

Annual Monitoring Report the Food Standards Agency to the Welsh Language Commissioner

2023 - 2024

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this monitoring report is to provide a summary of the Food Standards Agency's bilingual activities and services, which support of its compliance with its Welsh Language Scheme. The report covers the period between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.

The report highlights our efforts at the FSA 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 Agency's Welsh Language Unit is responsible for coordinating this provision, and the Unit works hard to ensure that the provision is continually reviewed and improved so that our audience is bilingual in Wales have the best possible experience when engaging with the Agency. But this work would not be possible without the support and willing cooperation of the Agency's entire staff, who all have a part to play in the FSA's bilingual culture and corporate identity in Wales.

2. The objectives of the Welsh Language Unit

The main objectives of the Welsh Language Unit (WLU) are as follows:

- Providing and coordinating bilingual services in accordance with the FSA's Welsh Language Scheme
- Providing advice and guidance to FSA staff on the 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 the website and Welsh-medium 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/lessons
- Monitoring and reporting on compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme

3. Main projects 2023-24

It has been another busy year for the Language Unit, reflecting the activity and productivity of the Agency as a whole, and the wider remit it has adopted since the UK left the European Union. The Unit collaborated on a variety of high-profile projects and workflows to ensure that bilingual information was being shared with the public and our partners in local authorities. Here are some of the main projects this year:

- A communication campaign to celebrate 10 years since the mandation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Wales
- The creation and launch of a bilingual website for the submission of Regulated Products applications, on behalf of the Welsh Ministers
- Extended food safety incident, involving chicken from Poland
- The 'Food and You 2' Survey, an official statistic that measures key food safety metrics
- Conducting a series of inspections of local authorities bilingually, including translating the reports and associated correspondence

All correspondence and publications for users in Wales are created bilingually and promoted through the relevant media to the public in Wales. We also provide a comprehensive range of bilingual online content on our website, [food.gov](https://www.food.gov). We translate day-to-day correspondence, news stories, user information, guidance and advice, communication campaigns and content for social media, as well as various reports, surveys and bulletins.

In addition to this project work, we have produced and promoted a number of bilingual corporate reports this year, including:

3.1 The Annual Food Standards Report

On 8 November 2023, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland published [Our Food: an annual review of food standards across the UK](#). This was the second of a series of reports that will be published annually, as part of our ongoing commitment to transparency, and to ensure that parliamentarians, trading partners and consumers, both domestic and abroad, are aware of the changes to our food system and the challenges it faces. It was vital to ensure that such a high-profile report with such a wide audience was available in Welsh, and the Language Unit was part of this significant project from the outset. The report was launched at an event in the Senedd in November, which was broadcast live on bilingual social media.

3.2 Annual Report 2022 - 2023

[The Food Standards Agency's Annual Report](#) for the year ending 31 March 2023, was published in January 2024. 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 6 Report

[Food and You 2](#) is our flagship survey that measures reported consumer knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues. We use an external contractor, [Ipsos](#), to carry out bilingual surveys twice a year amongst adults in Wales, England and Northern Ireland, as reported by the users themselves. The Agency prepares a bilingual report on the findings of the individual waves, and this year, we published the [Wave 6](#) report. In addition to translating the report, the WLU once again this year worked with Ipsos to create bilingual postal and online surveys, along with all related correspondence.

The whole process is completely bilingual, and the responses received are translated into English and included in the data. The survey is sent to more than 4,000 households throughout the UK, and every household in Wales receives all the related documentation bilingually, which is a great opportunity to share the Agency's bilingual corporate identity.

3.4 Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

In 2017, the government introduced new legislation that made it a statutory requirement for all organizations with 250 or more employees to report annually on the gender pay gap within their organisation. The FSA publishes its [Gender Pay Gap report](#) bilingually on the GOV.UK website.

4. Social media

The WLU manages the FSA's Welsh 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/>
- **LinkedIn** : @Food Standards Agency – <https://www.linkedin.com/company/food-standards-agency/>
- **X**: @FSACymru – <https://x.com/FSACymru>

The central Communications team share their communications plan with the Unit every two weeks, and we then set about designing content in Wales that complements the corporate activity, tailored to our Welsh speaking audience.

We share content regularly, ensuring that the Welsh messages are published at the same time as those on the corresponding English accounts, and create resources of the same professional standard in order to maintain an equal standard in both languages.

