision offered by the Agency, and a section that explains the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner; the regulator that monitors our compliance with our Welsh Language Scheme.

### **8.2 Induction sessions for new staff**

All new members of staff who join the FSA have an induction day on their first day in the job. The induction session includes an introduction to the work of the Welsh Language Unit and the Welsh Language Scheme, and ensures that all new members of staff throughout the body are aware of the requirement to work bilingually in Wales. Now, they are also directed to the new Welsh Language Unit Hub, so that they can access all the information and resources available to them in one place.

When new members of staff join the FSA, the Welsh Language Unit sends a welcome message, explaining who we are and what we do. We attach the Unit's

video and briefly outline our work. For new FSA in Wales staff, we also organise a Teams meeting so that we can meet and talk to each new individual. On top of the information provided in the general induction day, they receive a more detailed presentation on the functions and services of the Welsh Language Unit and how to request them. We talk about their roles and explain what steps they will need to take to fulfil their personal duties as part of the Welsh Language Scheme. We encourage them to take advantage of opportunities to learn the language, for example through the 'Cymraeg Gwaith' provision, and we offer our support in this regard. However, we also emphasise that a positive attitude is just as important as the ability to speak the language.

### **8.3 Messages from the Director**

Following an organisational restructuring process during the year, the FSA in Wales became part of the UKIA directorate, under the leadership of a new Director, Anjali Juneja.

Every fortnight, Anjali sends a message to all Directorate staff giving a general update. Ever since FSA in Wales became part of UKIA, Anjali asked that the messages be translated by the Unit so that they could be shared bilingually. The agendas of the Directorate's staff meetings, both online and face to face, are also shared bilingually. This reflects an awareness of the FSA in Wales' bilingual corporate identity, and the respect towards it in all parts of the Agency and at all levels. Anjali, along with the Chair of the Board, Suan Jebb and the CEO, Emily Miles, also uses bilingual auto-signatures for any correspondence in Wales.

### **8.4 Iechyd Da – staff support group for Health and Wellbeing**

The FSA in Wales has a Health and Wellbeing working group which organises and facilitates campaigns, events and initiatives to improve and promote staff wellbeing. The group promotes all events and produces all resources bilingually. These include a quarterly health and wellbeing newsletter, published in Welsh and English, as well as other guidance for staff, for example guidance on volunteering and physical activity.

The FSA's mental health champion in Wales is bilingual, and can offer valuable support in Welsh and English. This is essential with support services such as mental health, as failing to offer a language choice could be detrimental to people who are in a vulnerable state when seeking help.

### **8.5 Welsh Language Commissioner Case Study: Bilingual Campaigns**

During the year, the FSA worked with the Commissioner's office as part of a series of case studies to share effective practices. The case study focussed on the FSA's bilingual campaigns, and described how the Welsh Language Unit works with the Wales Communications team and the central Communications team in London to plan, create and promote information campaigns. Focusing on the theme 'One campaign, two languages', the case study contained advice on membership of project boards, bilingual drafting, creative input and advice on elements such as images and campaign titles, casting actors and contributing to the promotion plan. The case study can be seen on the Welsh Language Commissioner's website.

Following the effective practices conference, a short [video](#) summarising the advice was produced.

## 9. Number and Percentage of Bilingual Staff

The number of posts in the FSA in Wales has increased over the past few years to reflect the Agency's wider responsibilities following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union, particularly in the area of regulated products. [The FSA's 'other ways of working'](#) means that we offer flexible arrangements (including the option to work entirely from home) and digital tools that facilitate remote working. A significant number of FSA staff now work exclusively from home. As such, when we recruit for jobs in Wales, we now do so from a wider geographical area than ever before. Indeed, a number of staff in the FSA in Wales are now based across the entire United Kingdom.

