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# WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS STRATEGY 2021

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Cardiff Council

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Caerdydd

**Ddwyieithog**



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# Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. What is the Welsh Language Skills Strategy?	4
3. Implementing the Strategy	5
4. Recruitment	9
5. Welsh Language Training	11
6. Welsh Language Awareness Training	12
Appendix 1 - Welsh Language Skills Strategy Action Plan	14
Appendix 2 - ALTE Welsh Language Framework	16



# 1. Introduction

**Cardiff Council’s vision is to become a bilingual organisation that values and supports the use of Welsh among its staff; projecting a bilingual ethos where both languages are used, and staff feel supported to use their Welsh language skills.**

As a city, we are on a journey to becoming a truly bilingual capital city. As an organisation, we want to lead by example and encourage the use of Welsh internally, and to increase opportunities to see, hear and use the language when conducting our business.

Cardiff Council believes that all its staff should be provided with the opportunity to participate in training to develop or improve Welsh language skills.

Proficiency in multiple languages is an important business skill and supports the provision of high-quality services to the people of Cardiff.

Research has shown that bilingualism and multilingualism are beneficial in terms of mental health and may delay the onset of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.<sup>1</sup>

Welsh language training will also provide Cardiff Council staff with the opportunity to learn the language so they may support and directly engage with their children’s Welsh language education.

Welsh language provision may therefore be viewed as beneficial for the provision of services to the people of Cardiff, staff well-being, and engagement with Welsh language and bilingual education.

The Council is committed to promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh within its internal administration, as described in its **Bilingual Cardiff – A Bilingual Council strategy**.

The aims of this strategy are as follows:

- develop the formal and social use of Welsh amongst our workforce through regular learning and social opportunities, and greater participation in a variety of formal and informal language networks and events;
- increase the opportunities for staff to develop their Welsh language skills, increase their confidence, and to improve the bilingual services we provide; and
- externally promote and project a bilingual workplace ethos with the view of attracting more bilingual staff.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/2018-05-15/bilingual-brains-are-more-resilient-dementia-cause-alzheimers-disease>

## 2. What is the Welsh Language Skills Strategy?

The **Welsh Language Skills Strategy** supports the Council's commitment to the Welsh language and the implementation of the **Welsh Language Standards**.

It presents actions to maintain a Council-wide overview of staff Welsh language skills and inform training and recruitment assessments and requirements to ensure that the people of Cardiff have access to high quality Welsh language services.

Written and spoken Welsh language proficiency is rated in accordance with the ALTE Framework included as **Appendix 2** and ranges from Level 1 to Level 5.

This is also the framework used by Cardiff Council to assess levels of language proficiency on the Digigov HR platform.

Supporting actions presented by the **Welsh Language Skills Strategy** are as follows:

- all recruited customer facing posts to include proficiency (Level 3 or above) in Welsh as a desirable requirement;
  - all recruited customer facing posts will also include proficiency (Level 3 or above) in a Community Language as a desirable requirement;
  - the provision of the opportunity for all Cardiff Council staff to engage with Welsh language training and reach a level of proficiency equivalent to Level 1;
  - manager-led assessments to confirm Service Area and Departmental Welsh language staffing requirements and identify posts designated as Welsh Essential;
  - staff to provide up to date information about their Welsh language skills on the Digigov platform to provide a snapshot of current Welsh language capacity and allow the Council to meet its statutory reporting requirements;
  - a regular exercise to be conducted on the Digigov platform to compare the information collected by the manager assessments and collection of staff information detailed above - this will allow Cardiff Council to identify skills gaps and identify and/or confirm posts as Welsh Essential; and
  - the information collected on the Digigov platform to assist managers in identifying possible skills gaps resulting from a member of staff leaving a particular Department or post.
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## 3. Implementing the Strategy

**The Strategy offers a simple and objective method to assess and identify possible skills gaps and inform recruitment and training requirements.**

It is not intended as a static document and includes commitments to conduct regular assessments to discern the Council's continued capacity to deliver Welsh language services, and the number and proficiency of its Welsh speaking staff.

It is anticipated that the number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff will increase, and continue to increase, during the life of this Strategy and therefore the data underpinning decisions must be updated and actioned regularly.

