

# Welsh Language Standards report



1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

## 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 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## 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**

The Risk and Impact Officer has taken on the role of the Welsh Language Officer, with the support of the Director of Strategy and Sector Development. During the pandemic, she worked with teams across WCVA supporting them. The Risk and Impact Officer has met with various members of staff discussing the standards, and has supported new members of staff with any questions they may have.

As well as supporting compliance with the standards, The Risk and Impact Officer continues to work closely with the Commissioner's Hybu team, who have recently had a shift in work roles. The main contact from the team has been seconded to Welsh Government, and meetings have been set up with other member in the Hybu team to discuss progress on the working plan.

Desktop guidance notes are available to assist staff with compliance, and are saved in the WCVA General folder on teams. 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**

During 2020, 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. Welsh language and our events and learning programme**

Due to Covid 19, our training was initially put on hold, including the review of our Welsh Language learning offer, between September and March. When our learning programme resumed, several webinars and courses were delivered through the medium of Welsh. Developing this programme further is important to the service WCVA delivers and we are continuing to look for qualified trainers with experience in the subject areas to help us deliver our programme. We are working with member organisations who work largely through the medium of Welsh to identify how we can strengthen our Welsh language training offer.

During the pandemic, WCVA events also shifted online. Initially this presented challenges to running bilingual events. WCVA uses Microsoft Teams as its main platform for online meetings. Initially the functionality was poor to support bilingual meetings. WCVA worked with the Commissioner's office to identify solutions. We adapted formats to support bilingual meetings through the pandemic and invested in alternative software, including Zoom to provide the translation function. We continue to test different ways of supporting bilingual meetings online and feedback to the Commissioner's office where relevant.

### **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 2020-21, **7** 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 and 56 attended this training.

We offer the Work Welsh online course, where staff can achieve Welsh Language qualifications (Levels 1-3, depending on staff roles). Due to the pandemic and working arrangements, no members of staff completed qualifications or completed training 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 01 April 2020:

21	Staff identify themselves as Welsh speakers
11	Staff are learning Welsh
71	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:

<b>Posts</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
3	Welsh language skills were essential
0	Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post
24	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.

## Contacts

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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.

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