



Valuation Office
Agency

Asiantaeth y
Swyddfa Brisió

Valuation Office Agency - Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report

10 November 2022

(November 2021 to October 2022)

Introduction

As a public organisation operating in Wales, the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) is required to prepare a Welsh Language Scheme (WLS) Under the 1993 Welsh Language Act. The Welsh Language Commissioner requires the VOA to produce an annual monitoring report to assess the progress we're making in delivering the commitments in our WLS. This Report covers the period from November 2021 to the end of October 2022.

Summary of achievements

For this reporting period we have:

- Appointed a dedicated Welsh Language Officer and Translator, who took up their role in November 2021.
- Acted upon the Welsh Language Commissioner's recommendation, following the submission of the 2020-21 WLS Report to re-establish the VOA's Welsh Language Working Group.
- Actively promoted our WLS and the commitments across the business.
- For the first time published our WLS Annual Monitoring Report (i.e. for 2020-21) on our website.
- Reviewed and ensured that the automated acknowledgment messages sent from our customer facing inboxes are bilingual.
- Encouraged and promoted the Welsh language networks and the opportunities to practice Welsh amongst our staff members.
- Established Welsh language practice sessions with the Customer Service Welsh learning cohort.
- Ensured that any Wales specific messaging on social media platforms such as Twitter have been factored into our communications plan and prepared bilingually.
- Increased number of Welsh language interactions with Local Authorities (LAs) by the VOA's Local Authority Engagement Team (LAET)

Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme

Welsh Language Commissioner reporting requirements:

- *We ask you to report information about implementation of the scheme's timetable.*
- *We ask you to confirm what actions were completed during the year and what further steps are required to complete other actions.*

Welsh Language Officer and Translator

In November 2021 a dedicated Welsh Language Officer and Translator (hereafter referred to as the 'Officer') joined the VOA and is based in an office in Wales.. As

stated in our WLS, the Officer's key responsibilities include promoting our commitments within the Scheme as well as monitoring and reporting the VOA's compliance to the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Officer also acts as a point of contact for colleagues who have questions about our commitments in the Scheme or any general queries relating to the Welsh language. Since joining the VOA, the Officer has:

- Introduced themselves to a variety of colleagues across the VOA to promote the role and the importance of our Welsh language offering.
- Promoted and raised awareness across the VOA about the WLS and our commitments by presenting at various meetings and posting related material on the intranet. Further information is provided under *'Mainstreaming the Welsh language' - Welsh language learning and training including language awareness training*.
- Re-established the Welsh Language Working Group as recommended by the Welsh Language Commissioner. Further information is provided under *'Self-regulation'*.
- Joined various working groups, projects, and meetings across the VOA to ensure the Welsh language and our Welsh speaking customers are considered from the earliest opportunity.
- Promoted the opportunities available to staff to learn and practice Welsh. Further information is provided under *'Mainstreaming'*.
- Joined Welsh language networking groups, including the Welsh Committee of Government Departments (*Pwyllgor CALL*), The Welsh Language Network, The British Civil Service Welsh Language Network (open to Welsh speakers working for the Civil Service in England as well as in Wales) and the Centre for Digital Public Services (Welsh Government) meetings. By proactively joining these networks and contributing to the discussions the Officer has created new working partnerships on behalf of the VOA. This has provided an opportunity to share good practices and to aid and develop our Welsh language services in the future.
- Dealt with a variety of translation requests, in particular time-sensitive requests to ensure our Welsh speaking customers receive important messaging within the same time frame as English-speaking customers. Though the Officer is able to assist with translations, the VOA continues to access translations both through its Welsh Language Customer Service Centre (WLCSC) unit and HMRC's Welsh Language Unit.
- Reviewed and proofread internal Welsh translations for quality assurance purposes.