Guidance on conducting assessments is provided later in this document. However in order to support and promote the visibility of the Welsh language within the Council, the following two actions will be implemented with immediate effect.

### Welsh Language Desirable Posts

The first step in supporting the implementation of the **Welsh Language Skills Strategy** is recognition that linguistic fluency is a business skill.

Employees with the capacity to work in more than one language offer value to the Council and this should be reflected within the recruitment process.

The first presented action is to include proficiency in Welsh as a desirable requirement in job specifications and descriptions for all identified customer facing posts.

A customer facing post is defined as any post that features, or is likely to feature, direct engagement with the public for the purpose of providing services.

They include reception services, Hub services, the Connect to Cardiff service, support staff for public meetings, social workers, and any other post where it is necessary to deal with the public directly.

Proficiency will be set at Level 3 and above on the ALTE Framework scale. Customer facing posts will be identified as part of the manager-led assessment of capacity described below.

Once identified all recruitment information for these posts will be updated to include proficiency in Welsh as a desirable skill.

This action will not make it a requirement that Level 3 proficient Welsh speakers are appointed to all customer facing posts - it will only confer an advantage in instances where a recruitment decision needs to be made as there are two (or more) candidates of equal quality.

## Welsh Language Training

Cardiff Council's ambition to become a truly bilingual organisation will be supported by the offer of free Welsh language training to all staff. Staff members are to be given the opportunity to participate in training so they may reach a level of proficiency equivalent to Level 1.

Following completion of this training members of staff may decide whether they wish to continue on their journey to becoming fully bilingual by engaging with the more advanced Welsh language training courses provided, or supported, by Cardiff Council.

Level 1 proficiency will allow all staff to:

- understand and use familiar everyday expressions if the speaker is talking slowly and clearly and is prepared to help
- introduce themselves and others and ask and answer questions about basic personal details, e.g. where someone lives, works, what they like doing, things they have and what they did;
- understand very short texts where people are giving basic information about themselves or others, e.g. on forms; and
- pass on a simple message or make a simple request, e.g. by e-mail.

Training will be provided to support all staff members to develop this level of proficiency.

It is anticipated that all current Cardiff Council staff members will be working towards Level 1 training by the end of the 2021/22 Financial Year.

Newly recruited staff will be expected to engage with the training within the first 12 months of their employment. All staff will also be encouraged to partake in more advanced Welsh language training sessions to further improve Welsh language skills.

A menu of options to facilitate Welsh language training will be developed in partnership with The Academy (Cardiff Council's in-house training platform) and the Council's Welsh language tutor.

Training providers will include The Academy and external providers such as the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

The training offer to staff will be compiled from the menu of options below and tailored to staff and Team requirements. Proposed training formats include:

- tutor-led on-line courses;
- trainee-led e-learning courses;
- hybrid courses - a combination of tutor-led and trainee-led on-line and e-learning courses;
- tutor-led face to face courses ; and
- residential courses.

A menu of training options will be developed and published by the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

Staff will be given the opportunity to discuss their preferred training programme with their managers and will be supported to undertake the training within a specific timeframe.

## Assessment and Planning

Cardiff Council has a central role in providing leadership and an example to follow when planning and delivering bilingual services.

In order to fulfil these commitments it is vital that the Council maintains an up-to-date overview of staff capacity and the level and proficiency of Welsh language skills.

This information provides the foundation for assessments of the Council's capacity to deliver high quality Welsh language services and meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

## Manager-led Assessment of Welsh language capacity

A manager-led assessment will be conducted annually to identify the Council's current Welsh language requirements. Reporting will include:

- confirmation of the number of customer-facing posts within the manager's team;

- confirmation of the number of Welsh Essential posts within the manager's team;
- the number of Welsh Essential posts currently filled by a qualified Welsh speakers (proficiency of Level 3 or above);
- an assessment of the total number of Welsh Essential posts required to safeguard the provision of high quality Welsh language services by the team;
- proposed actions to meet any identified skills gaps through training and recruitment; and
- all data collected as part of this Council-wide assessment to be recorded on the Digigov platform.

## Council Staff Assessment of Welsh Language Skills

Each year Council staff provide information about their level of Welsh language skill on the Digigov platform.

This data confirms individuals' ability in both written and spoken Welsh and allows the Council to meet its statutory duty to report on staff Welsh language proficiency in the **Annual Report on the Welsh Language Standards**.

