

**WLGA WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT
2019-20****Purpose**

1. For members to receive and endorse the WLGA Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2019-20.

Background

2. The Welsh Language Commissioner undertook a review of the WLGA between November 2014 and February 2015. A standards report outlining the conclusions of the investigation was then produced for Welsh Ministers in May 2015 and which was also shared with the WLGA.
3. In October 2015, the Welsh Language Commissioner highlighted the Welsh Ministers' full response to the report together with the proposed timetable for introducing Welsh language standards for the WLGA.
4. The Welsh Language Standards (No.2) Regulations 2016 came into effect on 16th of February 2016 and the Welsh Language Commissioner was then duly authorised to issue a notice to the WLGA requiring compliance with one or more of the standards.
5. A period of consultation followed between 31st March 2016 to 26th May 2016.
6. In response to further queries raised by the WLGA, the Welsh Language Commissioner issued a determination letter together with a revised compliance notice in May 2017.
7. In September 2018, the WLGA published its first Annual Report covering the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. This third Annual Report covers the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

Recommendations

8. **Members are asked to receive and endorse the WLGA Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-20 for publication.**

Author: Sharon Davies

Head of Education

E-mail: sharon.davies@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA Welsh Language Standards

Annual Report 2019-20

Welsh Local Government Association

The WLGA's primary purposes are to promote a better local government, its reputation and to support authorities in the development of policies and priorities which will improve public service and democracy.

It represents the 22 local authorities in Wales with the 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities as associate members.

Welsh Local Government Association

Local Government House
Drake Walk
Cardiff CF10 4LG

029 2046 8600 | www.wlga.wales
@WelshLGA

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1. Introduction

The Welsh Local Government Association (hereafter referred to as the WLGA, or 'the Association') is fully committed to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards as set out by the Welsh Government under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

These standards set clear expectations on the WLGA to provide services in Welsh, and to promote the use of Welsh language through all our services.

The Welsh language standards applicable to the Association fall under four categories:

- Service Delivery
- Policy Making
- Operational
- Record Keeping

This Annual Report reviews the WLGA's compliance with the applicable Welsh Language Standards from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

The WLGA's Welsh Language Standards and Complaints Policy are available to view on a dedicated page on the WLGA's website: <https://wlga.wales/welsh-language-standards>

2. Background

The Welsh Language Commissioner undertook a review of the WLGA between November 2014 and February 2015. A standards report outlining the conclusions of the investigation was then produced for Welsh Ministers in May 2015 and shared also with the WLGA.

In October 2015, the Welsh Language Commissioner highlighted the Welsh Ministers' full response to that report together with the proposed timetable for introducing Welsh language standards for the WLGA.

The Welsh Language Standards (No.2) Regulations 2016 came into effect on 16th of February 2016, and the Welsh Language Commissioner was then duly authorised to issue a notice to the WLGA requiring compliance with one or more of the standards.

A period of consultation followed between 31st March 2016 to 26th May 2016.

In response to further queries raised by the WLGA, the Welsh Language Commissioner issued a determination letter together with a revised compliance notice in May 2017.

In September 2018 the WLGA published the first Annual Report covering the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. This third Annual Report covers the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

3. Our Standards

The Welsh Language Standards include five areas of standards – ‘Service Delivery’, ‘Operational’, ‘Policy Making’, ‘Record Keeping’ and ‘Promotion’; the WLGA does not have any standards under the area of ‘Promotion’.

Table 1 – Number of WLGA Welsh language standards by area

Standard area	Number of standards
Service Delivery	66
Operational	10
Policy Making	46
Record Keeping	8

Table 2 – Number of WLGA supplementary Welsh language standards by area

Standard area	Number of standards
Service Delivery	12
Operational	6
Policy Making	-
Record Keeping	2



The WLGA Welsh language standards are owned corporately.

The Annual Report is approved by the Leader of the WLGA with a view to seeking endorsement of the full membership at a meeting of the WLGA Council.

The Chief Executive of the WLGA is responsible for ensuring that we follow the procedures the association has set in place to monitor and ensure compliance with the standards.

All members of staff also bear responsibility for ensuring that they comply with the standards, and in addition to copies of the WLGA’s Welsh Language Standards, further comprehensive staff guidance has been issued as a reference and to assist in this regard.

The WLGA’s Senior Management Team welcome and encourage all queries and any ideas that improve the ways that we can support and enhance the use of Welsh, incorporating as appropriate any recommendations arising from the work of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The WLGA promotes Welsh language training for staff. Any member of staff who would like to use or learn Welsh can discuss this at any time with their line managers, and support is provided for those who wish to undertake training with the WLGA enabling time off from work to attend courses and/or payment of course fees (depending on the level of course being undertaken). Staff personal development and training needs are covered specifically as part of the WLGA’s Staff Appraisal Scheme.