One of the Officer's main objectives during the first year of taking up post was to highlight and promote the importance of our WLS. Further work is required to promote and embed our WLS but the initial interaction from colleagues over the

past year has certainly demonstrated that our Welsh Language obligations and the importance of our Scheme is a firm consideration. The Officer will continue to develop this awareness over the coming years.

Published 2020-21 Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report

In accordance with commitment 7 under 'Monitoring the Scheme' in our WLS the VOA published its 2020-21 Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report (WLSAMR) for the first time in April 2022. Members of the public can access our WLSAMR via a link at the bottom of our published WLS page - [VOA Welsh Language Scheme \(April 2021\)](#) . VOA colleagues can also access the WLS and the WLSAMR via the dedicated Welsh Language intranet page.

Local Authority Engagement Team

As part of their on-going work the VOA's Local Authority Engagement Team (LAET) continue to work alongside the 22 Local Authorities (LAs) in Wales. LAET have continued to proactively provide the communications they issue to the Welsh LAs bilingually (where appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable). LAET have increased their bilingual communications over the past year by providing bilingual LA working group minutes and/or any related presentations. LAET continue to provide their two-monthly bilingual newsletters to LAs.

LAET are currently expanding their interactions with LAs in Wales by offering one on one meetings and have sought their language preference through which to conduct these meetings.

District Valuer Service (DVS)

Over the reporting period DVS have continued to ensure that all relevant correspondence and regulatory documents, are kept up to date and translated into Welsh in line with the English versions. DVS welcome interaction from customers and working partners through the medium of Welsh and have dealt with cases through the medium of Welsh involving 20 bodies which include Surveyors, Local Authorities, Engineers, and Contractors.

Regional Valuation Unit (RVU) Wales & West

The RVU covering our operations in Wales have continued to deal with customers wishing to engage through the medium of Welsh. To manage our operations in Wales, the Welsh language is included on the Unit's risk register which is reviewed at least quarterly. Information regarding the number of RVU Wales & West staff members with Welsh language skills can be found under the '*Welsh language resource and demand*' subheading. However, we are pleased to report over the reporting period that a member of the WLCSC has joined RVU Wales & West to deal with Council Tax appeals and maintenance.

Automated acknowledgment messages

The VOA has a total of 7 customer contact email addresses which are relevant to our operation in Wales. The addresses in question send automated acknowledgment messages each time a customer submits an enquiry. During the reporting period we discovered a lack of consistency i.e. not all automated messages were sent bilingually. The team responsible for managing the inboxes have now assured that all automated messages are sent bilingually in line with the relevant commitments in our WLS. The automated acknowledgment messages from our customer complaint and Local Authority contact inboxes have also been amended to ensure that a bilingual message is sent upon receipt of correspondence. Our MP Correspondence, and District Valuer Services (DVS) inboxes don't use the automated acknowledgment message function. However, if a customer sends any initial correspondence to these addresses in Welsh the teams responsible for monitoring the inboxes will respond in Welsh.

Customer Correspondence Review

The Customer Correspondence Review (CCR) is an ongoing project to improve the way we write to our customers. The review was tasked to make it easier for our customers to understand what they need to know and do. This includes reviewing and improving our standard templates; supporting colleagues to apply revised writing standards; and developing our quality assurance process to reflect these standards. Our Welsh Language Officer has been part of the review since they joined the Agency in November 2021. The review has taken Welsh language correspondence into account from the initial discussions and is reviewing both Welsh and English correspondence to ensure consistency. In addition to reviewing the correspondence the CCR has published an internal correspondence guide. Welsh language considerations have been factored into this guidance, including links and information about 'Cymraeg Clir' (Clear Welsh). Further updates on CCR will be included as appropriate in the 2022-23 WLS Annual Monitoring Report.

Customer Experience Research

Over the reporting period both the VOA's 'Strategy and Customer Insight' (S&CI) and 'Social Research' teams have been working on a new customer research project, with specific focus on customer experience. The research covering Wales will focus on two customer groups i.e. Council Tax payers in Wales, and Welsh Billing Authorities.

