
Welsh Language Standards Regulations Annual Monitoring Report 2023-2024

Sept 2024

nmc
Nursing &
Midwifery
Council

About us

Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the independent regulator of more than 826,000 nurses and midwives in the UK and nursing associates in England, we have an important role to play in making this vision a reality.

We're here to protect the public by upholding high professional nursing and midwifery standards, which the public has a right to expect. That's why we're improving the way we regulate, enhancing our support for colleagues, professionals and the public, and working with our partners to influence the future of health and social care.

Our core role is to **regulate**. We set and promote high education and professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England and quality assure their education programmes. We maintain the integrity of the register of those eligible to practise. And we investigate concerns about professionals – something that affects very few people on our register every year.

To regulate well, we **support** nursing and midwifery professionals and the public. We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout professionals' careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address challenges they face. We work collaboratively so everyone feels engaged and empowered to shape our work.

We work with our partners to address common concerns, share our data, insight and learning, to **influence** and inform decision-making and help drive improvement in health and social care for people and communities.

Our commitment to the Welsh Language

In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (No. 8) Regulations, as set out by the Welsh Language Commissioner, we are committed to facilitating the use of the Welsh language and ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated any less favourably than English.

The aim of this annual monitoring report is to summarise our progress in implementing the Welsh Language Standards Regulations during the period from 6 December 2023 to 31 March 2024.

We are committed to consistent compliance with the Welsh Language Standards Regulations, and engaging with the Welsh Language Commissioner and others to be responsive and informed in our approach to meeting the needs of Welsh speakers. This report sets out our work in this area and will be published on our website.

A strategic priority

The NMC's strategy for 2020-2025 includes the implementation of the Welsh language Standards as one of our 22 corporate commitments.

Our accompanying values and behaviours underpin our approach to Welsh language compliance, as set out below:



Fair

We will ensure people interacting with our services will have fair opportunities to engage with us and access information in Welsh, and can trust our commitment to the new Regulations.

Kind

We value people who use the Welsh language, and we will be respectful when dealing with Welsh language requests. We will strive to ensure Welsh language speakers feel included and confident to engage with us in Welsh.

Collaborative

We will invest in our existing relationships, including with the Welsh Language Commissioner, and engage with wider Welsh communities, recognising we're at our best when we work well with others.

Ambitious

We will be open to new ways of meeting our Welsh language requirements, and will always aim to do our best for Welsh language speakers.

Governance of our Welsh language work

Members of the Council, the Executive team and all our colleagues play a part in ensuring our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Ruth Bailey, Executive Director for People and Organisational Effectiveness, is responsible for overseeing our annual reporting and engagement with the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Sam Foster is the Executive Nurse Director for Professional Practice and is also Lead Director for Wales. In this role, Sam oversees engagement with stakeholders in Wales at a strategic level and chairs our internal Wales working group.

Our internal Wales working group routinely meets to discuss key updates related to our regulatory role in Wales. It considers the perspective of people working and living in Wales on proposed NMC policy development and announcements. This group is made up of colleagues from across the NMC.

We have also established an internal Welsh Language Board which meets every quarter. This Board is made up of colleagues from across the NMC who have been responsible for implementing the Welsh Language Standards. Data on each of the compliance areas is collected and discussed at this quarterly meeting. Any issues arising or areas for improvement are also discussed.

Our progress over the past year

The NMC has been required to comply with the Welsh Language Standards (No.8) Regulations since 6 December 2023. We consider that we have been compliant with the regulations since this date.

In July 2024 we completed a self-assessment for the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to our compliance with the Standards. We declared a high level of assurance for most standards, as we have undertaken significant work to ensure that all teams are prepared to respond to requests to use Welsh. Many of the standards remain untested due to low numbers of requests, however we are satisfied that processes and guidance is in place should we receive such a request.

For the standards relating to websites, we declared a medium level of assurance due to the proportionate approach we have taken to translating website pages. This means that on some of our web pages which have been translated into Welsh, there are links to website pages available in English only. In our self-declaration we acknowledged that many of the NMC's web pages require updates, and at that point we will consider whether additional translation is required.

The Welsh Language Commissioner granted an extension for us to comply with Standard 20, which requires us to create a Welsh version of the UK-trained registration application process. Due to the anticipated programme of regulatory reform, we requested that the deadline for this standard be extended, and this was granted, and we have until 31 December 2025 to implement this standard. We continue to work towards this date for implementing Standard 20.