In order to create a Council-wide snapshot of staff Welsh language capacity this exercise will continue and all staff with access to the Digigov platform will be encouraged to record their proficiency in the Welsh language.

## Comparative Analysis

The information collected as a result of manager-led assessments and staff reporting provides the foundation for a comparative analysis of Cardiff Council's capacity and the number of Welsh speaking staff required to support the delivery of high quality Welsh language services.

This analysis will be conducted on the Digigov platform to provide an accessible Council-wide overview of current requirements and staff capacity.

This overview will allow managers to make objective decisions concerning the following:

- number of posts in their team to be designated as Welsh Essential;
- number of Welsh Essential posts currently filled by qualified Welsh speakers;
- current number of qualified Welsh speakers in their team and therefore the number of Welsh Essential posts that could be filled without further recruitment;
- identification of staff members who wish to develop their Welsh language skills to Level 3 or above so they are qualified to work in a Welsh Essential post; and
- recruitment required to fill Welsh Essential posts.

This comparative analysis will inform the denotation of posts as Welsh Essential throughout the Council and will require that they are advertised as Welsh Essential if gaps in provision have been identified which cannot be filled by training or current staff capacity.

This information will feed into the post assessments conducted by managers when recruiting through the Talentlink and Digigov platforms.

**“As a city, we are on a journey to becoming a truly bilingual capital city.”**



## 4. Recruitment

**The Council's recruitment process is administered through the Talentlink and Digigov platforms.**

This has conferred responsibility on individual managers to assess each post's essential and desirable requirements (including the need for Welsh language skills in accordance with identified skills gaps and required capacity).

It is the intention, through the implementation of this Strategy, to provide guidance to managers on identifying Welsh Essential posts and this will be based on the capacity and skills assessments detailed above.

The Digigov platform will provide an accessible overview for managers and identify posts to be designated as Welsh Essential based on the tasks involved, or in order to provide sufficient capacity to support Welsh language services at all times.

It will also inform managers of the number of Welsh Essential posts currently filled by Welsh speakers within their team.

This will allow for Welsh language requirements to be applied objectively and ensures that the level of Welsh language capacity required is maintained.

In cases where a post has been identified as Welsh Essential but it has not been possible to source a qualified Welsh speaking candidate through the recruitment process then the following steps may be undertaken:

- advertising the post as a temporary appointment and reviewing methods of meeting the need in a different way – e.g. changes to delivery of the service or re-advertising the post after a specific period of time; or
- provision of Welsh language training to the person appointed to the post.

Welsh Essential posts may be re-designated as Welsh Desirable if they have been advertised twice and it has not been possible to recruit a Welsh speaker.

However managers must ensure that their Team's capacity to provide high-quality Welsh language services is not adversely affected by the re-designation of individual posts as Welsh Desirable rather than Welsh Essential.

In order to support continued capacity and the provision of Welsh language services – a statement to learn Welsh to an agreed level of proficiency and within an agreed period of time may be included in the description of the re-designated Welsh Desirable post.

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The Council will also utilise all available opportunities to advertise and promote itself as a bilingual employer.

This will include the presentation of a bilingual corporate image, the promotion of a bilingual ethos and the availability of Welsh speaking staff in events, exhibitions, career fairs and any other examples of its engagement with the public.

All Council recruitment material and services are offered bilingually to support its image as an organisation that welcomes applications from Welsh speakers.

This includes its online recruitment system which offers applicants the opportunity to complete application forms, attend interviews, and receive notifications in the language of their choice.

Provision of this kind ensures equality of opportunity for all applicants within the Council's recruitment process and support its commitment to increasing the number of its bilingual staff to support the provision of services of equal quality to the people of Cardiff in both Welsh and English.

**Research has shown that bilingualism and multilingualism are beneficial in terms of mental health.**



## 5. Welsh Language Training

**The Council encourages and supports its employees through the provision of training to learn Welsh or to improve Welsh language skills.**

Welsh language courses are provided by the Council's dedicated internal Welsh language tutor or by selected external partners.

These courses are offered to all staff, however there may be an element of prioritisation in the case of frontline or customer facing staff or those individuals who must learn Welsh to a certain level for entry into a Welsh Essential post.