Publicising the standards and WLGA compliance

A document listing the standards that apply to the WLGA, the measures taken to ensure compliance and setting out how compliance is then monitored is available to download from the WLGA's website and can be viewed at the WLGA's main reception area:
<http://wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&mid=665&fileid=858>

Complaints

A Complaints Policy is available on our website and copies are available from our offices:
<http://wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&mid=665&fileid=860>

During 2019-20 the WLGA did not receive any requests for copies of the WLGA Complaints Policy.

Requests for information from the Commissioner

The WLGA is under a duty to provide information on how it complies with the standards.

In September 2019, the Welsh Language Commissioner undertook a thematic study and asked the WLGA to provide information on compliance with Standard 147, the obligation to keep a copy of every assessment undertaken in accordance with Standard 132 in respect of Welsh Language Skills that may be needed in relation to new or vacant posts.

Copies of every relevant record for the period from 1/4/2019 to 30/9/2019 were duly provided, including confirmation of the number of vacant and new posts that were advertised and the number of posts where there was an assessment of the need for Welsh Language Skills.

3.1 Service Delivery Standards

The Service Delivery standards relate to how the WLGA interacts with its' customers and stakeholders

Written Correspondence



Where the preferred language of the person we're contacting is not known, all initial correspondence is bilingual, with Welsh placed first either on the left or above any English text.

The WLGA records language preferences of individuals.

When corresponding with groups of people, all correspondence is issued bilingually. If a group convened by the WLGA expresses a language preference, that language preference is recorded and then used thereafter.

Telephone Calls



The WLGA actively encourages staff to use their Welsh at work and has developed a specific policy on 'Using Welsh in the Workplace'.

The WLGA main telephone number is operated by a fully bilingual receptionist.

Staff Guidance has been issued on the WLGA Welsh Language Standards which specifies:

- The verbal greetings to be used and the content of pre-recorded messages for both office and mobile phones with the Welsh language first
- How to deal with in-coming calls, and contacting someone by telephone for the first time
- How to record language preferences

The Guidance anticipates that there may be staff who don't feel confident at this stage in their personal development to conduct a conversation fluently in Welsh and if that is the case they may transfer the call to a colleague who has agreed to provide Welsh language support. The exceptions to transferring such calls are:

- Where the caller requires specific advice and no Welsh speaker has the required knowledge/understanding of the subject;
- Where the caller requires specific advice, and there is no Welsh speaker available.

Meetings



WLGA Staff Guidance also sets out what must be done when staff invite someone to a meeting, or when more than one person is invited to the same meeting.

For individuals who wish to use Welsh in meeting, the WLGA will arrange for simultaneous Welsh translation services to be available, unless the member of staff conducting the meeting with that individual speaks Welsh fluently.

The WLGA will arrange for simultaneous Welsh translation services for meetings involving ten or more people (including the WLGA's own staff) where a threshold of 10% of those attending that meeting wish to use Welsh.

For meetings that are open to the public:

- All invitations are sent bilingually, with Welsh first
- Speakers are asked if they wish to use Welsh, and encouraged to do so
- Simultaneous Welsh translation is always provided
- The person chairing the meeting will tell everyone present that simultaneous Welsh translation services are available, emphasising that everyone is welcome to use Welsh
- Any signs are bilingual, with Welsh first
- Any publicity and advertising material is bilingual, with Welsh first
- Any booking forms are bilingual, with Welsh first

Events

Events are covered by WLGA Corporate Guidance.

- All publicity is issued bilingually with Welsh first
- Booking forms, attendance lists and feedback forms are fully bilingual with Welsh first
- Speakers are asked if they wish to use Welsh and encouraged to do so
- Simultaneous Welsh translation is always provided
- The person chairing the event will tell everyone present that simultaneous Welsh translation services are available, emphasising that everyone is welcome to use Welsh

- All written material is provided in Welsh (i.e. Conference Programmes)
- Presentations are available in Welsh
- Staff attending events are encouraged to wear badges and lanyards which indicate that they are able to speak Welsh

Publicity, Signs and Materials

Publicity, Signs and Materials are covered by WLGA Corporate Guidance and in each instance the WLGA adheres to bilingual design principles.

Where there is a Welsh and English version of any sign, the Welsh version is always positioned where it is likely to be read first, either above or to the left of the English version.

All WLGA signs outside and throughout the building, including the reception area are fully bilingual with Welsh positioned to be read first.

As from 1st January 2018 the WLGA has entered into a legal agreement with Conwy County Borough Council for the provision of Welsh/English translation services for:

- Translation of written documents from English into Welsh
- Translation of written documents from Welsh into English
- Establishment and management of a database of work being requested, being undertaken and completed; this database will endeavour to ensure that identical documents being submitted separately are not re-translated, and that similar documents can be identified and the translation needs evaluated to reduce duplication of translated work
- Proof reading of quality control of translated materials

This agreement is reviewed periodically and has been found to be operating well and in accordance with the contract. The association's Risk Register also lists the agreement under 'business support'; the Risk Register is scrutinized by the WLGA Audit Committee as part of its remit.

Website and Social Media

The WLGA's website and use of Social Media are covered by WLGA Corporate Guidance.

The WLGA's website is bilingual and allows the user to toggle between Welsh and English language pages. An exemption for certain documents is specified under Standard #36.
<https://www.wlga.wales/home>

Posts to the WLGA's Twitter account are published in Welsh and in English as character limits don't usually permit bilingual tweets; the Welsh version is always published first.
<https://twitter.com/WelshLGA>

Reception



Our reception is staffed by a fully bilingual receptionist who also operates the main telephone number and among other duties monitors and coordinates the responses to the general enquiries email in-boxes.

We display a sign in our reception in both Welsh and in English encouraging visitors to use Welsh.

All staff are asked to wear either a Welsh at Work lanyard or a badge to let visitors know that they can speak Welsh.

There were some changes in the personnel covering reception during the period covered by this Annual Report; the written and verbal Welsh language skills of those selected for interview were checked as part of the selection process.

Email signatures and automated messages



Email signatures and automated messages are covered in Corporate Guidance.

Staff are encouraged to add the Welsh at Work symbol where they are comfortable to do so.

Email signatures are fully bilingual, with Welsh first and each emphasises that the WLGA welcomes correspondence in Welsh and in English and gives assurance that both languages will be treated equally.

Contracts

Adverts and accompanying documentation are made available in Welsh and in English and the WLGA welcomes related correspondence in either language.

The WLGA did not issue any contracts for tender during the period covered by this Annual Report.

Raising Awareness of Welsh Language Services

The WLGA ensures that elected members and officers comprising our member authorities and associate member authorities, and the public, understand what services we are able to deliver in Welsh.

The WLGA actively encourages staff to use their Welsh at work and this is underpinned by a specific policy on 'Using Welsh in the Workplace'.

3.2 Operational Standards

These standards relate to the internal use of Welsh by an organisation

Using Welsh at Work

The WLGA actively encourages staff to use their Welsh at work and has developed a specific policy on 'Using Welsh in the Workplace' which is augmented by comprehensive Staff Guidance on the WLGA's Welsh language standards.

All staff have been asked whether they wish to receive documents, forms and correspondence relating to their employment in Welsh.

Language choices of staff are recorded.

Where available, Welsh language interfaces for software are made available, as are language packs and interfaces for Windows and Microsoft Word.

Staff are actively encouraged to use Welsh language grammar and spell-checking software and use of Microsoft Translate (which has been developed and supported by the National Assembly for Wales), however, guidance has been issued cautioning against over-reliance or complacency when using on-line tools in place of Translation Services.

New internal WLGA policies are translated and made available in Welsh.

Staff are encouraged to wear badges and lanyards which indicate that they are able to speak Welsh.

Training opportunities are offered to those members of staff who wish to learn, or enhance their Welsh language skills, and any staff member can raise such requests at any time with their line managers.

Welsh Language Skills of the Workforce

In the period leading up to the implementation of the WLGA's Welsh language standards, staff were asked to complete an on-line survey to establish a baseline audit of the Welsh language skills within the organisation and to determine staff levels of interest in developing, or enhancing staff skills for listening, reading, speaking and writing in Welsh.

A copy of the annual WLGA Welsh Language Skills Survey is reproduced in **Annex A**.

