

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report Reporting Period 01.08.2019 – 31.07.2020

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1.0 Introduction and Overview

Since April 2018, Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales (AOC|ALW) has been legally required to comply with Welsh Language Standards, as established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The Welsh Language Standards set out how the Welsh Language should be used and treated in different situations, and establish equal rights for Welsh speakers and English speakers, based on two principles:

- ‘In Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language’
- ‘Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose to do so’

Our aim is to exceed the requirements of the standards wherever possible and to become an exemplary provider of Welsh language services and delivery. Alongside this aim, our Strategic Plan sets out our vision for ‘delivering equal access to Welsh medium provision’ along with our goal to ‘deliver the highest quality learning programmes, prioritising those who are hardest to reach and providing equal access to Welsh medium provision.’

This is AOC|ALW’s third annual report on our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards listed in our Statutory Compliance Notice. The report covers the period 1st August 2019 to the 31st July 2020. Part of this reporting period coincides with the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a significant impact on the organisation and the services we provide. Despite the inevitable impact on development activity, our commitment to the principles of the Welsh Language Standards has continued, and we have endeavoured to maintain compliance with the Standards during this time.

2.0 Developing Welsh Language and Bilingualism and Monitoring Compliance

In order to mainstream activity, key issues on Welsh language and bilingualism are discussed and ideas developed at regular College Management Team (CMT) meetings.

During the reporting period, all aspects of Welsh and bilingualism planning and development including compliance with the Welsh Language Standards were also supported by the Grŵp y Gymraeg a Dwyieithrwydd (Welsh and Bilingualism Group). Reporting to the organisation’s Learner Experience Committee, the purpose of this group was to co-ordinate and monitor the wide range of activities required to achieve the organisation’s strategic aims and to meet statutory requirements.

A different approach has been established for 2020/21, with the work of the Grŵp y Gymraeg a Dwyieithrwydd to be undertaken by operational teams and supported by additional task and finish working groups as required. This approach will ensure greater efficiency and avoid duplication of work.

Progress in relation to all aspects of the Welsh language, including the Welsh Language Standards, is reported to, monitored, and scrutinised by our Learner Experience Committee and Council.

There is a clear commitment to and advocacy of the Welsh language amongst the Senior Leadership Team and AOC | ALW's Council (our governing body), as demonstrated by our organisational requirement that all Council meetings are bilingual.

3.0 Welsh Medium and Bilingual Provision

One of our key challenges is to increase our levels of Welsh medium and bilingual provision, in line with our strategic aims, and for 2019/20 the organisation set an ambitious target of 5% of provision to be delivered through the medium of Welsh. This target was underpinned by our Welsh Medium and Bilingual Provision Action Plan, which aligns with the national 'Further Education & Apprenticeships Action Plan', in support of 'Tuag at Cymraeg 2050.'

Due to various challenges, not least the impact of Covid-19, we were unable to meet this target. The recruitment of bilingual tutors also continued to be a challenge for the organisation during the reporting period. This prompted a review of the organisational staffing structure, resulting in the reallocation of resources from management/support posts to Welsh medium delivery, in the form of dedicated tutor hours for Welsh medium provision.

For the academic year 2019/2020, less than 1% of our overall delivery hours were recorded in the Welsh medium or bilingual coding categories, i.e., C1 or B1. However, 12% of our provision was delivered with a small amount of Welsh (category B3), which is a positive reflection of the increased confidence amongst delivery staff to use some Welsh language across teaching and learning.

During the 2019-20 academic year, 15% of learners identified as either a fluent Welsh speaker or Welsh speaker but not fluent.

Amongst our Welsh speaking learners, successful completion was high at 91%, which is above the organisational comparator of 86%.

All areas of delivery have targets for Welsh medium and bilingual curriculum provision, which align with the overarching Curriculum Plan and Welsh Medium and Bilingual Provision Action Plan. Actions for the development of Welsh medium and bilingual provision and increased opportunities for our learners to use and develop their Welsh language skills are included in our Quality Development Plan.

We continue to appoint delivery staff who can deliver courses bilingually and through the medium of Welsh. Delivery staff continue to use our Embedding Bilingualism Toolkit, which was developed to support the embedding of bilingualism and the Welsh dimension into the curriculum.

AOC|ALW is collaborating with three Further Education Institutions in Wales on a project funded through the Professional Development Fund. The project aims to support practitioners to embed the Welsh language and culture into online learning programmes. As the education sector moves towards a blended learning model of delivery, it is imperative

that the Welsh language and culture has a prominent place in online teaching and learning platforms and that practitioners have the skills required to achieve this.

4.0 Compliance with Service Delivery Standards

4.1 Translation

Efficient and effective translation underpins the quality of our internal and external communication, and we currently draw upon a combination of internal and external translation services. Covid-19 has compounded the need to respond quickly to external events with our communications; despite these challenges we have established appropriate arrangements to ensure that all messages continue to be sent bilingually.

We allocated as many strategic and public documents to our internal translator as possible to develop a consistent Welsh voice and have created a bilingual organisational glossary of terms to ensure consistency in the use of Welsh.

4.2 Complaints

There have been no complaints received relating to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, however, the organisation has responded to a query regarding searching for our website via Google.

There have been no written complaints received relating to our compliance with the service delivery, policy or operational standards imposed.

4.3 Correspondence and Telephone Calls

Language preference for contact has been recorded to date using a link in the email signatures for all staff. However, a new contacts management system has been developed which will replace the email links during 2021. The new system will enable individuals to record their preferred language for correspondence in a more centralised location.

All documents and forms for learners and the public continue to be produced bilingually wherever possible or are produced in both Welsh and English if a bilingual version is not appropriate.

The post of National Bilingual Receptionist continues as the key feature in our 'active offer' national bilingual telephone service where all callers are greeted bilingually and asked to hold the line to speak in Welsh or bilingually.

The National Bilingual Receptionist is also the administrator for the translation service providing access to translation, advice and information, and has developed excellent working relationships with staff in each of the regional offices.

Challenges to our national bilingual reception service were presented by Covid-19 and the requirement for staff to work at home, however, a solution has been established to enable the service to continue while staff are working remotely.

4.4 Meetings

With the move to online meetings, simultaneous translation during our Council meetings has presented a challenge for us in terms of the functionality available within our chosen platform Microsoft Teams, however, a solution has been established which will enable us to continue to provide an appropriate translation service. Translation is also provided during our Regional Forum meetings, and attendees are encouraged to use the Welsh language should they wish.

We continue to use as much Welsh as possible during internal meetings. Many meetings are carried out in Welsh or bilingually naturally without the need for translation services, especially in our Bangor office where the majority of staff are Welsh speakers.

4.5 Social media

We have continued to monitor our social media to ensure compliance and have considered readability, register and tone to develop the quality of all our course advertising during 2019/2020. Additional arrangements have been established for checking the accuracy of translation in respect of our social media posts and website.

4.6 Promoting Welsh language services

We continue to promote our Welsh language services through including our 'active offer' message in correspondence and marketing.

Our plans to attend the Eisteddfod this year were disrupted by Covid-19, however, we plan to attend the next Eisteddfod to promote the organisation and the Welsh language services we offer.

Our learner induction processes and materials include the promotion of our Welsh language services. We include options for Welsh and bilingual services in our learner application and enrolment forms and have a section on learner rights to Welsh medium services in our learner handbook.

As part of our transition to online course delivery, a Welsh template for all courses was developed on our Moodle platform, to enable learners to access teaching and learning resources in Welsh.

5.0 Compliance with Policy Making Standards

All policies developed or updated during the reporting period have been assessed for equality impact assessment which includes assessment of the impact on the Welsh language.