We use our accounts to support the FSA's campaigns and policy activity on various food related issues, and to share important information with the public, stakeholders and partners, including allergy alerts and product recall and withdrawal notices in order to protect consumers. We also take opportunities to create and share content specific to Wales, to ensure that our accounts reflect the specific Welsh voice of FSA Wales.

During this reporting period, we started sharing bilingual messages on LinkedIn for the first time. This is the FSA's largest platform with almost 130,000 followers. It offers a great opportunity to share important messages with a larger and professional audience, and also to draw attention to the Agency's Welsh language identity.

It has been a busy time on our social media, and we have carried out a number of campaigns. They include:

- **CSHB 10** – In order to mark 10 years since it became mandatory to display Food Hygiene Ratings in Wales, the FSA, in partnership with the Welsh Government and local authorities, launched a campaign on 28 November to [celebrate the success of the scheme](#). We used social media to share [local business](#) and [local authority](#) case studies with our audience, and to remind users of the [importance of the Scheme](#). A [resource pack](#) was also created for local authorities to help them share messages about the success of the Scheme.
- **Vegan Labelling Campaign** – The aim of this campaign was to help consumers make safe food choices and to help those with food sensitivities understand why they should not assume that a ‘vegan’ label means that the product does not contain certain allergens and that it is safe to eat. A [dedicated video](#) was developed to be shared on social media.
- **Food Business Registration** – [These messages](#) targeted new businesses to help them prepare for inspections and operate safely. We also developed a ‘Here to Help’ [resource pack](#) for local authorities so they can help spread the message.
- **Counterfeit branded chocolate bars** – This involved sharing [proactive messages](#) on social media to coincide with the new release of the ‘Wonka’, warning consumers not to eat fake Wonka bars for safety reasons.
- **Working with influencers** – During this period, the Agency started making more use of influencers to share the Agency’s important messages. First, the Agency worked with [@shwns](#) on a [picnic food safety campaign](#). Secondly, we took advantage of [@adamynyrdd’s](#) unique audience as he discussed [the importance of food safety when foraging](#). These two campaigns gave the Agency the opportunity to target Welsh users and reach a wider audience.
- **Chicken from Poland** – Following an increase in Salmonella cases linked to poultry products imported from Poland, [proactive content](#) was shared on social media to remind consumers to take care when handling, preparing and cooking poultry.
- **Regular messages** – In addition to the specific campaigns above, we have been busy sharing a variety of regular messages over the period in question. Like every year, [a resource pack](#) for students was shared in order to improve their awareness of good food safety and hygiene practices. We carried out our usual Christmas communication campaign to raise awareness of food safety and good hygiene practices during the holidays. The campaign covered festive topics, including [defrosting and cooking your turkey](#), [checking the food hygiene rating](#) before organizing a Christmas party, the importance [of remembering those with allergies](#), and being [aware of Listeria](#) over the festive period. The FSA and Food Standards Scotland published new advice on Listeria in July 2023 about the consumption of ready-to-eat cold smoked fish. To help communicate this new advice, relevant content was shared on our social media, and the FSA created [a resource pack](#) for local authorities to help them share the message with audiences as well as support local authority officers, particularly in

inspecting catering facilities in places such as care homes, hospitals and hospices.

Social media continues to be a useful tool to reach a Welsh and Welsh-speaking audiences, ensuring that they have access to useful, relevant information in their chosen language.

5. Food.gov website

The Agency's comprehensive website, [food.gov](https://www.food.gov), is our main means of sharing information and guidance on food safety and standards, and we are very proud that the website is almost entirely bilingual. The structure of the website is consistent with best practice in the field and users can easily toggle from one language to another. Users can clearly see which information is available in which language.

The WLU staff 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 share a work plan with the Unit to show what content is being added or modified on the website, and when. We then proactively translate any content and upload it. By doing this, we 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 and channels team, 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, and we work hard to ensure that the user journey is as good in both languages.

It should be noted that some of the more technical and scientific content of the website is not translated, because it is excluded according to our 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 uppermost layers are available in Welsh.

