



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Report 2020-21

September 2021

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives. She provides help and support directly to older people through her casework team and works to empower older people and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon. The Commissioner's role is underpinned by a set of unique legal powers to support her in reviewing the work of public bodies and holding them to account when necessary.

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Introduction

As an independent organisation funded by public monies, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales is required to comply with the [Welsh Language Standards](#) (the Standards), which set out a number of ways in which the Commissioner must provide and promote services through the Welsh language and facilitate and encourage its use in the workplace.

The Welsh Language Standards that apply to the Commissioner are divided into four different categories:

- Service Delivery
- Policy Making
- Operational
- Record Keeping

The Commissioner has been issued with 145 Standards:

	Compliance Date: 25.01.17	Compliance Date: 25.07.17	Total
Service Delivery	71	0	71
Policy Making	15	0	15
Operational	47	2	49
Record Keeping	9	1	10
Total	142	3	145

This is the fourth report undertaken by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales that details what steps and actions have been taken to comply with the Standards.

This report focuses on activities undertaken in the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, covering the 2019/20 financial year.

Context

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Commissioner's office closed on 17 March 2020 and all members of staff worked from home during 2020/21.

During this time, an informal review of the Service Delivery Standards was undertaken to ensure that we were still able to maintain our compliance with specific Standards relating to phone calls and meetings.

Compliance

The Commissioner's compliance with the Standards is set out below.

Service Delivery Standards

- A database is held recording an individual's language preference. This database is updated by all staff on an ongoing basis
- All staff know how to respond to correspondence (letter and e-mail), answer the telephone, arrange and hold meetings. No visitors attended the office during this time
- All template letters comply with the Standards
- An automated system for the main telephone number enables callers the option to speak to a member of staff in Welsh

- All answer machine messages are bilingual, with Welsh first
- Staff answer the phone bilingually, Welsh first
- All documents produced for public use are bilingual, using the tilt and turn format as standard (longer reports are produced separately in both languages)
- Attendees of meetings are asked for their language of choice. If over 10% state they wish to contribute in Welsh, then simultaneous translation is provided. This was possible using Zoom video conferencing
- All public notices and adverts are bilingual
- The Commissioner's website is bilingual
- Any signage in the office is compliant
- All tenders for contracts are published bilingually on the Sell2Wales website
- Tenders received in Welsh will be responded to in Welsh and any interviews will be conducted with the aid of a simultaneous translator

Policy Making Standards

- All staff understand the requirements of the Policy Making Standards
- Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance has been produced to help staff complete a Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Operational Standards

- A policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language is published on the website
- All staff are asked whether they wish to receive their contract of employment in Welsh and the results are recorded
- All staff are asked whether they wish to receive any paper correspondence that relates to his or her employment and which is addressed to him or her personally in Welsh and the results are recorded
- All staff are asked whether they wish to receive any documents relating to their training needs and their performance objectives in Welsh and the results are recorded
- All forms relating to annual leave, absences from work and flexible working hours are produced bilingually
- All policies are published bilingually on the shared access drive
- All staff are aware that they are able to make complaints in Welsh and have the right to respond to a complaint made about them in Welsh
- All staff will be offered the opportunity to host any meetings regarding complaints about them in Welsh (with the use of simultaneous translation)
- Any record of decision relating to a complaint against a member of staff will be issued in Welsh
- All policies are compliant with the Standards
- Computer software has been provided to all members of staff who required it to check spelling and grammar in Welsh (Cysgair and Cysill)
- The Welsh language skills of all staff has been assessed through self-assessment (see Welsh Language Skills of Employees section)
- The Commissioner provides opportunities during work hours for all employees to receive Welsh language training. During 2019/20, all employees had the opportunity to attend Welsh language lessons at various competency levels (see Welsh Language Skills and Training

section)

- Information to raise awareness of the Welsh language is provided to all new staff members as part of their induction
- Wording and a logo has been provided for staff's e-mail signature to inform people if they are fluent Welsh speakers or learners
- Welsh language skills for new or vacant posts are assessed (see Recruitment section)
- Posts are advertised bilingually and state language skills required
- Adverts state that the Commissioner welcomes applications in Welsh
- All information related to recruitment is published bilingually
- Application forms provide a space for individuals to state if they wish to use Welsh at interview stage and that simultaneous translation will be provided if necessary
- Any new signage is displayed bilingually with Welsh first

Record Keeping

- The Commissioner keeps a record of the number of complaints she receives relating to our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. No complaints were received in 2020/21.
- The Commissioner keeps a copy of any complaint that she receives in relation to the Standards
- The Commissioner keeps a record of steps taken to comply with the Policy Making Standards
- The Commissioner keeps a record of the Welsh language skills of all staff as well as the self-assessments that are completed by staff to determine their language proficiency
- The Commissioner keeps a record of the assessments undertaken to determine the required Welsh language skills of new or vacant posts
- The Commissioner keeps a record of how all new or vacant posts were categorised in relation to Welsh language skills needed

Language Complaints

During 2020/21, there have been no complaints received regarding the Commissioner's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

Welsh Language Skills and Training

As at 31 March 2021, the Commissioner employed 18 members of staff. The Welsh Language Survey was conducted during March 2021, which asked staff to self-assess their skills using a matrix of proficiency in Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. All members of staff responded to the survey. The results are detailed in tables 1 and 2 below, showing that 37% of the organisation are Welsh speakers.

Table 1 Welsh language skills of all staff

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
0 – No Skills	2	2	4	3
1 – Entry	4	4	5	7
2 – Foundation	4	2	3	2
3 – Intermediate	2	5	1	0
4 – Advanced	1	1	3	2
5 – Fluent	6	5	3	5

Table 2 Welsh language skills of all staff at Band level

Level	Band						Total
	B	C	D	E	F	Comm	
No Skills	0	0	2	0	-	-	2
Entry	0	0	2	1	-	1	4
Foundation	4	0	1	-	-	-	5
Intermediate	0	0	1	-	-	-	1
Advanced	0	1	0	-	1	-	2
Fluent	1	3	1	-	-	-	5

During 2020/21, the Commissioner remained committed to provided opportunities during work hours for all employees to receive Welsh language training, fully funded by the organisation.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all external Welsh language classes that staff were due to attend were cancelled. There was therefore no ability to attend external Welsh language training during 2020/21. However, staff continued to access online learning, such as SaySomethingInWelsh.

Recruitment

When a new or vacant post arises, the Chief Operating Officer will complete a Welsh language skills assessment for each role. This assessment will determine the Welsh language skills required for that role based on the requirements of the role e.g being public facing, providing advice and support directly to older people.

During 2020/21, one role was advertised externally. This role was a vacant position, already classified as Welsh 'desirable'. A review of the language skill requirements of this role was undertaken, and it was determined to continue to advertise the role as Welsh 'desirable'.

Training

No training was delivered through the medium of English or Welsh on topics such as recruitment and interviewing, performance management, complaints and disciplinary procedures, induction, dealing with the public, and health and safety.