

## **EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO**

### **The Welsh Language Standards (No. 6) Regulations 2017**

This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Welsh Language Division and is laid before the National Assembly for Wales in conjunction with the above subordinate legislation and in accordance with Standing Order 27.1.

#### **Minister's Declaration**

In my view, this Explanatory Memorandum gives a fair and reasonable view of the expected impact of The Welsh Language Standards (No. 6) Regulations 2017. I am satisfied that the benefits justify the likely costs.

Alun Davies AM  
Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language

15 December 2016

## Description

The Welsh Language Standards (No. 6) Regulations 2017 ('the Regulations') specify service delivery standards; policy making standards; operational standards; and record keeping standards.

The Regulations also make the standards specifically applicable to the following 27 organisations, enabling the Welsh Language Commissioner ('the Commissioner') to issue Compliance Notices to those organisations in relation to the standards specified:

Coleg Ceredigion	Merthyr Tydfil College Limited
Coleg Sir Gâr	Swansea University
Cardiff and Vale College	Aberystwyth University
Coleg Cambria	Bangor University
Coleg y Cymoedd	Cardiff University
The governing body of St David's Catholic College	Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Limited
Gower College Swansea	University of Wales
Coleg Gwent	University of Wales: Trinity St David
Bridgend College	University of South Wales
Pembrokeshire College	Glyndŵr University
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	Cardiff Metropolitan University
NPTC Group	The Open University
WEA YMCA CC Cymru	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
Career Choices Dewis Gyrfa Limited	

## Matters of special interest to the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee

### *The Welsh Language Standards (No. 6) Regulations 2017*

The Welsh Language Standards (No. 6) Regulations 2017 makes standards applicable to the 27 organisations named above. The Welsh Government laid the Welsh Language Standards (No. 3) Regulations 2016 ("the No 3 Regulations") making standards for these organisations in February 2016. Those regulations were rejected by the previous Assembly on 15 March 2016.

### *Policy changes between different sets of Regulations*

To date, the approach taken by the Welsh Government has been that Regulations specifying standards are prepared so that they are suitable for a specific group of organisations or a sector. This focus can influence the policy approach taken in each set of regulations and result in different standards being prepared for different sectors. In regulations for other sectors, the approach taken was to specify circumstances in which standards did not apply. A different approach has been taken with The Welsh Language

Standards (No 6) Regulations. Paragraph 30 of Schedule 1, part 3 of the Regulations lists the services and activities in relation to which an organisation can be required to comply.

This list of activities and services has been included in the Regulations to ensure that commercial activities such as research and publishing academic materials are not caught by standards and that the Regulations therefore do not interfere with an organisation's ability to raise its own income. This means that, for example, (subject to the body's compliance notice) standards will apply to correspondence which relates to the matters in the list in Paragraph 30 of Schedule 1.

#### Designated student accommodation for Welsh speakers

Replicating commitments in Welsh language schemes into the legal framework of Welsh language standards can be challenging because of the strict way in which standards have to be drafted to create enforceable duties. One such case is in reference to student accommodation that has been designated to Welsh speakers.

The Welsh language schemes of both Aberystwyth and Cardiff Universities indicate a commitment to provide students with designated student accommodation for Welsh speakers. The Welsh Ministers consider that it is not reasonable and proportionate to specify standards which provide students with an absolute right to accommodation reserved for Welsh speakers. If more students apply for designated accommodation than spaces available, then it is inevitable that a body would fail to comply with such a standard.

New standards have therefore been included in the Welsh Language Standards (No.6) Regulations 2017 which provide students with the right to express a preference for accommodation reserved for Welsh speakers as well as for that right to be promoted by the body.

#### Name of the Regulations

The title of the Regulations laid is the Welsh Language Standards (No. 6) Regulations 2017. It is intended that all the Regulations made under section 26 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 ("the Measure") will be made in one continuous series, in the same way as commencement orders. It is felt that this approach will make the Regulations easier to deal with and to refer to, particularly when Compliance Notices refer to Regulations. Since the No 3 Regulations were rejected, further regulations have been made, and therefore it is considered appropriate to continue that sequential numbering. It also makes it easier to differentiate between the rejected regulations and these revised Regulations.

### Bodies in Regulation 3

Regulation 3 of these Regulations lists the bodies that the Commissioner is authorised to give a compliance notice to in respect of the Standards specified. Section 43 of the Measure provides that regulations may not make standards specifically applicable to a person unless the standard is potentially applicable to them. The majority of the bodies listed are either specified in column 1 of the table in Schedule 6 of the Measure or are within a category of persons specified in that column, and column 2 of their entry sets out which standards are potentially applicable to them (section 36 of the Measure).

### Numbers in the Regulations

There has been no change to the policy regarding numbering in Regulations. The Regulations use the Welsh alphabet i.e. (a), (b), (c), (ch) etc. This affects standards 27 A-D and a small number of sub paragraphs within individual Standards (see Standards 99, 121, 134, 144, 145A, 161 and 177) It also affects:

- (1) paragraphs 30, 33, 40, 44, 45, and 59 of Schedule 1, paragraph 2 of Schedule 2, paragraphs 11 and 13 of Schedule 3 and
- (2) regulations 2(5) and 3(4).

This style is different to the usual numbering style adopted in subordinate legislation made by the Welsh Ministers. Usually, the Welsh and English version adopt the English alphabet. In this case, because of the nature and the subject matter of the Regulations, the Welsh alphabet had been used. The Welsh style numbering has been used in the English and Welsh versions to ensure consistency and to remove any possibility of confusion when cross-referring. The same style was adopted within the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/996), the Welsh Language Standards (No. 2) Regulations 2016, the Welsh Language Standards (No.4) Regulations 2016 and the Welsh Language Standards (No.5) Regulations 2016.

### **Legislative background**

The Regulations are made in exercise of the powers conferred on the Welsh Ministers under sections 26, 27, 39 and 150(5) of the Measure. Section 26 of the Measure enables the Welsh Ministers to specify standards by regulations. Section 27 enables the Welsh Ministers to specify different standards in relation to different conduct. It also enables them, in relation to a particular conduct, to specify one standard or a number of standards.

Before the Commissioner can give a person a compliance notice requiring them to comply with a standard, that standard has to be specifically applicable to the person (section 45). Section 39 provides that a standard is specifically applicable to a person once the Welsh Ministers have authorised the Commissioner to give that person a Compliance Notice in respect of that standard. Section 105(5) provides that any power of the Welsh Ministers to

make regulations includes a power to make such transitional, transitory, consequential, saving incidental and other provision as the Welsh Ministers think necessary or appropriate.

The Regulations, pursuant to section 150(2) of the Measure must be laid before and approved by resolution of the National Assembly for Wales (i.e. the affirmative procedure).

### **Purpose and intended effect of the legislation**

The Measure confirmed the official status of the Welsh language in Wales and created a new legislative framework for the language.

A key step in giving effect to the Measure is specifying standards and authorising the Commissioner to require persons to comply with those Standards.

Section 25 of the Measure provides that a person is required to comply with a standard specified by the Welsh Ministers where certain conditions are met. Those conditions include:

- i. That a standard is specifically applicable to the person (i.e. the Welsh Ministers have authorised the Commissioner to give that person a Compliance Notice in respect of that standard),
- ii. That the Commissioner has given a Compliance Notice to the person,
- iii. The Compliance Notice requires the person to comply with the standard, and
- iv. The Compliance Notice is in force.

The duty to comply with standards will take the place of the Welsh Language Schemes that were developed under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and monitored by the Welsh Language Board until its abolition on 31 March 2012, and the Welsh Language Commissioner since 1 April 2012.

The Regulations have two purposes. The first is to specify standards.

Standards falling into the following categories of standards are specified in the Regulations:

- Service-delivery standards will be imposed in relation to the delivery of services in order to promote or facilitate the use of the Welsh language, or to ensure that it is treated no less favourably than English.
- Policy-making standards will require organisations to consider what effect their policy decisions will have on the ability of persons to use the language and on the principle of treating Welsh no less favourably than English.
- Operational standards deal with the internal use of Welsh by organisations.

- Record-keeping standards will make it necessary to keep records about some of the other standards, and about any complaints received by an organisation. These records will assist the Commissioner in regulating the organisation's compliance with standards.

The standards have been drafted with the aim of:

- Improving the services Welsh-speakers can expect to receive from organisations in Welsh
- Increasing the use people make of Welsh-language services
- Making it clear to organisations what they need to do in terms of the Welsh language
- Ensuring that there is an appropriate degree of consistency in terms of the duties placed on organisations in the same sectors.

Some standards are dependent on each other. The Regulations therefore contain tables (in Part 2 of Schedules 1 and 3) to accompany the Service-delivery standards and Operational standards, detailing which other standards will also need to be imposed when a particular standard is included in a Compliance Notice. Part 2 of Schedule 1 to the Regulations also contains a table which provides that the Commissioner may not require a body to comply with a particular standard when another particular standard is included in a compliance notice.

The second purpose of the Regulations is to authorise the Commissioner to give Compliance Notices to the organisations listed above requiring them to comply with the standards specified.

The Regulations, when they come into force, will not have a direct effect on organisations and they will not, by themselves, create rights for Welsh language users. That will only happen when all the conditions in section 25 have been met. However, the Regulations are a crucial step in the Measure's framework, and enable the Commissioner to require organisations to comply with the standards.

It will be for the Commissioner to choose which standards to impose on each organisation by way of a Compliance Notice. The Regulations set the range of standards which could be imposed on an organisation. There is no requirement on the Commissioner to require every organisation to comply with every standard. The organisation may have to comply with the standard only in some circumstances and not in others – depending on what is stated in their Compliance Notice. The Compliance Notice will also set the date by which the organisation is required to comply with a standard.

#### *Means of appeal*

Any organisation will be able to challenge the requirements to comply with a particular standard on the grounds of whether it is reasonable and proportionate to require them to do so.

In the first place, an organisation will be able to present a challenge to the Commissioner. If they are unable to resolve the dispute, there is a route of

appeal available to the Welsh Language Tribunal, and thereafter to the High Court.

### *Sanctions*

The Commissioner will be responsible for enforcing compliance with standards. In cases where the Commissioner determines that an organisation has failed to comply with a standard, the Commissioner may take enforcement action. Enforcement action under the Measure can vary from the making of recommendations or giving advice to an organisation, to the imposition of a civil penalty not exceeding £5,000.

### **Risks if Regulations are not made**

If the proposed Regulations are not made, the following risks will be realised:

- Welsh Language Schemes introduced under the Welsh Language Act 1993 will remain in place for the organisations listed above.
- If Welsh Language Schemes remain there will be no enforcement mechanism if an organisation breaches their Scheme.
- Currently, Welsh Language Schemes vary from organisation to organisation, and the commitments in some Schemes are not specific. This leads to a situation where the public are unsure about which services they can expect to receive in Welsh. This uncertainty will continue if the Regulations are not made. Although there may still be some variation between organisations, the standards are specific in their nature and will therefore reduce the public's uncertainty.
- Uncertainty on the part of organisations concerning their Welsh language provisions, due to the fact that they have been under the impression that their Schemes will be replaced by standards. Many organisations have started to prepare for the onset of standards and the new monitoring and enforcement regime.
- No improvement as far as organisations' internal use of Welsh is concerned. An organisation's internal use of Welsh would continue to depend on the goodwill of that organisation, with no monitoring system in place.
- A key component of the Measure will not be implemented.

More detailed information about the risks and benefits of implementing the standards can be found in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) below, with the risks of not introducing standards highlighted in the 'Option 1: do nothing' section of the benefits.

### **Consultation**

The Commissioner conducted a standards investigation with the organisations who can be required to comply with the standards specified in the Regulations between November 2014 and February 2015. The Welsh Ministers gave due regard to the conclusions the Commissioner presented in the standards reports. These reports can be found on the Commissioner's website.

The Welsh Ministers decided not to hold a full public consultation on a draft version of these Regulations. However, the organisations in the Commissioner's second investigation have had opportunities to engage in the process of making Standards. All the organisations responded to the Commissioner's standards investigation; of these most already have a Welsh language scheme and experience of developing a Welsh language provision. Commitments made in the bodies' Welsh language schemes were also considered.

In addition, specific matters relating to the Regulations have been discussed with sector representatives, namely Colegau Cymru, NUS Wales, Universities Wales and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, in order to gather more information about the nature of their work.

### **Competition assessment**

A competition Filter Test has been undertaken – the Regulations are unlikely to have a significant detrimental effect on competition. In order for the Regulations to fulfil the policy aim of not applying to commercial activities, a list specifying in relation to which matters the standards could apply is included in the Regulations. See paragraph 30 of Schedule 1 and paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 (Service Delivery Standards and Policy Making Standards).

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Some standards in the No. 6 Regulations under the 'meetings' heading (standards 25- 26B and 28 – 29B relating to student support meetings as well as complaints and disciplinary procedures) make specific provisions to accommodate the language use of vulnerable individuals. The student support element of these meeting standards will only come into play when the focus of the meeting relates to the individuals' counselling or mental health needs. They do not cover issues relating to support given to individuals with physical or sensory impairments.

