

12 January 2024

Dear

ATISN 20002 - Request for data on Welsh language use in business/government transactions in Wales.

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 12 December 2023. You asked for:

“raw data on an annual basis of both current demand and how that has changed for the Welsh Language in all forms of phone and written correspondence with the Welsh Government and Senedd and possibly Welsh NHS.”

You've also asked for the:

“percentage of written communications with Welsh Government departments arrives in Welsh, and/or requests a Welsh medium response.”

Our response

To reiterate what was noted in the acknowledgement letter, we are only able to provide information in relation to the Welsh Government. We do not hold any information that relates to the Senedd or the NHS in Wales. You would need to contact them directly to gather information that relates to their work.

We hold some information that would be caught by your request but we are unable to fully fulfil the request, as doing so would exceed the appropriate time limit in attaining the information requested.

Whilst it is almost impossible to come to an accurate estimate, it would be reasonable to assume that almost all members of staff will receive emails from external parties at some point during the year. This would mean that all members of staff would need to be asked to check their mailboxes to identify correspondence from external sources and then asked to calculate the number in English or Welsh. For example, if we estimate that staff receive around 50 emails per working day, across all 5,000+ members of staff, that would equate to approximately 65 million emails that would need to be reviewed. Even if took just 5 seconds to review each incoming email to see if it was from an external party and to identify the language used, it would take over 90,500 hrs to collate the information for 2023 alone. This would significantly exceed the 24hr time period to respond to this request.

We do not record the language of incoming correspondence (hard copy or electronic) or phone calls, apart from correspondence to Welsh Government Ministers, as noted below. For correspondence sent to Welsh Government officials, in order to collate the information you have asked for, we would need each individual across the Welsh Government to check the language of correspondence received by them, and count the number of phone conversations with external parties in either English or Welsh. Note that many emails are automatically deleted after 12 months,

so it would not be possible to collate accurate figures for anything before a 12-month period to when your request was received. This again would significantly exceed the 24hr time period to respond to this request.

Correspondence

In relation to Ministerial Correspondence, some of the information that you request can be found in annual reports on the Welsh Government's compliance with its duties under the Welsh Language Standards, links to the documents are provided below.

You have also asked for correspondence to the Welsh Government as a whole. We have interpreted that to mean correspondence to any individual member of staff. There is no central record of correspondence to officials. As mentioned above, many emails are automatically deleted after 12 months, so it would not be possible to collate accurate figures for anything before a 12-month period to when your request was received. This again would significantly exceed the 24hr time period to respond to this request.

Phone Calls

In the 2009-2010 annual report on the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Scheme, which was in place before the advent of the Welsh Language Standards in 2016, there is reference to calls to the Welsh and English language helpdesk numbers that were in place in 2009-10:

'In 2009-10, the bilingual helpline (0845 010 3300), which offers a language choice to customers through a bilingual greeting, received 65,536 calls. The Welsh language helpline (0845 010 4400) received 2,520 calls. This figure is encouraging, especially considering that many of the calls received come from outside Wales and that a significant number of people would have received a Welsh language service through the bilingual helpline.'

Subsequent reports on the Welsh Language Scheme did not include this data.

More recent data can be seen in annual reports on the Welsh Government's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards where some of this data has been reported for phone calls to the Welsh Government's main helpdesk number. Please note that reporting on use of services is not a requirement of the annual report under the Welsh Language Standards and hasn't been included every year. You can find some of the data you've requested for previous years in section 1.3 of the reports below:

2017-2018 - [Welsh Language Standards annual report 2017 to 2018 | GOV.WALES](#)

2018-2019 - [Welsh Language Standards annual report 2018 to 2019 | GOV.WALES](#)

2019-20 - [Welsh Language Standards annual report 2019 to 2020 | GOV.WALES](#) – Ministerial Correspondence received in Welsh and English reported

2020-21 - [Welsh Language Standards annual report 2020 to 2021 | GOV.WALES](#)
Ministerial Correspondence and Shared Service Helpdesk calls received in Welsh and English reported

2021-22 [Welsh Language Standards annual report 2021 to 2022 | GOV.WALES](#)
Ministerial Correspondence and Shared Service Helpdesk calls received in Welsh and English reported

With regards to phone calls, please see below the statistics for April 2022 – May 2023:

	<i>Helpdesk External</i>
<i>Welsh line Calls</i>	<i>1,381</i>
<i>English line calls</i>	<i>46,244</i>

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely