

Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Introduction

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued a Compliance Notice to ColegauCymru on 25 July 2016.

This Compliance Notice outlined the ColegauCymru duty to meet the statutory Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. This Measure awarded official status to the Welsh language, with an aim for the Welsh language to not be treated less favourably than the English language.

The introduction of the Welsh Language Standards, which is a list of what organisations must do and deliver in Welsh, ensures that those in Wales who wish to live their lives in Welsh can do so. These Standards create Welsh language linguistic freedom to use for individuals in Wales.

As part of the compliance process, the Welsh Language Standards require ColegauCymru to present an Annual Report, in relation to each financial year (April - March), that reflects on adhering to the demands of 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 the progress of the organisation towards complying with the Standards between from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

ColegauCymru believes that it is responding to the Standards in a positive manner. All staff have received Welsh Language Awareness training as part of their induction and their Welsh language abilities are self-assessed as part of their roles. Regular updates on how to improve working practices, as well as promoting and facilitating Welsh language use are included as part of our regular communication team briefings.

ColegauCymru is committed to encouraging the whole team to use the Welsh language whatever their ability, creating a bilingual working environment where use of Welsh is welcomed and encouraged. We also support learners and less confident speakers to use the language in a non-judgemental and supportive environment.

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 several public, charity and statutory bodies, including ColegauCymru. ColegauCymru has a responsibility to provide bilingual services, to ensure the Welsh language is not treated any less favourably than the English language.

ColegauCymru is required to comply with the following standards:

- Service Delivery
- Policy Making
- Operational
- Record Keeping

The Standards aim to:

- Make it clear to organisations what their duties are in relation to the Welsh language.
- Make it clear to Welsh speakers about the services they can expect to receive in Welsh.
- Make Welsh language services more consistent and improve their quality.

Welsh Language Responsibility

The Communications Manager leads on this work across the organisation. Working with the Director of Policy and Public Affairs, they both ensure procedures are in place to help staff understand their role in assisting ColegauCymru to meet the Standards.

Guidance is available to all staff to assist compliance. 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; and taking participants' language choice into consideration.

Day to day Welsh language compliance matters are managed by Director of Policy and Public Affairs and the Communications Manager.

Vision for Welsh Language

ColegauCymru and the Welsh Language Commissioner have a good working relationship that sees them supporting each other in the promotion of the Welsh language in post-16 education.

The aim of collaboration and partnership is to highlight and attract publicity around the importance of Welsh language skills in academic and vocational education, increasing provision of the Welsh/bilingual curriculum offer and the crucial role of further education colleges in supporting bilingual communities to thrive and achieve economic sustainability.

Developing our Welsh language learning offer

All staff are offered Welsh language training to support business operations and individual development. ColegauCymru covers the cost and/or release of staff from work for this purpose.

We actively promote short online Welsh taster courses to staff.

Notable Achievements for 2023/24 period

1. A full audit of the ColegauCymru website to ensure compliance.
2. Welsh Language Standards refresher training delivered at Staff Away Day - 27/6/23 Coleg Gwent.
3. Welsh Language Standards refresher training delivered at Staff Away Day - 13/12/23 Coleg Sir Gâr.
4. 2 new staff members each received inductions which included a bespoke 30-minute one-to-one training session on the Welsh Language Standards and their respective responsibilities.
5. We continue to have a weekly recurring diary marker for *Welsh Wednesdays* - an opportunity for colleagues to come together to chat informally in Welsh, regardless of their language level.
6. Monthly update reports on compliance for our Senior Management Team were introduced.
7. The Communications Manager carried out regular, informal spot-checks across all ColegauCymru departments to ensure compliance and best practice.

Complaints – in accordance with Standard 141

Service Delivery - ColegauCymru is subject to 64 Service Standards.

No complaints have been received relating to compliance with the Service Delivery Standards.

Policy Making - ColegauCymru is subject to 9 Policy Making Standards.

No complaints have been received relating to compliance with the Policy Making Standards.

Operational - ColegauCymru is subject to 42 Operational Standards.

No complaints have been received relating to compliance with the Operational Standards.

Welsh language skills and learning - in accordance with Standard 145

Welsh language skills of ColegauCymru staff as of 31 March 2023. We carried out a Welsh language skills audit of staff resulting in the following findings:

- 4 of the 16 members of staff are fluent Welsh speakers.

Recruitment – in accordance with Standard 148

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

- (i) Welsh language skills were essential: 0 posts
- (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post: 0 posts
- (iii) Welsh language skills were desirable: 2 posts

(iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary: 0 posts

All posts are advertised as either Welsh language skills essential or desirable. We explain the level of skills required to match the responsibilities of the role.

Contacts

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ColegauCymru welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English. We will respond to correspondence received in Welsh, in Welsh. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.

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