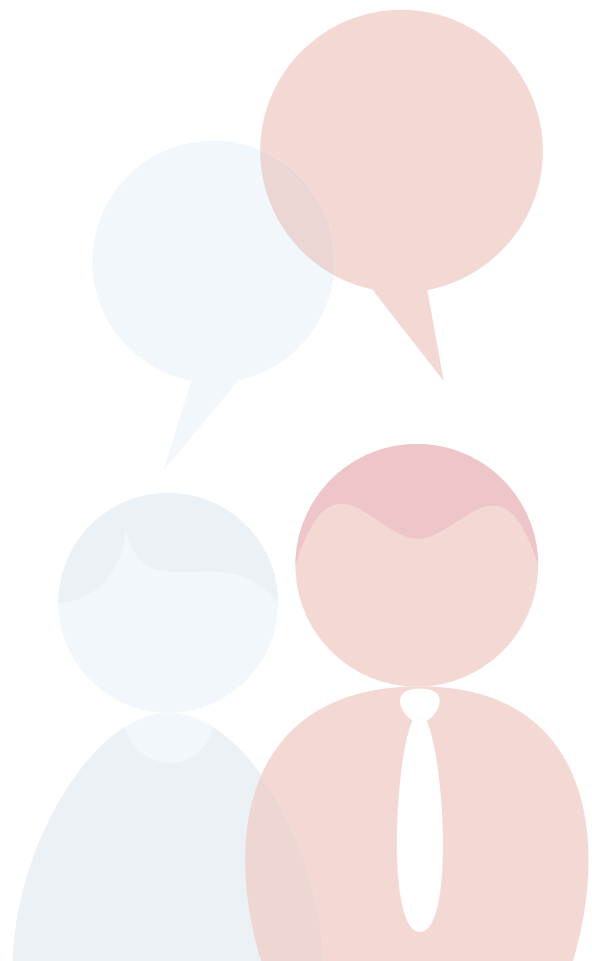
It is the Council's aim to ensure that every Directorate and service builds and develops its capacity to provide Welsh language services by improving the skills and confidence of its staff.

In accordance with the commitments made in this Strategy a comprehensive training programme to ensure all staff provided with the opportunity to reach Level 1 Welsh language proficiency will be rolled out as part of its implementation.

Following participation it is hoped that Council staff will subsequently engage with more advanced Welsh language courses to improve their skills further.

The Council will support staff attending Welsh language training and Welsh language vocational courses by releasing them from their usual duties so they may attend.

The Council also encourages and supports staff who wish to work bilingually through the provision of bilingual resources (e.g. software) and regular opportunities to use their Welsh at work.



## 6. Welsh Language Awareness Training

Welsh language awareness training is mandatory for all staff.

This encourages a more bilingual work environment and provides context demonstrating the importance of high quality Welsh language services.

The updated and current bilingual Welsh Language Awareness e-module is available on the Cardiff Council Academy website.

“Proficiency in multiple languages is an important business skill and supports the provision of high-quality services.”



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# APPENDICES

Cardiff Council - Welsh Language Skills Strategy 2021

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# Appendix 1

## Welsh Language Skills Strategy Action Plan

	Actions	Responsibility	Date for	Progress to Date
1.	Council-wide assessment of every team and service area's capacity to provide Welsh language services.	HR to provide data Directors to make assessment	31/03/2021	
2.	Directors and Assistant Directors to monitor and confirm all Welsh language skills assessments made as part of recruitment initiation.	Directors and Assistant Directors	Ongoing commitment	
3.	Results of the assessment described in <b>Action 1</b> to be recorded in Digigov to enable the comparison exercise described in <b>Action 4</b> .	HR	30/04/2021	
4.	Staff self-assessment of Welsh language skills through the Digigov platform.	Self-assessments to be provided by Council staff members. All communications to be managed by the Council's Human Resources Department.	31/03/2021  Staff without PC access – TBC	
5.	Comparison exercise based on <b>Actions 1 &amp; 3</b> to identify requirements and Welsh Essential posts.	Data provided by HR	30/05/2021	
6.	Establishment of Welsh Desirable as a minimum requirement for all customer facing recruited posts.	SMT Communications to be provided from the CEX to all Line Managers	31/05/21	
7.	Communicate that Level 1 Welsh language skills (in accordance with the ALTE framework) training is available to all Council staff.	Communications to be provided from the CEX to all Line Managers and staff members.  Details to be communicated by Cardiff Council's Academy.	31/03/2021	