The difference between the new complaints, disciplinary and student support meetings standards and the other meetings standards is the level of Welsh medium provision (or level of translation) provided at the meeting. In the complaints, disciplinary and student support standards, two way translation would be provided – from Welsh to English as well as from English to Welsh. For individuals in a vulnerable position or in a fragile state of mind, the procedure of switching language during a meeting could cause increased levels of stress so the offer of two way translations puts the individuals' needs first. The focus here is the avoidance of undue stress caused to an individual already under mental strain. Therefore, advancing equality of opportunity having due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered



by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

Meetings involving individuals with physical or sensory impairments, have been accounted for in the other meetings standards so that those meetings can take place in Welsh. If the physical issue leads to the individual suffering from stress or other mental health issues, then the 'student support' standards would apply. At each point, a student with or without a form of physical or sensory impairment would be offered to have meetings conducted through the medium of Welsh via the meetings standards. It is, of course, a matter for the Welsh Language Commissioner to determine which standards a body has to comply with, and in which circumstances or areas.

We are content that specific provisions in the No 6 Regulations are compatible with the Welsh Ministers' equality duties.

### **Post-implementation review**

The Measure provides many opportunities for the Commissioner to bring the suitability of the standards specified in the Regulations to the Welsh Ministers' attention. For example:

- The Commissioner may make recommendations or provide advice to the Welsh Ministers (section 4 of the Measure) which could directly recommend amending the Regulations if she sees fit to do so. Advice given by her could also lead to the Welsh Ministers determining that it would be appropriate to review the standards. The Welsh Ministers must have due regard to any written recommendations or advice that the Commissioner makes or gives when exercising the function to which the recommendation or advice relates.
- Section 18 of the Measure requires the Commissioner to produce an annual report which must include a review of issues relevant to the Welsh language (among other matters) and could also include any other matters the Commissioner think it is appropriate to include.
- The Commissioner also has the power to undertake Standards Investigations (sections 61 and 62 of the Measure) which can consider which standards should be, or should continue to be, specifically applicable to a person, whether or not the standards are already specified by the Welsh Ministers. After a Standards Investigation the Commissioner must produce a Standards Report, a copy of which must be provided to the Welsh Ministers. The Welsh Ministers must have due regard to such report in accordance with section 66 of the Measure.

Subject to their Compliance Notices, organisations will publish Annual Reports which deal with how they have complied with the standards imposed on them (see standards 166, 172 and 178). These Annual Reports could also raise issues regarding the suitability of the standards specified.

## **PART 2 – REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

### **Background**

1. The organisations subject to the Welsh Language Commissioner's ('the Commissioner') second standards investigation were asked to take part in a Welsh Government Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). The RIA questionnaire was distributed with the Commissioner's Standards Investigation documentation. The Commissioner's investigation was conducted between 7 November 2014 and 9 February 2015, and organisations were asked to submit their RIA responses directly to the Welsh Government.
2. 73 of the 119 organisations in the Commissioner's second investigation responded to the RIA questionnaire, giving a response rate of 61%. The responding organisations included a good cross-section of the different sectors, and covered organisations with a varying range of Welsh language provisions. The majority of the respondents provided detailed information about the costs and benefits of implementing the standards within their organisations.
3. In May and early June 2015, the Commissioner presented her official Standards Investigation response to the Welsh Government in the form of nine standards reports issued under section 64 of the Measure. The Welsh Ministers must have due regard (i) to the Commissioner's Standards Reports in deciding whether and how to exercise the powers in Part 4 of the Measure (which includes the power to specify standards), and (ii) to any advice issued by the Commissioner in writing.

### **Summary of Responses**

4. 15 of the 27 organisations (56%) that will be subject to the No 6 Regulations have provided information on the cost of their current Welsh Language Scheme and an estimate of the cost of complying with the Welsh Language Standards. These organisations were Coleg Sir Gâr, Cardiff and the Vale College, Coleg y Cymoedd, Coleg Gwent, Grwp Llandrillo Menai, NPTC Group, Swansea University, Bangor University, Cardiff University, The University of Wales: Trinity St David, Cardiff Metropolitan University, University of South Wales, The Open University, Career Choices Dewis Gyrfa and HEFCW.

### **Accuracy and Usefulness of Data**

5. We have concerns around the data received from organisations and whether it is suitable to produce a robust and accurate RIA. The Commissioner based her second investigation on the draft Regulations prepared for bodies in set 1 that were subject to a Welsh Government

consultation in November 2014. The RIA responses were therefore also based on these Regulations. Some organisations were reluctant to base their RIA responses on draft regulations due to their potential to change, and due to the fact that they had been prepared specifically for the Welsh Ministers, local authorities and National Park Authorities.

