

Welsh Language Standards Report

1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023



1. Introduction

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued a compliance notice to Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) 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 2022 to 31 March 2023.

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 this period the Membership and Events officer also acted as the Welsh Language Officer, with the support of the Marketing and Communications Manager. They met with various members of staff to discuss the standards, and supported new members of staff with any questions.

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, taking the participants language choice into consideration; and recording the language choice of our members and contacts.

During this period, WCVA underwent a significant restructure. A new role of Membership and Welsh Language Manager has been created as part of the process and the post begins from April 2023.

4. Vision for Welsh Language

As well as supporting compliance with the standards, the Welsh Language Officer continued to work closely with the Commissioner's Hybu team to promote the use of Welsh across the sector. We continued to promote Cynnig Cymraeg to CVCs and the Hybu team joined a meeting of Chief Officers to talk about the scheme. During this period, we commissioned an external company to assist us in thinking about how as an organisation we move beyond compliance so that the Welsh language is viewed as an integral part of our identity. The report and its recommendations have been considered and will be adopted over the coming year.

5. Welsh language and our events and learning programme

WCVA continues to deliver its learning and events programme with both online and face to face content 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 continue working with member organisations who work largely through the medium of Welsh to identify how we can strengthen our Welsh language training offer. Ideas and suggestions in the external report mentioned above will be adopted to strengthen this work further.

6. Complaints – in accordance with Standard 141

Service Delivery - WCVA is subject to 75 Service Standards.
1 complaint was received during this period.

Policy Making - WCVA is subject to 16 Policy Making Standards
No complaints were received during this period.

Operational - WCVA is subject to 46 Operational Standards
No complaints were received during this period.

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

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. To strengthen our approach in this area, we will fully adopt the recommendations in the external report mentioned above.

We ask all staff during their appraisals if they are interested in learning Welsh.

WCVA Staff language skills as of 31 March 2023

	No. of staff	78
Welsh as preferred language	3	3.8%
Welsh Speakers	13	16.5%
Welsh Learners	6	7.5%

8. Recruitment - in accordance with Standard 148

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

	Welsh Language Essential	Welsh Language highly desirable	Welsh Language desirable
Internal	6		36
External			10

We have recently changed to using a proficiency framework and going forward this will be used instead of Welsh essential or desirable.

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.