# Appendix 1

## Welsh Language Skills Strategy Action Plan

	Actions	Responsibility	Date for	Progress to Date
8.	Inclusion of Welsh language as a desirable requirement for customer facing posts in all recruitment material and resources.	Post descriptions and person specifications to be adapted on DigiGOV.  Adapted information to be provided to applicants as posts are advertised for recruitment.	31/03/2021  Ongoing	
9.	Development of a menu of training options for Council staff to assist in reaching Welsh language proficiency Level 1 in accordance with the ALTE framework.  Options will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>digital tutor-led courses</li> <li>digital trainee-led courses;</li> <li>a mixture of both tutor-led and trainee-led courses;</li> <li>face-to-face courses (when available);</li> <li>provision of online and digital Welsh language learning resources; and</li> <li>informal Welsh language discussion groups (such as Paned a Chlonc).</li> </ul> Courses will be provided by The Academy (the Council's in-house training provider), the National Centre for Learning Welsh, or a combination of both.	Lead by The Academy and the Council's Welsh language tutor.	31/03/2021	
10.	Presentation of the Welsh language training offer to all Council staff	The Academy and shared by all Line Managers.	30/06/2021	
11.	Completion of Welsh language training by all current Council staff.	All staff.	31/03/2022	
12.	Completion of Welsh language training by newly recruited Council staff.	All newly recruited staff.	Within 12 months of commencing employment.	

# Appendix 2

## ALTE Welsh Language Framework

### Entry - Level 1

#### General description

You can:

- Understand and use familiar everyday expressions if the speaker is talking slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
- Introduce yourself and others and can ask and answer questions about basic personal details, e.g. where someone lives, works, what they like doing, things they have and what they did.
- Understand very short texts where people are giving basic information about themselves or others, e.g. on forms.
- Pass on a simple message or make a simple request, e.g. by e-mail.

#### Listening

You can:

- Understand everyday expressions, and very basic phrases if the speaker is talking slowly.
- Understand conversations about basic personal information, e.g. where someone lives, works, what they like doing, what they did.
- Guess what is being said when someone is giving details about events, such as time and place.

#### Speaking

You can:

- Use some familiar everyday expressions, e.g. greetings, thanks.
- Pronounce place names and names of people.
- Talk about basic personal things in an informal situation, e.g. interests, family, work, what you did yesterday.
- Talk about basic topics, e.g. the weather, time, prices.

#### Reading

You can:

- Understand very short phrases, and can guess what some notices mean.
- Understand short texts where people are giving basic information about themselves or others.
- Usually find details, such as time and cost, in advertisements or notices.

#### Writing

You can:

- Write very simple phrases or sentences about yourself or others.
- Pass on a simple message or make a simple request, e.g. by e-mail.



# Appendix 2

## ALTE Welsh Language Framework

### Foundation – Level 2

#### General description

You can:

- Understand sentences when people talk slowly about everyday situations e.g. basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment, and what they have done or would do.
- Hold a basic conversation with someone else on a common everyday topic e.g. work, hobbies, preferences, things which have happened or future plans.
- Understand messages about everyday things and basic letters/emails.
- Write short notes to friends/colleagues e.g. to pass on a message

#### Listening

You can:

- Understand when people talk about everyday situations, e.g. personal information, work, what they have done or would do, provided they talk slowly.
- Understand when people ask you or others to do something, and when they're asking about future plans, e.g. requesting a meeting.

#### Speaking

You can:

- Hold a basic conversation with someone else on a common everyday topic, provided the other speaker helps.
- Ask and answer questions on familiar topics, e.g. work, hobbies, preferences, things which have happened or future plans.

#### Reading

You can:

- Understand messages about everyday things, and some very basic letters or e-mails, e.g. asking for something, or asking to pass a message on.
- Understand short pieces of texts or very simple books, e.g. books for children.

#### Writing

You can:

- Write a short note to a friend or colleague, asking for something, thanking them or explaining something, e.g. absence from work.
- Write a short text about a familiar topic, e.g. personal experience, or work-related experience.