6. To enable an assessment to be made of the additional cost incurred in complying with the Welsh Language Standards, an organisation would have to provide a figure for the cost of delivering their current Welsh Language Scheme and an estimate of what it would cost them to comply with Standards. However, in a number of cases organisations were unable to provide either figure or could only provide one of the figures.
7. Even where estimated costs have been provided, many organisations stressed the difficulties of providing accurate data when they did not know which of the draft standards they would be expected to comply with. Some organisations have seemingly provided estimated costs for complying with every single standard. However, it is unlikely that every standard will be imposed on any single organisation – this will be a decision for the Commissioner when she issues compliance notices under section 45 of the Welsh Language Measure.
8. Organisations have also interpreted the questions in different ways. There are a number of examples of organisations indicating that their costs will increase in order to employ multiple additional members of staff to deal with implementing different categories of standards when their evidence suggests that only one person would potentially be needed to do that work. This has greatly increased the estimates provided by these organisations. There were also some examples of organisations including the cost of employing staff that are employed to deliver services as cost of complying with their current Welsh language scheme. The evidence indicated that these staff members were employed to deliver the organisation's services, and sometimes not exclusively through the medium of Welsh.
9. A number of organisations have provided estimates for compliance that are many times higher than other, similar organisations.
10. With these issues in mind, this RIA focuses on the economic, social and linguistic impacts on organisations as well as covering the financial impact as far as possible. If the Regulations are passed by the Assembly, further information will be collected from organisations when the Commissioner issues Compliance Notices and organisations are in a position to provide more accurate costs.

## **Options**

11. This Regulatory Impact Assessment considers two options:

- Option 1: Do nothing – Organisations would continue to operate their existing Welsh Language Schemes under The Welsh Language Act 1993.
- Option 2: Introduce Welsh Language Standards for the 27 organisations listed above.

12. The following analysis considers the costs and benefits associated with each of these options in turn.

## Costs and benefits

### Costs

#### Option 1: Do Nothing

13. There are no additional costs under this option. The organisations would not be required to comply with new Welsh Language Standards but they would be expected to continue to deliver the existing Welsh Language Schemes.

14. Table 1 summarises the information received from the organisations about the cost of complying with the existing Welsh Language Schemes. The range in costs is likely to reflect differences in the size and scope of the organisations involved as well as probable differences in the interpretation of the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 1 - Range of costs for delivering existing Welsh Language Schemes

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Minimum (£)</b>	<b>Maximum (£)</b>
Bodies in the (No. 6) Regulations	15	0	629,000

#### Option 2: Introduce Welsh Language Standards for the 27 organisations listed above.

15. While it has not yet known which of the standards will apply to each organisation, it is considered likely that there will be additional one-off and recurrent costs incurred by the organisations to comply with the standards.

16. The main recurring cost is expected to be staffing, in particular staff with expertise in the fields of translation, marketing and policy. Organisations are likely to need to expand translation facilities, either by recruiting more internal translators or more commonly by outsourcing translation work to external providers.

17. In addition, there are likely to be one-off and recurrent training costs incurred. The one-off training costs are expected to relate to internal administration and training regarding the implementation of standards, with

the recurring training costs focusing to a greater degree on the possible need to provide more statutory staff training through the medium of Welsh and training for staff to improve their Welsh language skills,

18. As noted above, the organisations involved were contacted and asked to provide cost data to inform this RIA. Our concerns about the data collected are outlined above.
19. To demonstrate the variation in responses, the minimum and maximum identified additional costs for these organisations are set out in the table below. While the maximum cost estimate is an outlier, there were other organisations that identified a significant increase in compliance costs. At the opposite end of the range, it is not clear how realistic it is to suggest (prior to knowing which standards will apply) that complying with the standards will impose no additional costs on an organisation.