Despite the increase in numbers and the geographical distribution of staff, 24% of FSA in Wales staff are fluent Welsh speakers. 67.5% of the staff have some Welsh language ability (Basic, Basic/Intermediate and Intermediate) and only 7.5% indicate that they do not have any Welsh at all. See the table below for a detailed breakdown. Our [Bilingual Skills Strategy](#) (described in more detail in 9.1 below) ensures that Welsh-speaking officers are appointed to positions for which it is stated that the Welsh language is essential, that Welsh language capacity is planned for each team, and that our recruitment practices in Wales help us achieve the objectives of the Strategy.

The FSA in Wales places emphasis on staff's attitude to the Welsh language, as well as their ability. The Unit's ongoing awareness-raising activity ensures that awareness is high amongst staff and that bilingual working is an integral part of the Agency's culture and corporate identity in Wales.

There were 66 posts in the FSA in Wales during 2022-23 and 6 vacancies, with some being filled/vacated during the period in question. Staff were asked to self-assess their level of Welsh ability through an e-mail questionnaire. The following table indicates the staff's Welsh ability according to their own self-assessment:

Fluent	16	24%
Intermediate	1	1.5%
Basic/Intermediate	6	9%
Basic	38	57%
None	5	7.5%

The definitions of the levels are based on the [learning levels](#) as defined by the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

### 9.1 Bilingual Skills Strategy

[A Bilingual Skills Strategy](#) is in place at the FSA, which outlines how we will maintain an adequate bilingual workforce in order to provide an effective Welsh language service in Wales. The FSA is committed to providing an effective Welsh

language service in Wales, in accordance with the commitments in our Welsh Language Scheme.

In order to provide a meaningful and equitable service in Wales, which does not treat the Welsh language less favourably than English, a skilled workforce that can operate bilingually is required. If we are to maintain this skilled bilingual workforce, we must attract and retain Welsh speaking staff across all FSA in Wales teams and professions. In addition to this, staff need to be given the opportunity to undertake training to develop or improve their Welsh skills.

Our Bilingual Skills Strategy will help us manage and plan staff's language skills. It covers the following key areas:

- improving the bilingual services we provide
- determining the level of Welsh language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) required for teams and positions throughout the FSA in Wales
- recruiting individuals with the appropriate level of Welsh language skills for each post that is advertised
- promoting and celebrating a bilingual workplace, internally and externally, with the intention of attracting and retaining bilingual staff
- increasing opportunities for staff to develop their Welsh language skills and build their confidence

Our aim is to ensure that, over time, our Welsh language services meet the requirements set out in the Welsh Language Measure 2011, because they could be directly relevant to the FSA in the future. Our Welsh language services should also contribute to the Welsh Government's ambitious target of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050, and honour the FSA's commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, namely 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language'.

## 9.2 Recruitment

In accordance with the provisions of our [Bilingual Skills Strategy](#), all vacancies in Wales are advertised as either 'Welsh – desirable' or 'Welsh – essential', as appropriate, to ensure that there is the ability to speak Welsh in all teams. This requirement is decided on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with the Director of Wales, the Senior Management Team and the Welsh Language Unit. When making such decisions, consideration is also given to areas where there is a specific need for Welsh speakers (such as the Communications department or within the Business Support Team). When these criteria are included in job advertisements, it is explained why this has been done, to ensure that these do not become a 'tick box' exercise. The key Welsh language appointments during the reporting year include a new Translator and Welsh Language Officer in the Welsh Language Unit, who joined the team in March 2023.

During 2022-23, one post was advertised as a 'Welsh – essential' position, namely the Translator and Welsh Language Officer. The FSA used the 'Lleol' recruitment

platform to promote this post, as well as Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru's website and newsletter. The post was also shared on our Welsh social media accounts. All the other jobs advertised in Wales included 'Welsh – desirable' in the job specification, including justification as to why having a Welsh speaker would be beneficial in that role.

15 positions were advertised bilingually this year.

