

Welsh Language Standards report



1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

1. Introduction

A compliance notice was issued to Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) by the Welsh Language Commissioner on 25 July 2016.

This compliance notice outlined WCVA's duty to meet 147 of the statutory Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. This Measure gave equal status to Welsh and English so that Welsh cannot be treated less favourably than English.

The introduction of the Welsh Language Standards is designed to ensure that those in Wales who wish to live their lives in Welsh can do by obliging public bodies and some third sector organisations, to deliver their services in Welsh.

The Welsh Language Standards require WCVA to present an annual report, in relation to each financial year, that deals with the way that it has complied with the Service Delivery, Policy Making and Operational Standards. Provision is also included within the Standards concerning publishing and publicity of the Annual Report. This Report sets out WCVA's progress towards complying with the Standards from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

2. Background

The Standards are a set of legally binding requirements that aim to improve the bilingual service that the people of Wales can expect to receive from a number of public and statutory bodies. WCVA is also included. The Standards clearly set out what our responsibilities are in terms of providing bilingual services, ensuring the Welsh language is not treated any less favourably than the English language.

The Language Standards are divided into five different categories

- Service Delivery
- Policy Making
- Operational
- Record Keeping
- Promotion

WCVA is required to comply with Standards for Service Delivery, Policy Making, Operational, and Record Keeping.

The Standards aim to:

- Make it clear to organisations what their duties are in relation to the Welsh language.
- Make it clearer to Welsh speakers about the services they can expect to receive in Welsh.
- Make Welsh language services more consistent and improve their quality.

3. Welsh Language Officer role

During the period, the Risk and Impact Officer acted as the Welsh Language Officer, with the support of the Director of Strategy and Sector Development. She worked with teams and managers across the organisation to ensure procedures are in place and to help staff understand their role in assisting WCVA meet the Standards.

Desktop guidance notes are available to assist staff with compliance. The main elements of the guidance notes deal with the practical day-to-day implications of working to meet the Standards, such as how to answer the telephone; how to arrange meetings, talking the participants language choice into consideration; and recording the language choice of our members and contacts.

4. Vision for Welsh Language

WCVA's Welsh Language Scheme is still a working document which outlines the organisation's commitment to the Welsh language.

In November 2019, WCVA and the Welsh Language Commissioner reviewed and signed a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding. The working plan was also reviewed, which sets out joint working for each financial year. This work includes co-hosting learning opportunities and looking for opportunities to promote WCVA's and the Commissioner's work at national events.

5. Developing our Welsh language learning offer

The way we run our Welsh language offer is under review as we have not had the desired response for attendance at the arranged courses. We are currently reviewing this to introduce further incentive to increase attendance for 2020-2021. During February 2020 we visited 7 Welsh organisations in North Wales to discuss their requirements and how WCVA can support them, unfortunately due to COVID-19 we have been unable to take this work further.

6. Complaints – in accordance with Standard 141

Service Delivery – WCVA is subject to 75 Service Standards.

No complaints were received during this period.

Policy Making – WCVA is subject to 16 Policy Making Standards.

No complaints have been made during this period relating to WCVA's compliance with the Policy Making Standards.

Operational – WCVA is subject to 46 Operational Standards.

No complaints were received in this period relating to WCVA's compliance with the Operational Standards.

7. Welsh language skills and learning – in accordance with Standard 145

WCVA believes that it is responding to the Standards in a positive manner. In 2019-20, **10** staff received Welsh Language Awareness induction training as part of their induction to WCVA. WCVA delivers Welsh Language Refresher training to staff every two years. This training was due to take place during March 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID-19. The training was rearranged and delivered online during April

2020. These courses include the Standards and how to improve working practices accordingly.

We offer the Work Welsh online course, where staff can achieve Welsh Language qualifications (Levels 1-3, depending on staff roles). During this time period 2 members of staff completed qualifications. No members of staff attended residential courses/university courses during this period.

WCVA is committed to encouraging all its staff to use the Welsh language skills that they have, and to creating a bilingual working environment where they feel they can use Welsh. Learners and less confident speakers are encouraged to use the language in a non-judgemental and supportive environment.

Welsh language skills of WCVA staff as of 31 March, 2020:

17	Staff identify themselves as Welsh speakers
9	Staff are learning Welsh
67	Staff identify themselves as not having any Welsh language skills

8. Recruitment – in accordance with Standard 148

The number of new and vacant posts advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where:

Posts	Criteria
3	Welsh language skills were essential
0	Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post
9	Welsh language skills were desirable:
0	Welsh language skills were not necessary

All posts are advertised as either Welsh language skills essential or desirable. Where possible, we explain the level of skills required.

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WCVA welcomes receiving correspondence in Welsh. We will respond to correspondence received in Welsh, in Welsh. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.