Table 2 - Range of additional costs identified by organisations (£)

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Minimum (£)</b>	<b>Maximum (£)</b>
Bodies in the (No. 6) Regulations	15	0	10,000,000

20. Due to the above concerns, the data is considered incomplete and potentially inconsistent. Following discussions with Government Economists and Statisticians, it has been agreed that the data collected is not sufficiently robust for use in a Regulatory Impact Assessment. Given the ranges in the submitted data and the current uncertainty around which of the Standards will apply to each organisation, even taking an average of costs is considered unlikely to be an accurate reflection of the cost of complying with the Welsh Language Standards.
21. A further round of data gathering was considered but it was decided that the outcome was likely be the similar and that it would not be possible to collect the data needed to produce a robust assessment of the cost implications until there is further information available on which standards will apply to each organisation.
22. In addition to the compliance costs incurred by the organisations, there are also likely to be costs incurred by the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Welsh Language Tribunal for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the standards. Finally, there will be an appeals process established whereby, if an organisation believes that the standards imposed on it are unreasonable and disproportionate, there will be means to appeal to the Commissioner in the first instance, and thereafter to the newly established Welsh Language Tribunal. The costs associated with these processes are not known at this stage.

## **Benefits**

### **Option 1: Do Nothing**

23. This is the baseline option and there are no additional benefits associated with this option.
24. Doing nothing would maintain the status quo of the Welsh Language Schemes which have been in place since 1993. The regulatory role of the Commissioner would continue along similar lines to that of the Welsh Language Board as would the resource-intensive procedures involved in agreeing and amending schemes, and the current, limited, enforcement system.

### **Option 2: Introduce Welsh Language Standards for the 27 organisations listed above**

25. The purpose of the standards is to improve the level of Welsh language service which members of the public can expect to receive. At this stage (and until the Welsh Language Commissioner issues the compliance notices), it is only possible to outline the expected benefits in general terms.
26. The standards will make clear what organisations need to do in terms of the Welsh language, so that people will know what to expect with regard to Welsh language services. This clarity, both for the public and the organisations, will help ensure that the standards can be effectively enforced and lead to an increase in the use of Welsh language services.
27. 24 of the 27 organisations already operate Welsh Language Schemes and already do many of the things set out in the standards. The standards build on the Schemes and place more rigorous requirements on organisations. However, the Commissioner can only set standards that are reasonable and proportionate for each individual organisation to comply with.
28. On a practical level, the standards will replace sometimes vague commitments in Schemes with specific and enforceable duties.
29. Organisations will now be required to take a more proactive and strategic approach to mainstreaming the Welsh language. Key to this will be the 'proactive offer,' which places the onus on the organisation to offer services in Welsh, rather than on the individual to request them. This will provide a solid foundation to improve services for Welsh speakers.
30. An improved enforcement regime will provide a more effective means of dealing with alleged non-compliance and allow for early and informal resolution of complaints as appropriate.
31. As part of the RIA process, organisations were asked to comment on any linguistic, social or environmental advantages of introducing standards. A variety of responses were noted, from organisations that saw no

advantages to introducing standards to those who viewed the standards as an opportunity in several ways.

32. From an economic or business point of view, some organisations saw the standards as an opportunity to increase the number of Welsh speakers within their workforces – they commented that this could lead to longer term savings on translation and interpretation work that was previously outsourced as well as increasing their capacity to work through the medium of Welsh which would be helpful when working with organisations who operate largely through the medium of Welsh. Several of the higher education organisations commented that the standards could help increase recruitment of Welsh domicile students in general, as well as recruitment of students to Welsh medium courses, and subsequently increase income.
33. Some organisations commented that the standards would help them to improve the services that they offer to a bilingual public and to attract new customers. Providing a better working environment for staff was also mentioned, along with supporting staff to use their Welsh in the workplace.
34. A small number of organisations commented on their social responsibility to promote the Welsh language and felt that the standards would help with normalising the use of Welsh, especially in a business environment. This could increase people's confidence and help them to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives. One organisation felt that the standards would give the Welsh language greater value as a skill in the workplace. One of the universities commented that the standards would help them respond to the increasing demand for Welsh speakers in the medical, optometry, pharmacy, dentistry, social work, health care sciences and law professions.
35. Lastly, some organisations said that compliance with the Standards was likely to broaden their links with their local communities and encourage greater local involvement and engagement in their activities. Increased social inclusion was also mentioned by a number of organisations.

## **Conclusion**

36. The current uncertainty surrounding which of the Standards each organisation will need to comply with means that it is not possible to produce a robust assessment of the costs and benefits associated with the Regulations at this stage.
37. The Welsh Language Commissioner has confirmed that she will consult with the relevant organisations before issuing final compliance notices and factors such as reasonability and proportionality of individual standards are likely to be discussed at this stage, as well as which standards organisations will be expected to comply with and in which circumstances. As part of this process, organisations could present an assessment of the

relative costs and benefits associated with the Standards. This could be considered by the Commissioner as part of the process of coming to a decision on whether the standards are reasonable and proportionate.