

Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

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 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 2024 to 31 March 2025.

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 and more formally in our bi-annual away days.

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.

The Policy Officer ensures that the Welsh language is actively considered and embedded across all areas of policy development and public affairs activity. This includes assessing the potential impact of policy proposals on the use of Welsh, advising colleagues on best practice to promote bilingualism, and ensuring compliance with relevant Welsh language standards and legislation. The role also involves working collaboratively across the organisation and with external partners to champion the Welsh language and support its normalisation in further education and beyond.

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.

ColegauCymru is committed to supporting the Welsh Government goal of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

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 2024/25 period

- Summer 2024 - ColegauCymru Staff Away day held in Gower College Swansea included refresher training for staff on compliance of the Standards and best practice with an emphasis on colleagues to “use the Welsh they have” in their day-to-day work.
- ColegauCymru has facilitated a member of staff to enrol on an Entry level Welsh course.
- The Communications Manager attended an online session which focused on the Welsh Language Commissioner’s report for 2023-2024 - *Delivering Change Together*, which shared their findings following monitoring of compliance over the year and to give an update on the work of setting regulation outcomes following the consultation.
- 3 new staff members received inductions which included a bespoke one-to-one 30-minute Welsh Language Standards compliance training session.
- In June 2024, ColegauCymru attended the Welsh Language Commissioner Information session on Promoting Compliance.
- In October 2024, ColegauCymru was pleased to respond to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol consultation *Towards Cymraeg 2050 - FE and Apprenticeships Plan*. ColegauCymru welcomed the themes in the strategy: learner experience; staffing capacity; provision; resources; assessment and qualifications; and employer engagement. We recognise the prioritisation of subjects, although it should be noted that there is appetite within the sector for colleges to have greater flexibility to define their own priority subject areas, working with Regional Skills Partnerships where appropriate - to reflect local demand and circumstances. Given the importance of the foundational economy in Wales, we would welcome further consideration of these sectors. In terms of assessment in Welsh or bilingually, further work is needed to better understand the reasons driving learners’ decisions in taking assessment through the medium of Welsh or through the medium of English. If we are to meet the million Welsh speakers by 2050 target, it is essential that a whole education system approach is taken.
- In October 2024 ColegauCymru responded to the Senedd CYPE Committee consultation on the *Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill*. ColegauCymru supports the main aim of the Bill, which is to ensure that all pupils reach the end of compulsory education as independent Welsh language users. However, in our response, we highlight several areas within the Terms of Reference of the inquiry where we would welcome greater clarity.
- ColegauCymru supported the *Defnyddia dy Gymraeg* social media campaign in November/December 2024. The campaign encourages people to use their Welsh every day in a variety of situations, at work, with businesses, public services, at play, at school - wherever they can.
- In November 2024, ColegauCymru facilitated a training session for college governors. Hosted by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol Senior Academic Manager and Registrar, Dafydd Trystan, the session covered on the Welsh language strategy for Cymraeg 2050, with a focus on FE and the work needed to reach a million (confident) Welsh speakers by 2050.
- The Communications Manager continued to carry out regular spot-checks across all ColegauCymru departments and output to ensure compliance and best practice.
- A second Welsh language compliance staff training session was held for this period in December 2024 at The College Merthyr Tydfil. The focus on this session was *Compliance is the minimum standard - we are committed to achieving best practice wherever possible*.

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 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 2025. We carried out a Welsh language skills audit of staff resulting in the following findings:

- 3 of the 17 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: 3 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. Both the job descriptions and vacancy landing pages on the website clearly state that ColegauCymru is a proudly bilingual organisation and that we welcome correspondence and applications in Welsh. We also clearly advertise that we encourage and support staff to learn, develop and use their Welsh language skills in the workplace.

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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