Our implementation activity was overseen by a cross-organisational Welsh Language Standards Regulations project board which met monthly from August 2022. The 67 standards were separated into seven workstreams and leads in each area were responsible for identifying what activity was needed to ensure compliance with the standards.

The Welsh Language Standards project board took forward initiatives across the NMC to ensure we are complying with the Standards and facilitating the use of Welsh language. Through this process we have:

- Developed supporting guidance for all colleagues in relation to their responsibilities under the Standards, including a Welsh Language policy, FAQs, and specific supporting guidance for the policy making standards.
- Established a Welsh language automated telephone line and processes to provide interpreting if required.
- Created processes for translating documents as part of corporate projects or on an ad-hoc basis, including in relation to Fitness to Practise cases.
- Created a Welsh Language Impact Assessment form, template and supporting guidance for colleagues to consider the potential positive or adverse impacts of a policy decision or change on the opportunities to use the Welsh language.
- Used a range of internal communications channels to ensure colleagues are aware of the changes and their responsibilities under the new regulations. We provided updates via all-staff briefings, internal communications channels and by attending individual team meetings, ensuring maximum awareness among colleagues in all areas of the NMC.
- Updated our HR systems to allow NMC colleagues to declare their Welsh language skill levels and established processes to facilitate requests for Welsh language training. We have also updated our Welsh language and culture e-learning module.

Following successful implementation of the standards, the project focused on preparing for the compliance date has been closed. We now have a Welsh Language Standards Board as focus has shifted to the monitoring of our ongoing compliance, and collecting relevant data on a quarterly basis. The data collected by this board feeds into this annual report.

Annual data monitoring

Standard 66 of the Welsh Language Standards (No.8) Regulations requires the NMC to provide data within this annual report on the following areas:

1. Number of complaints received in relation to our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.
2. Number of colleagues declaring Welsh language skills and their skill levels.
3. Number of vacant or new roles where Welsh language skills are required.

For the period from 6 December 2023 to 31 March 2024, we can provide the following data:

1. No complaints were received in relation to our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.
2. Three (3) colleagues declared Welsh language skills. Two of these declared CEFR A1 level proficiency, and one declared CEFR A2 level proficiency.
3. There were no vacant or new roles advertised where Welsh language skills are required.

During this period, we collected additional data around our Welsh language provision:

- Eight pieces of corporate project work required Welsh translation.
- One additional website page was translated into Welsh.
- There were 982 visits to the NMC's Welsh language website.
- One colleague requested details for Welsh language training, and two colleagues completed additional online training around the Welsh language and its history. In the coming year we will continue to promote these training opportunities with an aim to increase the number of colleagues undertaking them.
- One Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) was completed as part of Phase 1 of our review into Advanced Practice. This document is available on our website in [Welsh](#) and [English](#). Completing a Welsh Language Impact Assessment is part of the NMC's policy development cycle and is a mechanism to consider any adverse or positive impacts of a policy decision or change upon opportunities to use the Welsh language. We aim to increase the number of WLIA's being completed in the coming financial year.

Key actions for the next year

2024-2025 will be the first full financial year of the NMC being subject to the Welsh Language Standards Regulations. We will continue to hold regular Welsh Language monitoring board meetings throughout the year to maintain oversight of our compliance with the standards, and identify any areas for improvement.

We will continue to promote awareness of the Welsh Language Standards Regulations and our responsibilities with NMC colleagues, and we aim to increase the number of colleagues undertaking training in relation to the Welsh language and its history.

We will also ensure that further Welsh Language Impact Assessments are completed in relation to our major projects and policy development work. The requirement to complete a WLIA and consider impacts on the use of the Welsh language is highlighted in project management frameworks, as well as the templates for papers to be presented to the Council.

We will continue to review the pages provided in Welsh on the NMC website, and as pages are updated we will consider whether they should also be translated into Welsh.

We remain committed to engaging with the Welsh Language Commissioner and look forward to offering our views through the new framework of co-regulation and self-assessment of compliance against the standards. We will continue to commit to facilitating the use of Welsh language for people who engage with us, and working to ensure we increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.

Recent engagement activity

In addition to complying with the Welsh Language Standards Regulations, we continue to engage with key stakeholders in Wales.

During the reporting period from **1 April 2023** to **31 March 2024**, the NMC held a number of meetings and events with key stakeholders in Wales.

On 27 September 2023, we held an Open Council meeting in Cardiff. Materials for this meeting were translated into Welsh, and simultaneous interpreting into Welsh was provided, in line with the Welsh Language Standards relating to events in Wales. This meeting was well received by stakeholders and provided an opportunity to test our compliance with the standards ahead of the compliance date in December 2023.