# Appendix 2

## ALTE Welsh Language Framework

### Intermediate – Level 3

#### General description

You can:

- Understand the main points when someone talks about common or everyday topics, or when things to do with work are discussed e.g., in conversation, or in a small group meeting.
- Hold an extended conversation with a fluent speaker on a familiar topic to do with everyday life e.g. hobbies, travel or immediate work-related topics.
- Describe experiences and events, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
- Understand straightforward short articles or emails on everyday topics to do with work.
- Write a letter/email on most topics, asking for things, giving information, inviting someone or organising an event.

#### Listening

You can:

- Understand information being given about common or everyday topics, or when things to do with work are being discussed, e.g. in conversation, or in small group meetings.
- Usually understand the main message and details, provided people speak clearly, e.g. when announcements are made or when listening to news bulletins.

#### Speaking

You can:

- Hold an extended conversation with a fluent speaker on a familiar topic, e.g. interests or work.
- Express a view and exchange information on a range of topics to do with everyday life, e.g. hobbies, travel or immediate work-related topics.

#### Reading

You can:

- Understand straightforward short articles on everyday topics of interest, or to do with work.
- Guess what words mean from the context, when the topic is familiar.
- Understand most e-mails and work-related documents.

#### Writing

You can:

- You can write a letter on most topics, asking for things, giving explanations, describing experiences, inviting people, or organising an event.
- You can write fairly accurately on most familiar topics, e.g. related to interests or work-related.

# Appendix 2

## ALTE Welsh Language Framework

### Advanced – Level 4

#### General description

You can:

- Usually follow most conversations or discussions, even on topics you're not familiar with, unless someone is speaking with a strong unfamiliar accent e.g. in a conference.
- Talk confidently with fluent speakers on familiar topics related to everyday life or work, and can express your views, engage in discussion, and speak at length about general topics e.g. in a meeting, or in a one-to-one situation.
- Understand most correspondence, newspaper articles and reports aimed at fluent Welsh speakers with the aid of a dictionary, and scan through long texts to find detail.
- Write short articles, reviews or reports on a variety of subjects of a general nature, or which are work-related, and respond accurately to most types of correspondence from internal or external sources.

#### Listening

You can:

- Usually follow most conversations or discussions, even on topics you're not familiar with.
- Understand most TV and radio programmes for first language speakers, unless they're speaking with a strong unfamiliar accent.

#### Speaking

You can:

- Talk confidently with fluent speakers on familiar topics related to everyday life or work.
- Express views, engage in discussion, and speak at length about general topics, e.g. in a meeting, or in a one-to-one situation.

#### Reading

You can:

- Understand most correspondence, and scan through long texts to find details.
- Understand most newspaper articles and reports aimed at first language speakers, with the aid of a dictionary.
- Understand novels and other texts, provided they are not written in a very formal or very colloquial style.

#### Writing

You can:

- Write a short article, review or report on a variety of subjects of a general nature, or which are work-related.
- Write detailed and well-structured texts, which are appropriate for the reader.
- Respond accurately to most types of correspondence from colleagues or external contacts.

# Appendix 2

## ALTE Welsh Language Framework

### Proficiency – Level 5

#### General description

You can:

- Understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.
- Speak at length about complex issues, present arguments, and lead discussions.
- Summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.
- Express yourself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, adapting your style according to the audience e.g., in an informal or formal context.

#### Listening

You can:

- Easily follow all conversations and discussions between others, on all sorts of topics.
- Understand all kinds of spoken Welsh, including lectures or complex discussions.

#### Speaking

You can:

- Express myself fully and precisely, even when discussing complex issues.
- Adapt your language style according to the audience, e.g. when speaking in a formal context or talking to colleagues.
- Speak at length about a complex issue, presenting arguments, and leading the discussion.

#### Reading

You can:

- Read and understand nearly all written texts with ease, with only occasional reference to a dictionary.
- Read long texts, e.g. reports, articles, to find relevant details and understand nearly all types of writing, e.g. formal or informal.

#### Writing

You can:

- Write extended texts, reports, articles, minutes or other types of writing in a style appropriate to the reader.
- Write in formal or informal Welsh as necessary.
- Write with a high degree of accuracy on a wide range of topics.

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