6.0 Compliance with Operational Standards

6.1 Staff Training

Intensive Welsh lessons delivered via the Cymraeg Gwaith/ Work Welsh scheme were provided to staff for the majority of the 2019/20 academic year, however, these were disrupted by Covid-19 and the suspension of face-to-face teaching in March 2020. We are currently working to establish distance-learning options as an alternative to the above.

Induction training is provided on an individual basis and all organisational documents are bilingual. The Human Resources Officer responsible for induction provides individual guidance and support to Welsh speaking new employees in Welsh. There were no training courses provided or requested internally in Welsh on the other areas listed in Standard 135 (recruitment and interviewing; performance management; complaints and disciplinary procedures; dealing with the public and health and safety). However, during this time a significant amount of information was provided to staff on Health and Safety matters in the form of briefing notes and guidance documents; these were all provided bilingually. Welsh speaking staff also attended a course in Welsh on the use of Cysill and Cysgair computer software.

As outlined above, we have organised work time Welsh language courses for staff wishing to commence Welsh language lessons and also for those wishing to progress. During 2019/20, our internal Sylfaen/Foundation courses delivered via Cymraeg Gwaith/ Work Welsh were attended by 17 members of staff. 8 members of staff attended the Mynediad/ entry level course. Our Chief Executive has progressed with Welsh language training at Intermediate level during 2019/20.

We have also continued to provide Welsh language awareness courses which are mandatory for all staff.

6.2 Welsh Language Skills of Staff

It has remained a challenge to collect information from our tutors at the same level as office support staff, but the process has been supported by all tutors now having organisational email addresses. According to the records held on 31 July 2020, staff were recorded as having Welsh language skills as shown in the table below.

Level	Understanding	Speaking	Reading	Writing
0 No Skills	33	23	43	56
1 Entry	65	69	48	46
2 Foundation	16	27	22	22
3 Intermediate	11	12	14	9
4 Advanced	10	5	8	7
5 Proficiency	10	9	10	5

We recognise that not all staff have completed the survey and will work to improve our systems for capturing this information during 2020/21.

6.3 New and vacant posts

There were 12 new and vacant posts during the reporting period which were assessed and categorised as follows:

Date	Post	Welsh Language Requirement	Level
August 2019	HR Manager	Desirable	5
August 2019	Regional Administrator (SE)	Desirable	3
October 2019	Regional Administrator (SE)	Desirable	3
November 2019	Business Development Manager	Desirable	3
February 2020	Regional Manager (SW&M)	Desirable	5
February 2020	Curriculum Delivery Officer(SDF Project, North)	Desirable	3
February 2020	Quality Assurance & Qualifications Assistant	Desirable	3
March 2020	ESOL Reach Assessor x 3 (North, SE, SWM)	Desirable	3
May 2020	Curriculum Delivery Officer (SDF Project, SW&M)	Desirable	3
June 2020	Curriculum Delivery Officer (Maternity cover, North)	Desirable	3

7.0 Conclusion

This has been the second full year for imposition of the Welsh language standards and the focus has been on embedding compliance into our everyday service delivery and operational practices.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the organisation and the services provided during this reporting period. Despite the inevitable impact on development activity, our commitment to the principles of the Welsh Language Standards has continued, and we have endeavoured to maintain compliance with the Standards during this time.

We have continued to widen our focus to include areas outside the standards which link to other organisational drivers around the Welsh language, for example, the Estyn quality

indicators for Welsh and Cymraeg 2050, by further developing our Welsh medium curriculum and continuing to embed Welsh and the Welsh dimension in teaching and learning.

Overall, the staff response to the Welsh Language Standards continues to be very positive, and we have embraced the opportunity to work towards becoming a fully bilingual organisation.

8.0 Further Information/ Contact Details

If you have any queries regarding this report or any aspect of Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales' compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, please contact Cath Hicks, Head of Learner Services and Resources: cath.hicks@adultlearning.wales