The Research is split into two phases. Phase 1 is qualitative, involving customer interviews over the phone; Phase 2 will involve a quantitative customer survey. Phase 1 commenced in August 2022 and the survey in Phase 2 will go live in winter 2022/23, with findings anticipated for delivery by early 2023.

The actual research work was tendered to external suppliers The tender document referenced commitment 23 under '*Partnership Working and Procurement*' in our WLS i.e. that the successful bidder agreed to take our WLS into account, and the importance of our offering via the medium of Welsh when dealing with customers in Wales.

The on-going Customer Experience Research also highlights the Team's work in assuring that the VOA complies with commitment 21 in our WLS under '*Other Dealings with the Public in Wales*'. The initial invite email sent to potential participants in Wales to opt in or out of the research was done bilingually. The email also asked the participants if they wished to proceed with any research surveys during Phase 1 and 2 in Welsh.

The research demonstrates how our Welsh speaking customers and our WLS have been considered as part of the planning and delivery of the research work from the outset. Where appropriate we have asked our Welsh speaking participants how they found using our Welsh language services and will feed this back to the relevant business areas.

Estates

The VOA continues to operate in 4 offices in Wales:

- Cardiff - Tŷ William Morgan.
- Carmarthen - St David's Park.
- Swansea - Civic Centre.
- Wrexham - Regent House.

In line with Welsh Government guidelines, between November 2021 and October 2022, colleagues were able to return to our offices to work. The VOA (in line with wider Civil Service working arrangements) has adopted a hybrid working pattern allowing flexibility for colleagues to work partly from our offices and from home. Since fully reopening our offices in Wales in April 2022 colleagues have been able to interact with each other in person, including those who are able to interact in Welsh. By hearing the Welsh language used during meetings and/ or in social circumstances around the offices the language is mainstreamed organically in the workplace.

As of September 2022, we have 19 people from operations and the corporate business areas based in our offices in Wales who use or can use their Welsh language skills at work.

Further statistics on our Welsh speakers and those with Welsh language skills is discussed under '*Mainstreaming the Welsh Language*'.

Providing services to the public

Telephone Communication

Welsh Language Commissioner reporting requirements:

- *Number of Welsh language calls received to the main telephone number or call centre during the reporting period.*
- *Number of English language calls received to the main telephone number or call centre during the reporting period*

The Welsh Language Customer Service Centre (WLCSC) based in our Cardiff office continue to operate our Welsh language line. As of 2 August 2022, the VOA's Customer Service Centres moved to a new telephony platform. The new system can provide more data and a better understanding of customer demand.

Between 1st November 2021 and 30th September 2022, the VOA received 15,349 calls via the main Wales customer contact line. Of those 782 customers opted to select the Welsh language line. Following Welsh line selection customers are presented with automated messages including information about our online services and website. Some customers elect to drop out of their call following these messages as we have either answered their enquiry with the automated message or have signposted them to another way to obtain the information that they need. 572 of these calls proceeded to speak with a Welsh speaking advisor.

Translation

The WLCSC team continue to handle internal translation requests under 1,000 words. Translations over 1,000 words or of a complex nature are processed by HMRC's Welsh Language Unit. The WLCSC continue to work closely with HMRC's Welsh Language Unit and meet monthly to discuss any issues or updates. As mentioned in the 2020-21 Report, due to turnaround times for translation requests, time-sensitive translation requests e.g., for external announcements or lines to take, are translated by the VOA's Welsh Language Officer.

Between 1st of November 2021 and the 30th of September 2022, the WLCSC team received 360 translation requests.