Table 3 - Baseline Audit of WLGA Welsh Language Skills March 2017
(64 responses)

3a: Welsh Language Skills Levels for Listening	No:	%
No skills	40	62.5
Able to understand basic enquiries in Welsh - 'Ble mae ...?', Ga I siarad â ...?'	8	12.5
Able to understand a basic social conversation in Welsh	3	4.7
Able to follow routine conversations involving work between fluent Welsh speakers	3	4.7
Able to follow the majority of conversations involving work including group discussions	3	4.7
Able to understand all conversations involving work	7	10.9

3b: Welsh language Skills Levels for Reading	No:	%
No skills	36	56.3
Able to read basic words and phrases, e.g. signs or short simple notes	13	20.3
Able to read basic material involving work (slowly)	3	4.7
Able to read routine material with a dictionary	3	4.7
Able to read the majority of material in own area	2	3.1
Able to understand all material involving work	7	10.9

3c: Welsh language Skills Levels for Speaking	No:	%
No skills	39	60.9
Able to conduct a general conversation (greetings, names, sayings and place names)	11	17.2
Able to answer simple enquiries involving work	1	1.6
Able to converse with someone else, with some hesitancy, regarding routine work issues	2	3.1
Able to speak the language in the majority of situations using some English words	4	6.3
Fluent – able to conduct a conversation and answer questions for an extended period of time where necessary	7	10.9

3d: Welsh language Skills Levels for Writing	No:	%
No skills	46	71.9
Able to write basic messages – 'Diolch am y llythyr. Dyma gopi o'r map.'	5	7.8
Able to answer simple correspondence with assistance	2	3.1
Able to draft routine text, with editing assistance	2	3.1
Able to prepare the majority of written material related to the area of work, with some assistance in terms of revision	4	6.3
Skilled – able to complete complex written work without the need for revision	5	7.8

Staff were asked to think about how they could use Welsh at work, and whether they would be interested in opportunities to learn, develop and improve their skills

3e: Welsh language Skills Levels for Writing	No:	%
Learn Welsh (speaking, writing, reading)	27	49.1
Develop specific work-related Welsh language skills (e.g. meet and greet other work area specific languages)	27	49.1
Improve your spoken Welsh	17	30.9
Improve your written Welsh	16	29.1
Other (please specify):	4	7.3

All Staff were alerted to various courses available to them, the way in which they would be supported to undertake training etc. was explained, and they were invited to discuss their training needs and objectives with their line managers.

Staff Training

All WLGA Staff were invited to attend a one-day Welsh Language Awareness Course in the period leading up to the implementation of the WLGA Welsh language standards, and then again in May 2018. A record of attendance was kept. No members of staff requested the course in Welsh.

Following on from the WLGA baseline audit of Welsh language skills carried out in March 2017, all staff were invited to attend appropriate training courses in order to develop, or further enhance their Welsh language skills: www.learnwelsh.co.uk Staff were also encouraged to come forward with suggestions for appropriate courses closer to their home locations, and providing these courses met the core requirements, approval was given (Swansea University 'Welsh in a Week' etc. and Coleg Gwent).

The WLGA registered for the Work Welsh scheme operated by The National Centre for Learning Welsh, thereby providing staff with the opportunity in work time to complete a 10 hour on-line course teaching basic Welsh suitable for use in the workplace.

<https://learnwelsh.cymru>

A further skills audit was undertaken covering the period 31st March 2019 to 1st April 2020.

Recruitment

During 2019-20 the WLGA undertook recruitment for 17 members of staff.

All posts were evaluated for the level of Welsh skills required and in each case the posts were advertised in Welsh and in English. Applicants who are interviewed are encouraged to use Welsh at interview if they wish to do so. Successful applicants are given comprehensive Staff Induction, which includes familiarisation with the WLGA's guidance on compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

3.3 Policy Making Standards

These standards 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.

WLGA Staff are expected to follow detailed guidance provided by the WLGA Policy Impact Assessment Tool.

The section of the WLGA Policy Impact Assessment tool which relates specifically to the requirements of the WLGA Welsh Language Standards is reproduced below:

How will this policy impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?		
What positive or negative effects will this have?	What could be formulated or changed so that it would have positive, or increased positive effects?	What could be formulated or changes so it would not have adverse effects, or decreased effects?

Internal WLGA policies are subject to the same assessment.

3.4 Record Keeping Standards

These standards 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 and are available to the Commissioner on request.

3.4.1 Records in relation to Complaints [#141, 142, and 143]

Copies of all complaints are kept, whether or not they relate to the standards to which the WLGA is under a duty to comply, and the steps taken to ensure compliance.

Table 4 - Number of complaints received during 2018-19

Standard area	Number of standards
Service Delivery	-
Operational	-
Policy Making	-
Record Keeping	-

3.4.2 Records in relation to Policy Making [#144]

During the course of 2019-20 the WLGA did not consult on any new policies.