6. Contact us

Consumers mainly contact the Agency through the website, and they can 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 a central helpline (0330 332 7149) which has a bilingual message offering the caller a choice of language. There is no longer a direct telephone number for FSA Wales, but if the central line receives a call from a Welsh speaker, 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 officer in question, or by being directed to a Welsh speaker in the relevant team. By continuing to recruit in accordance with [our Welsh Skills Strategy](#), we have succeeded in ensuring that we have fluent Welsh speakers in most of the FSA Wales teams. We also have Welsh speakers among the senior management team. This means that the caller can be directed to an officer or senior member of Welsh-speaking staff who has policy expertise in almost all of the Agency's policy areas. The two teams that do not have a Welsh-speaker are the Legislative Strategy team and the Incidents team. When positions become vacant in these teams, language requirements will be considered as part of the recruitment process, alongside the other requirements of the positions.

7. Awareness

In addition to the usual orientation sessions for the staff, we held a number of internal and external awareness sessions during the reporting year.

UK Directorate of International Affairs (UKIA) Away Day

The Language Unit presented a comprehensive and interactive session on our work, the legislative requirements, and the Welsh language at UKIA's Away Day in London in January 2024. We received extremely positive feedback from colleagues and Directors, and it has led to invitations to take part in the other Directorates' Away Days.

Train the Trainer

In early 2024, the WLU commissioned a 'Train the Trainer' course from Cwmni Iaith Cyf, with the aim of improving our presentation skills and our methods of planning awareness sessions for the Agency's staff. We attended a two-day training course on 7 and 8 February 2024, to help us to draw up useful and creative resources that we can use in our awareness sessions.

Association of Welsh Translators

We were invited by the Welsh Translators' Association to present a session to members on the work and structure of the Language Unit, as part of an attempt across the Association to share good practice among members and recognized organisations.

Devolution Learning Week

To mark Devolution Learning Week, the Agency arranged an on-line session for all staff by the WLU to discuss the complexities of working bilingually in a devolved context, across the three nations.

8. Internal Procedures

FSA Wales 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

We have hubs on our intranet, which are small 'sites' for individual FSA teams. Staff can turn to the hubs to get information and news about the team, to find out who works in it, how to get in touch, the team's remit and any useful resources. FSA Wales team has its own bilingual hub, respecting the team's identity, normalising bilingual working internally and giving the staff a language choice. As one of the Agency's key corporate teams that provide services to staff across the Agency, the WLU also has its own hub. We have taken advantage of this opportunity to bring all the WLU's resources together in one place and promote them to the 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 pack, useful bilingual phrases including e-mail signatures and out of the office messages, and other useful terminology. We have also included a short video introducing the team, our work and the reasons for providing bilingual services in Wales. There is also a section that outlines the Welsh learning provision offered by the Agency, and a section that explains the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner in regulating the Agency's compliance with our statutory 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 orientation session includes an introduction to the work of the WLU and the Welsh Language Scheme, ensuring 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 WLU hub, so that they can see all the information and resources available to them in one place.

When new members of staff join FSA Wales, the WLU sends a message to welcome them which explains who we are and what we do. We attach the Unit's video and briefly outline our work, and invite them to a Teams meeting for an informal conversation. Building on the information they received in the general induction day, they receive a more detailed presentation on the functions and services of the Language Unit and when and how to make a request for them. We talk about their roles and explain the steps they need to take in order to fulfil their personal duties under the Scheme. We encourage them to take advantage of opportunities to learn Welsh, for example through Cymraeg Gwaith, and offer our support. We also emphasize that a positive attitude is just as important as the ability to speak Welsh.

8.3 Director's messages

FSA Wales became part of the UKIA directorate last year, under the leadership of Director, Anjali Juneja. Anjali sends a message to all Directorate staff every two weeks. From the time FSA Wales became part of UKIA, Anjali asked the Unit to translate her messages so that they could be shared bilingually. The agendas of the Directorate's staff online and face to face meetings are also shared bilingually.

This reflects the awareness of the bilingual corporate identity of FSA Wales, and the respect towards it in all parts of the Agency and at all levels.

8.4 Iechyd Da – staff group for health and wellbeing

The work of the health and wellbeing working group continued during the reporting period. It promotes 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 newsletter includes a 'Cornel Gymraeg', which draws attention to Welsh and Welsh history, traditions or cultural issues, and includes useful vocabulary and expressions for staff.

One of the FSA's mental health champions in Wales is bilingual and can offer valuable support in Welsh and English. This is essential with support services such as mental health, because not offering a choice of language could be detrimental to people who are in a vulnerable state when seeking help.