309 processed by the VOA WLCSC

30 processed by HMRC's Welsh Language Unit

21 void requests

As of May 2022, the WLCSC have logged the type of translation requests received. The translated documents as of May 2022 total 175 and consisted of:

- MP and Senedd Members' correspondence
- Local Authority correspondence and publications
- Publications / wording to be used on our website
- Correspondences from customers

- Correspondences responding to customers
- Online contact forms

Mainstreaming the Welsh Language

Staffing and recruitment

Civil Service Jobs portal

As of June 2022 Civil Service Jobs has the functionality to allow government departments to provide a Welsh language version of job adverts. The portal itself has also been translated into Welsh, which allows Welsh-speaking applicants to view job details and apply in Welsh if they choose to do so. The portal also allows any future candidates to sign up for job adverts in Welsh if they have selected it as their preferred language. This is a positive step towards providing an equal service for both Welsh and English-speaking applicants. The VOA will further explore this functionality to advertise and attract Welsh speakers to apply for various posts in Wales, or where Welsh language skills are essential or desirable.

Welsh language resource and demand

The VOA holds a list of Welsh speakers and/or those with additional Welsh language skills across our operation in Wales, which itemises where they are based i.e. in our offices in Wales, England or if they are homeworkers. This list was collated in July 2022 (previous list from 2019/ 20) and is used to identify the number of Welsh speakers who could use their skills at work, and to evaluate if we were adequately resourced to deliver our Welsh language services. The list also provides the ability to identify how we could potentially call upon colleagues from the list to assist with Welsh language tasks outside of their immediate roles if needed. From our enquiries we identified 28 Welsh speakers and/or those with additional Welsh language skills in:

- Chief Valuer Group (CVG)
- RVU Wales and West
- WLCSC

Our Welsh language resource and demand list indicated that we have an adequate number of Welsh speakers in CVG and RVU. However, the list has also highlighted that additional work is needed to seek further opportunities to recruit Welsh speakers and additional Welsh speaking graduates to maintain and further develop our Welsh language services within these specific areas. Since collating the 2022 Welsh language resource and demand data, an additional resource with Welsh language skills joined the RVU Wales and West team in September 2022.

The list also indicated that we were not adequately resourced at the time of collating the data (i.e. in July 2022) in the WLCSC. The list therefore highlighted the need to increase our Welsh speaking resource within this business stream and to further

expand our flexibility and strengthen contingency against future demand. We currently have the correct resource to meet current demand with the use of temporary staff but additional work is ongoing to ensure we have a more permanent staffing solution to ensure service stability in the future. Our Welsh Language Officer would like to update the list on an annual basis to track any changes and to help identify any potential risk to our Welsh language service delivery. Also, by maintaining a Welsh language resource and demand list on an annual basis it is hoped that our internal Welsh language resource will be monitored regularly by the relevant teams.

Welsh language Customer Service Centre

The VOA continues to handle Welsh language customer calls and internal translation requests via our WLCSC based in our Cardiff office at, Tŷ William Morgan.

The WLCSC team have faced staffing level challenges over the reporting period since last reported in November 2021, due to team members leaving the VOA and others securing internal promotion.

Since July 2022, the Welsh Language Officer has been supporting the Head of the CSC and the HR team along with other members of the CSC team to explore and find solutions to recruit more Welsh speakers into this crucial business area and to develop a longer-term recruitment plan. As of October 2022, WLCSC had 6 members of staff to meet the current demand, however the VOA are continuing with the ongoing discussions to increase the staffing levels in this space.

Welsh language learning and training, including language awareness training.

The creation of the dedicated Welsh Language Officer role is a practical way of mainstreaming the Welsh Language within the VOA. The Officer has proactively introduced themselves to various teams and working groups to raise awareness and to spread the word about the role and the importance of our WLS.