### **9.3 Staffing of public events**

When public events are held, such as the launch of the Standards Report for Members of the Senedd in Wales, the Welsh Language Unit consults on language requirement for each individual event, and the staffing arrangements at each event reflect that requirement. Other events where bilingual staff were present to speak to the public include the National Eisteddfod in Tregaron and the Royal Welsh Show. The FSA continues to provide simultaneous translation services as required in face-to-face public meetings. Members of staff who speak Welsh have a 'Working Language' badge and lanyard.

## **10. Language Training**

All staff members in the Wales office have received language awareness training which helps them to understand more about the Welsh language, its history and official status in Wales. They also learn about what they are required to do as part of their role in order to ensure compliance with the Agency's statutory Welsh Language Scheme. The Welsh Language Unit has a Hub on the intranet which reinforces these learnings. The Unit also has a group on Viva Engage (previously known as 'Yammer'), an internal social networking platform, and we share news and relevant material about the Welsh language in this group.

Staff who wish to learn Welsh, or increase their confidence/use of the language, are directed by the Welsh Language Unit to the relevant resources (for example the 'Cymraeg Gwaith' provision and 'Say Something in Welsh'). The FSA has registered for the 'Cymraeg Gwaith' online module (through the National Centre for Learning Welsh) and is encouraging staff in the office in Wales, and beyond, to undertake the module to learn basic Welsh for use in the workplace.

The Welsh Language Unit is on hand to provide mentoring support, whether face-to-face or through another medium (instant messages, social media) in order to help staff develop in this area.

### **10.1 Refreshing language**

In November 2022, the Welsh Language Unit commissioned 'IAITH: y ganolfan cynllunio iaith' to hold a language refresher course for Welsh-speaking staff members. The only aim of the course was to build staff confidence in their Welsh language skills and encourage them to correspond or draft in Welsh as part of their work. Six members of staff attended the session, and a beneficial, interesting and fun afternoon was spent under the guidance of Gareth Ioan, learning, discussing and doing writing exercises. There was positive feedback from both the trainer and the trainees, with the staff noting at the end of the session that their

written Welsh skills were far better than they anticipated. Following the success of this session, we continue to look for opportunities to hold similar language sessions, with the aim of showing that the Welsh language belongs to everyone at the FSA in Wales, that staff are welcome to use Welsh internally and that the Agency supports them to improve their Welsh skills.

## **11. Information Technology**

All FSA staff members who wish to work bilingually have 'Cysgliad' software on their devices. All FSA staff in Wales have a bilingual email signature and out of office message on their email accounts, translated by the Welsh Language Unit. Welsh-speaking staff are encouraged to draft text and correspondence in Welsh, and the Welsh Language Unit is always on hand to check this work as required.

The Welsh Language Unit continues to use Phrase translation memory software to ensure consistency and accuracy of translations. We also continue to develop an internal terminology database that relates specifically to our areas of work. It is standardized in collaboration with Canolfan Bedwyr and also published on [Porth Termau](#).

The Welsh Language Unit manages all the FSA's Welsh social media accounts and content as stated in section 4.

The Welsh Language Unit staff have all been trained as web editors, and we upload all Welsh content to the food.gov website daily. The Welsh Language Unit can also modify the structure of the website as needed to support the Welsh content, which is increasing all the time. This is described in more detail in section 5.

Information about the Welsh Language Unit and the FSA's Welsh language policy is readily available internally on the Welsh Language Unit Hub, and externally on our [public website](#).

## **12. The Association of Welsh Translators: Approved Organisation**

The FSA was one of the first bodies to be identified as an approved organisation by Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru (The Association of Welsh Translators). This ongoing recognition is testament to our commitment to providing bilingual services of the highest quality to the public in Wales and the quality and competence of our translators. The Association holds training courses, virtual lunch and learn sessions and translation workshops, and the Unit's staff members have taken advantage of a number of these opportunities this year.

## **13. Complaints**

There were no complaints about the FSA's Welsh language provision during 2022-23.