9. Number and Percentage of Bilingual Staff

The number of posts in FSA Wales has increased over recent years to reflect the Agency's wider responsibilities following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union, particularly in the field of regulated products. We now employ 62 members of staff. [The FSA's working culture](#) means that we offer flexible ways of working (including the option to work entirely from home) and digital tools that facilitate remote working. A significant number of FSA staff now work from home, and as such we are recruiting from a wider geographical area than ever for jobs in Wales. A number of FSA Wales staff now work in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Despite the increase in numbers and the geographical distribution, over 27% of FSA staff in Wales are fluent Welsh speakers, including members of the Senior Management Team. 35% of the staff have some Welsh ability (Basic-Intermediate - Fluent) and only 9 members of staff state that they do not speak 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. It also ensures that we plan Welsh language capability for each team and that our recruitment practices in Wales help us achieve the objectives of the Strategy.

FSA 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 very high among staff and bilingual working is an integral part of the Agency's culture and corporate identity in Wales.

There were 62 posts in FSA Wales during 2023-24, and 6 vacancies, with some being filled/vacated during the reporting period. Staff were asked to self-assess their

level of Welsh ability through an email questionnaire. The following table indicates the employees' own assessment of their Welsh ability:

Fluent	17	27.4%
Medium	1	1.6%
Basic – Medium	4	6.5%
Basic	31	50%
None	9	14.5%

The definitions of the levels are based on the levels [of Learning Welsh](#).

9.1 Bilingual Skills Strategy

The FSA has implemented a [Bilingual Skills Strategy](#), which outlines how we 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.

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

Our Bilingual Skills Strategy helps us to manage and promote the 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 FSA Wales
- Recruiting individuals with the appropriate level of Welsh language skills for each job being advertised
- Promoting and celebrating a bilingual workplace, internally and externally, with the intention of attracting and retaining bilingual staff
- Increasing the opportunities for staff to develop their Welsh skills and build their confidence.

Our longer-term aim is to ensure that our Welsh language service meets the requirements set out in the Welsh Language Measure 2011, as they are likely to become directly relevant to the FSA in the future. It 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 a 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 teams have Welsh language capability. This requirement is decided on a case-by-case basis by agreement with the Director of Wales and the WLU, and in accordance with 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, an explanation is included as to why this has been done (for example, to provide a bilingual service on the FSA's main telephone line in Wales), to ensure that these do not become a general 'tick in the box' exercise.

During 2023-24, no posts were advertised as a 'Welsh - essential' post. Every job 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.

9.3 Staffing of public events

When we hold public events, such as the event to launch the Standards Report for Members of Parliament in Wales, the Language Unit assesses the language needs for each individual event, and the staffing arrangements at each event will reflect that need. All members of staff who speak Welsh have a 'Working Language' badge and lanyard.

10. Welsh language training

All staff members of the Wales office have received language awareness training which helps them understand more about the Welsh language, its history and status in Wales, as well as learning about what they are required to do in order to ensure compliance with the Agency's statutory Welsh Language Scheme. The WLU has a 'hub' on the intranet which reinforces these messages. The WLU also has a group on Microsoft Engage, which is an internal social networking platform, and we share news and relevant material about the Welsh language on this group.

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

Furthermore, the WLU is always available 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.

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 signature and out of the office

messages on their email accounts, translated by the WLU. Welsh-speaking staff are encouraged to draft text and correspondence in Welsh, and the WLU is always on hand to check this work as required.

The WLU continues to use translation memory software Phrase (formerly Memsource) to ensure the consistency and accuracy of our translations. We also continue to develop an internal terminology database that relates specifically to our areas of work, and it is standardized in collaboration with Canolfan Bedwyr and also published on the [Port Termau](#).

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

The WLU officers are all trained web editors, and we upload all the Agency's Welsh language content to the food.gov website as needed. The WLU also build and 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 WLU and the FSA's Welsh language policy is readily available internally on the Unit's hub, and externally on our [public website](#).

12. Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru (Association of Welsh Translators) approved organization

The FSA was one of the first bodies to be identified as an approved organization by Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru. 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 regularly holds training courses, virtual lunch and learn sessions and translation workshops, and the Unit's staff members took advantage of a number of these opportunities this year. We were also very proud that one of the Unit's staff members gained membership of the Association this year by passing its challenging entrance exam.

13. Complaints

There were no complaints about the FSA's Welsh language provision during 2023-24.