Over the reporting period the Officer has also raised awareness about our WLS and the Welsh language by providing presentations to the following teams and groups:

- Customer Experience Advisory Group
- Strategy & Transformation senior leadership
- Strategy & Transformation Away Day (As part of the wider VOA Wales Policy Team presentation)
- Policy, Legal and Disclosure Team
- CEO/ ExCom (shared the 2020-21 WLS Annual Monitoring Report and a summary paper which included background and information about our WLS and obligations)

By presenting and providing information to the groups and in the meetings mentioned above, the WLS and our commitments have been raised and sighted by a wider group of VOA colleagues as well as senior colleagues. It is hoped that the

information has been cascaded with the relevant teams across the VOA. In addition to the internal teams and groups mentioned above, the Officer has also presented to a group of Welsh Government (WG) stakeholders to raise awareness of the new role within the VOA and the VOA's WLS. Our 2020-21 WLS Annual Monitoring Report was also shared directly with the WG stakeholders ahead of its publication. The Officer has also established links with the WG's Welsh speaking Communications & Engagement Manager to ensure alignment where appropriate of any terminology translated into Welsh that is included in external communications.

As well as attending and presenting in group meetings the Officer published a bilingual St David's Day message, both as a blog on the VOA intranet homepage and distributed to colleagues in our offices in Wales on 1st March 2022. The blog raised awareness of Wales's national day, introduced the Officer and details about the opportunities on offer to learn Welsh via the 'Work Welsh' courses, as well as how to join the Wales and Welsh language Civil Service networking groups. The Officer has also provided an article to the VOA's Chief Operating Officer (COO) monthly newsletter, and a video clip introducing the role of the Officer in the internal VOA roadshow.

Over the reporting period VOA colleagues based in our Wales offices who have indicated that they can speak Welsh or have expressed interest in learning or developing their Welsh language skills have been informed of opportunities to put this into practice. Colleagues have been invited to take part in the Civil Service Welsh tandem sessions, whereby people who have registered are paired with others who have indicated the same level of Welsh proficiency to organise informal catch ups with each other. The VOA have also paired with the HMRC Welsh Language Unit's weekly 'Coffi Cymraeg' virtual sessions. Two sessions are available, one for beginners, the other for those who are advanced or at a fluent level. The sessions provide an opportunity for participants to converse leisurely with each other through the medium of Welsh. Due to their informal nature no attendance records are held for these sessions.

Over the past year the VOA have continued to promote the 'Work Welsh' programme funded by Welsh Government which offers Welsh language online learning courses for staff. As of October 2022, 31 VOA staff members were enrolled on the programme.

In 2020-21 we reported about members of the CSC in Cardiff that had volunteered to take part in a pilot 'Welsh Work' cohort. Of the original team only half remain. Unfortunately, uptake for the second CSC cohort (as mentioned in the last Report 2020-21) wasn't successful. However, the remaining members of the first cohort have made progress. The Officer has worked closely with these individuals and has listened to their concerns. The cohort expressed that they found it hard to allocate time to concentrate on the 'Work Welsh' course, therefore the Officer liaised with CSC managers to allow dedicated time in the working week for the cohort to pursue the online learning. The cohort also expressed that they found it challenging to put what they had learnt on the course into general practice. Since May 2022 the cohort have been attending Welsh practice sessions via MS Teams / in person with the

Officer every other week. The practice sessions provide an opportunity for the cohort to practice conversational phrases and pronunciations and to ask questions. These informal meetings also provide an opportunity for the Officer to share useful links and tips with the cohort. Once the cohort have completed the relevant learning units, the CSC Learning and Development Team will evaluate the success in this investment to determine any next steps in this space.

Website and on-line services

Welsh Language Commissioner reporting requirements:

- *Percentage of the organisation's website pages and online services available in Welsh;*
- *An update on the progress made to improve/ increase the website's Welsh language content during the reporting period;*
- *Information on the process used to ensure that existing content, updates and new content comply with the Welsh language scheme*

In preparation for reporting against the listed reporting requirements the Welsh Language Officer (WLO) worked with the Agency's Digital Publishing Team (DPT). During this timeframe we faced some issues that were out of our control and affected the information we were able to collate thus not meeting the WLC reporting requirements as listed above. Both the VOA's DPS and the Government Digital Service (GDS) are responsible for managing the Agency's webpages and online services. The DPT team conducted their own search on the Welsh language webpages and online services in their remit and provided the following evidence:

- Total of 1071 pages on GOV.UK are controlled by the DPS team. Out of these pages, the toggle for a full Welsh translation is available on 10.
- Total of 51 pages out of the 1071 include documents that have been translated to Welsh (3 of which are pages that include the toggle). This means that whilst the entirety of the page may not be able to be translated, the relevant documents that users will need to access, submit etc, are provided in Welsh.