Cross-regulatory engagement on the Welsh Language Standards Regulations

The NMC and GMC jointly chaired the Welsh Language Standards Joint Regulators' Forum which until December 2023. Through this engagement we have discussed our respective approaches to implementing the standards and our understanding of how to apply the standards in the context of health and care professional regulation.

Professional Regulation and Professional Practice

During the last financial year, there has been engagement with NHS organisations, the NHS executive and external stakeholders in Wales. This is reflected in the increased number of requests we have received for supportive sessions, discussion relating to professional queries covering Fitness to Practise (FtP), application of the Code, revalidation, registration and the NMC's core messaging (for example Computer based testing (CBT), Occupational English Test (OET), Advanced Practice and the FtP process).

On 26 May 2023, Anne Trotter (Assistant Director, Professional Practice) and Aditi Chowdhary-Gandhi (Head of Standards) attended the All-Wales Practice Assessment Document Develop Group for Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (SCPHN) and Specialist Practitioner Qualification (SPQ) Launch meeting to discuss Post Registration Standards.

Employer Link Service

Since January 2024, the Employer Link Service (ELS) has held monthly meetings with the Deputy CNO for Wales and have supported high level enquiries into open FtP cases relating to Health Boards and Trusts in Wales.

The Employer Link Service has undertaken twenty-eight engagement and learning sessions to senior nursing and midwifery teams and registrants across all Health Boards and two Trusts in Wales. This includes:

- 1.** Four 'Welcome to the UK' sessions aimed at supporting our colleagues who originally trained overseas and have come to work in Wales (often referred to as Internationally Educated Nurses – IENs).
- 2.** Eleven bespoke sessions delivered to Midwives across Wales.
- 3.** One collaborative session with the GMC to Obstetricians and Midwives at a Health Board in Wales.

The Employer Link Service has undertaken twenty-five engagement sessions with external stakeholders such as RCN, RCM, NHS executive and professional regulators with a further three learning sessions delivered to students at two AEIs in Wales. The Employer Link Service was also invited to attend and support seven of the NHS Executive All Wales Perinatal Mortality and Morbidity Review meetings.

ELS supported ten registrants going through the FtP processes and supported two witnesses in preparation for Fitness to Practice Committee (FtPC).

On 5 October 2023, the NMC produced a bilingual update of the FtP process with Social Care Wales and delivered this to Care Home Managers.

The Regulation Advisor for the Independent Health Sector has commenced discussions with providers in this sector across Wales.

Health and social care sector stakeholders

As Lead Director for Wales, Sam Foster has met regularly with the Executive Directors of Nursing chaired by the CNO and Deputy CNO for Wales.

On 1 June 2023, Andrea Sutcliffe (former Chief Executive) and Alice Hood (Assistant Director, Public Engagement) had an introductory meeting with Alyson Thomas, (Chief Executive, Llais) to discuss the work of Llais, the public voice organisation for the health and social care sector in Wales. On 6 July 2023, Alyson Thomas attended the Public Stakeholder Roundtable meeting to discuss our Strategy development.

On 28 June 2023, Sue Tranka, Gill Knight and Karen Jewell (Nursing Officer for Maternity and Early Years) attended the CBT Cross Organisational Working Group meeting.

On 7 August 2023 Sam Foster, Lesley Maslen (Executive Director for Professional Regulation) and Ruth Walker (Executive Nurse Director at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board) met with Gill Knight to discuss the caseload for Wales.

On 20 September 2023, the NMC sent our response to the PSA letter to UK Government Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to Baroness Morgan of Ely, Minister for Health for Wales.

On 28 November 2023, Anne Trotter (Assistant Director, Professional Practice) attended the 8th Welsh Simulation and Teaching Symposium at Cardiff University.

The NMC continues to be invited to participate in the Cross Regulatory Wales Health Care Summit hosted by Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) every six months.

Nursing associates in Wales

The NMC received a request from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to regulate the role of nursing associate in Wales, subject to the necessary changes to our legislation. Our Council agreed to the request in March 2024 and until the General Election was called we were working with the Welsh Government and DHSC on the legislative change. Those discussions will resume in September 2024.

Emma Westcott (Assistant Director, Strategy and Insight) is leading the work, and she has joined the Welsh Government's programme board for the delivery of this change. Other colleagues are participating in sub-groups of the programme board. Emma is undertaking engagements in Wales on the subject of nursing associate regulation, including conferences and bilateral meetings as requested.

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Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362)