3.4.3 Records in relation to employees Welsh Language Skills [#145]

Table 5 - Audit of WLGA Welsh Language Skills March 2020

(63 responses)

5a: Welsh Language Skills Levels for Listening	No:	%
No skills	27	42.9
Able to understand basic enquiries in Welsh - 'Ble mae ...?', Ga I siarad â ...?'	17	27.0
Able to understand a basic social conversation in Welsh	2	3.2
Able to follow routine conversations involving work between fluent Welsh speakers	4	6.3
Able to follow the majority of conversations involving work including group discussions	3	4.8
Able to understand all conversations involving work	10	15.9

5b: Welsh language Skills Levels for Reading	No:	%
No skills	27	42.9
Able to read basic words and phrases, e.g. signs or short simple notes	16	25.4
Able to read basic material involving work (slowly)	4	6.3
Able to read routine material with a dictionary	4	6.3
Able to read the majority of material in own area	2	3.2
Able to understand all material involving work	10	15.9

5c: Welsh language Skills Levels for Speaking	No:	%
No skills	27	42.9
Able to conduct a general conversation (greetings, names, sayings and place names)	18	28.6
Able to answer simple enquiries involving work	1	1.6
Able to converse with someone else, with some hesitancy, regarding routine work issues	4	6.3
Able to speak the language in the majority of situations using some English words	3	4.8
Fluent – able to conduct a conversation and answer questions for an extended period of time where necessary	10	15.9

5d: Welsh language Skills Levels for Writing	No:	%
No skills	33	52.4
Able to write basic messages – 'Diolch am y llythyr. Dyma gopi o'r map.'	14	22.2
Able to answer simple correspondence with assistance	4	6.3
Able to draft routine text, with editing assistance	0	0.0
Able to prepare the majority of written material related to the area of work, with some assistance in terms of revision	5	7.9
Skilled – able to complete complex written work without the need for revision	7	11.1

3.4.4 Records in relation to training courses attended by employees [#146]

Table 6 - Training Courses attended (and undertaken by) staff

Standard area	Number of standards
Introduction to Welsh	-
Basic Entry Level	-
Work Welsh On-line	-

3.4.5 Records in relation to Welsh Language Assessments for new or vacant posts and how they were categorized [#147 and 148]

Table 7 - New and Vacant Posts advertised 2018-19

Skills Category	Determination
Essential	1
Need to be learned	-
Desirable	16
Not necessary/specified	-

ANNEX A

WLGA Welsh Language Skills Audit 2019-20

The Welsh Language Standards ask that we conduct an audit of Welsh language skills of our staff on an annual basis. Your answers to the following questions will be kept as a record of your language skills and an analysis of the workforce will be reported in the Annual Report to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Your Welsh language skills

1. Please tell us your name:

You should answer the following based on your skills for work, rather than at home or socially.

2. Please tell us your Welsh language skill level for listening:

- No skills
- Able to understand basic enquiries in Welsh - 'Ble mae ...?', Ga i siarad â ...?'
- Able to understand a basic social conversation in Welsh
- Able to follow routine conversations involving work between fluent Welsh speakers
- Able to follow the majority of conversations involving work including group discussions
- Able to understand all conversations involving work

3. Please tell us your Welsh language skill level for reading:

- No skills
- Able to read basic words and phrases, e.g. signs or short simple notes

- Able to read basic material involving work (slowly)
- Able to read routine material with a dictionary
- Able to read the majority of material in own area
- Able to understand all material involving work

4. Please tell us your Welsh language skill level for speaking:

- No skills
- Able to conduct a general conversation (greetings, names, sayings and place names)
- Able to answer simple enquiries involving work
- Able to converse with someone else, with some hesitancy, regarding routine work issues
- Able to speak the language in the majority of situations using some English words
- Fluent – able to conduct a conversation and answer questions for an extended period of time where necessary.

5. Please tell us your Welsh language skill level for writing:

- No skills
- Able to write basic messages – ‘Diolch am y llythyr. Dyma gopi o’r map.’
- Able to answer simple correspondence with assistance
- Able to draft routine text, with editing assistance
- Able to prepare the majority of written material related to the area of work, with some assistance in terms of revision
- Skilled – able to complete complex written work without the need for revision

6. Thinking more about how you could use Welsh at work, would you be interested in the opportunity to do the following:

- Learn Welsh (speaking, writing, reading)
- Develop specific work-related Welsh language skills (e.g. meet and greet other work area specific languages)
- Improve your spoken Welsh
- Improve your written Welsh
- Other (please specify):

7. If there is anything else you'd like to tell us about how you do, or how you'd like to be able to use Welsh at work, please tell us:

Thank you for completing this survey. The information you've provided will help us develop approaches to the use of Welsh in the workplace going forward.