The information provided by DPT above was conducted by searching for 'Welsh' in the title, therefore there are pages that did not return on this specific search. It has transpired that a manual search would be required to gain an accurate account of the number of Welsh Language pages and publications controlled by DPT on GOV.UK.

In terms of ensuring that existing content, updates, and new content comply with the Welsh language scheme, since joining the VOA in November 2021 our WLO has been in discussions about the development of further Welsh language online services. It is hoped that during the 2022/23 reporting period that additional bilingual services will be live.

This section highlights our need as an Agency to further investigate how we can better manage and track our Welsh language online presence in preparation for the next WLS annual monitoring report. Our WLO will discuss the WLC reporting requirements in further detail with DPT, GDS and other VOA stakeholders.

Complaints / Expression of Dissatisfaction

Welsh Language Commissioner reporting requirements:

- *Number of complaints received during the reporting period regarding the organisation's compliance with the Welsh language scheme*

No complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction were received regarding the VOA's compliance with the WLS between November 2021 and October 2022. A complaint was received in Welsh but this was retracted as it was not relevant to the VOA. We have however considered areas where the complaints process could be improved and the issues we identified have now been resolved and built into our complaints process for handling any future Welsh Language related complaints.

Self-regulation

Welsh Language Commissioner reporting requirements:

- *Details of the arrangements and procedures the organisation has adopted to assist it in effective self-regulation.*

The VOA has proactively strengthened its arrangements and procedures to assist in effective self-regulation by:

1. Working with an up-to-date Welsh Language Scheme (WLS) as of April 2021, which is due to be reviewed no later than 1 April 2023 as stated in WLS:

Reviewing and amending the WLS

The WLS will be reviewed every two years and the first review will take place no later than 1 April 2023. In addition, amendments to the WLS will be considered sooner than 1 April 2023 in the event of changes to the legislative requirements or how our services are delivered in Wales. This WLS will not be amended without prior approval by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

2. Recruiting a full time Welsh Language Officer and Translator in November 2022
3. Re-establishing the Welsh Language Working Group (WLWG) in August 2022. The group consists of a cross section of representatives from across the VOA's key business areas, including:

- Service Delivery Directorate:

- Change Management Services & Continuous Improvement
- Corporate Communications:
 - Communications Team
 - Complaints
 - Local Authority Engagement Team
- Customer Service Centre
- Chief Valuer Group
- People Group:
 - HR Resourcing
 - Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing
 - Estates
 - Learning and Development
 - Graduate Programme
- Chief Operating Officer Group :
 - RVU Wales & West
 - Service delivery
- Strategy and Transformation Group:
 - Business Systems Transformation
 - Policy
 - Strategy and Customer Insight

In line with the terms of reference, the aims of the WLWG are to:

- Discuss how the various business streams are working towards meeting the commitments in the VOA's WLS including any future projects or developments.
- Raise any issues or concerns relating to the commitments outlined in the WLS and how to overcome and work towards resolving these issues.
- Use the WLWG as a mechanism through which to gather insight to feed into the VOA's Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report.
- To 'support our Welsh Language Co-ordinator [i.e. Officer] in promoting the Scheme and our obligations under the Welsh Language Act 1993 across the Agency' - as stated in the Welsh Language Scheme.
- In line with the above, raise the profile of the Welsh Language in the VOA so that our obligations under our Welsh Language Scheme are acknowledged, better understood, and actively considered across our operations in Wales.
- Welcome input from colleagues who have their own views and ideas of how we can improve and develop our Welsh Language offering both internally and externally.

The WLWG held their first meeting in August and discussed the importance of establishing the group, the group's aims, and any Welsh language related updates to feed into this Report. Also, to highlight the importance of establishing a WLWG the

Standards Imposition and Compliance Officer from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office attended and presented at the first meeting.

The WLWG aim to meet every 3 months to monitor our developments and to raise any issues relating to implementing the WLS.

Action plan

Welsh Language Commissioner reporting requirements:

- *If the organisation's language scheme includes an action plan with ongoing actions, please provide an update on the delivery of the action plan*

In line with our current WLS (as published in April 2021) we do not have a specific action plan, however the WLS does include a series of objectives on how we aim to implement and monitor our commitments. Here are the objectives as noted in the WLS along with relevant updates on the delivery:

Implementing the WLS

- *Publish the WLS on our intranet page and launch a dedicated guidance hub for the Welsh language.*

Update: Our WLS is published on the intranet (bilingually) on our dedicated 'Welsh Language Service' page. Our 2020-21 WLS Annual Monitoring Report is also available on this page.

- *Publish the Scheme on our gov.uk webpage in both English and Welsh and promote awareness of the scheme or individual commitments wherever appropriate to encourage take-up of Welsh medium services.*

Update: Our WLS is published on our Gov.uk webpage in both English and Welsh along with our 2020-21 WLS Annual Monitoring Report.

- *Produce a manager's toolkit for translation services and guidance as to when a document should be translated.*

Update: We have published information bulletins on our intranet about the translation process and the steps colleagues must take if they wish to translate any correspondence / documents. Further work is needed to develop and produce a specific manager's toolkit for translation services and guidance, and to review the information bulletins.

- *Support our Welsh Language Co-ordinator in promoting the Scheme and our obligations under the Welsh Language Act 1993 across the Agency.*

Update: We have re-established the WLWG to help and support our Welsh Language Officer in promoting the WLS and our obligations under the Welsh Language Act 1993 across the VOA.

- *Run staff workshops to give training and guidance on the new WLS.*

Update: Our Welsh Language Officer has presented at various group meetings to provide information and guidance about our WLS. The Officer has also produced internal articles about our WLS. Further work is needed in this space to run staff workshops to give training and guidance on our WLS.

Monitoring the WLS

- *Our Welsh Language Co-Ordinator will be responsible for monitoring the VOA's delivery against this Scheme. They will update the VOA's Executive Committee at regular intervals, make recommendations for improvements, and lead on producing an annual monitoring report of our Welsh language services.*

Update: Since joining the Agency in November 2022 our Welsh Language Officer has been monitoring how the VOA are working towards delivering the commitments in its WLS and has led on producing the WLS annual monitoring reports. The VOA's Executive Committee (ExCom) receive the WLS annual monitoring report ahead of submission to keep them informed of our developments in the Welsh language space. ExCom also receive an update from the Officer following any feedback the Welsh Language Commissioner has about the Report and any further actions that need to be taken. Further work will be undertaken to develop and explore a structured plan to update ExCom more frequently.

- *We will consider any necessary amendments to improve our service for our Welsh speaking customers and in consultation with the Welsh Language Commissioner.*

Update: No significant updates for the period between November 2021 - October 2022

- *We will report on our performance against the commitments in this Scheme to the Welsh Language Commissioner. This report will be produced annually and will be available to the public.*

Update: We have continued to report annually to the Welsh Language Commissioner via our WLS Annual Monitoring Report. One significant millstone was the publication of our 2020-21 report in April 2022 on our website and intranet.

Reviewed and approved by:

Kirsten McFarlane

Director, Strategy, Policy & Transformation | Valuation Office Agency

7 November 2022