

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Monitoring Report



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023

This document is also available in Welsh.

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Introduction

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is pleased to publish its 2022 - 2023 Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report. The Service has continued to monitor its progress against the Standards throughout the past year and has continued to offer quality bilingual services, while following Welsh Government recommendations regarding COVID-19 procedures for employees and service users. Face-to-face meetings and interviews have been reintroduced, whilst video link meetings and forums continue to be used where appropriate.

Background to the Welsh Language Standards

Under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, all public service organisations in Wales are required to comply with language duties, which ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language. The duties encourage promotion of the Welsh language, the use of Welsh within internal administration and require that provision is made for the accessibility of Welsh to the public.

Section 44 of the 2011 Measure permits the Welsh Language Commissioner to issue a Compliance notice, requiring a body to comply with one or more Standards specifically applicable to it. The Welsh Language Standards (No. 5) Regulations 2016 were then introduced to the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales.

In accordance with section 44 of the 2011 measure, the purpose of the Welsh Language Standards is to provide:

- Clarity for organisations on the Welsh language
- Clarity for Welsh speakers on what services they can expect to receive in Welsh
- Greater consistency in Welsh language services and improvement of quality for users

Standards applied to South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

A total of 150 Welsh Language Standards are now in place within the following categories:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Service delivery | 66 Standards |
| • Policy making | 9 Standards |
| • Operational | 47 Standards |
| • Record keeping* | 8 Standards |
| • Supplementary* | 20 Standards across 4 categories |

The record keeping* and supplementary* Standards are applied to help organisations with the process of self-regulating their compliance.

Welsh Language Standards website page

The Service has a dedicated Welsh Language Standards page featured under 'Who we are' on the Service's website menu. The page contains information explaining the Welsh Language Standards along with links to the Authority's Compliance notice, Implementation Plan and Annual Monitoring Report.

Details are provided for the website user explaining how to register a complaint or compliment regarding compliance with the Standards and contact details are provided for queries regarding our Service and the Welsh language.

Link to Welsh Language Standards page:

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/who-we-are/Welsh-language-Standards

Procedure for complaints and compliments regarding the Welsh Language Standards:

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/contact-us

Implementing the Welsh Language Standards and Monitoring Compliance

The responsibility for the Authority's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards lies with the Executive Leadership Team and the Heads of Service. Each Head of Service is responsible for compliance with the Standards relevant to their department and is required to carry out a compliance review once a year. As a public body the Service is required to self-regulate for the Welsh Language Commissioner. This involves monitoring our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and ensuring that we provide enough opportunity for people to use the Welsh language when working with us or using our services.

Standards set by the Welsh Language Commissioner to assist with self-regulation are the record keeping Standards and supplementary Standards. The Authority is required to record periodically how we comply with the Welsh Language Standards and how we deal with the public. Recording this detail enables us to demonstrate how we maintain compliance. Monitoring compliance with the Standards also involves publishing an Annual Monitoring Report on the external website by 30th September each year.

The content of this report is as follows:

- The way in which the Service has complied with the different classes of Standards
- The number of employees who have Welsh Language Skills - Standard 147
- The number (and percentage if relevant) of staff members who attended specific training that must be provided in Welsh if it is available in English (namely training on recruitment and interviewing, performance management, complaints and disciplinary procedures, induction, dealing with the public and health and safety) - Standard 148
- The number of new and vacant posts categorised as those where Welsh Language Skills are essential, desirable, not necessary, or need to be learnt - Standard 151
- The number of complaints the organisation received about each class of Standards - Standard 143

The Service's new system for monitoring and reporting compliance with the Standards was further developed during 2022-2023 by the Planning, Performance and Risk Team. The team plan to provide general access to the system for all employees and more specific access for those involved in updating the system (task owners). Work on the system has been on hold during recent months, due to changes in key members of staff. Following the finalisation of task owners, the system will be tested and launched during the 2023-2024 period.

Welsh Language translation services

The Service has its own in-house Translation team with two permanent members of staff. The team operate as part of the wider Media and Communications Department and play a key role in ensuring the Service continues to deliver the highest standard of bilingual content for all stakeholders. During the past year the team have again made an outstanding contribution to the Service, providing prompt translation for a range of materials including complex technical documents, business plans, reports, video and social media messaging.

Strategic Plan 2020-2030 (April 2023 – Year Four Update):
[Strategic Plan 2020-2030 - South Wales Fire and Rescue Service](#)

Strategic Plan Video:
[Strategic-Plan-Year-4-Update](#)

Total number of words for 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

- **Translated: 86,201**
- **Proof read: 107,932**

Our translators continue to provide informal support to individual staff members who identify as Welsh learners and wish to practice their skills in the workplace. This support helps colleagues to build their confidence at speaking and writing through the medium of Welsh.

Corporate Policies and Procedures

The Service complies with the legal requirement of carrying out Integrated Assessments and includes Language as an area for assessment. Assessments are completed for all policies and procedures, including older documents being amended. Our Corporate policies which substantiate all service delivery and supporting activities are public facing. The policies are published on the Service's Website in both Welsh and English and can be accessed here: www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/who-we-are/corporate-policy

Job Posts and Welsh Language Skills

The Service advertises vacancies in the medium of Welsh and English and these are featured on the 'Latest Vacancies' page of its website. All job roles within the Service are categorised as Welsh Essential or Welsh Desirable. For those posts within the Essential category, candidates are assessed on their Welsh Language Skills as part of the Shortlisting and Selection process.

New and Vacant posts 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

- **Welsh essential: 2**
- **Welsh desirable: 42**

E-Recruitment System

Since its launch in 2021, the E-Recruitment System has been used for a range of different vacancies and recruitment processes, including some large-scale Recruitment Campaigns for Firefighters and Control room staff. The Service's E-Recruitment System provides the user with the option to navigate its pages and submit an application through the medium of Welsh. Within the online form, applicants are requested to provide information about Welsh Language status e.g., Welsh speaker or learner and their overall level of Welsh. The form also provides an option to receive further correspondence through the medium of Welsh. The new system has already improved the job application experience for our end users.

Welsh Language training provision

The Service recognises the benefits of Welsh Language Learning and is seeking to create a working environment, where bilingualism will continue to grow. Our employees are invited to enquire about Welsh Language Training via an advert on our Intranet site. During the 2022-2023 period, sixteen employees enquired about Learning Welsh. They were given advice on sourcing Welsh Language Learning and how to apply to the Service's Additional Learning Fund to cover the cost of their chosen course. The fund can be accessed by individuals at any time throughout the year, for additional learning and development opportunities.

Promoting Welsh Language and Culture

The Service actively promotes the Welsh Language and Culture both internally for its employees and externally for service users and the general public. During April 2022 - March 2023 we celebrated and publicised three important dates using global emails, intranet articles, posters and social media:

- 15th October 2022 - Diwrnod Shwmae
- 25th January 2023 - St. Dwynwen's Day
- 1st March 2023 - St. David's Day



Welsh Language Rights Day - 7th December 2022

On 7th December 2022, the Service participated in Welsh Language Rights Day to promote the Welsh Language Services provided by Public Organisations in Wales. The date was set by the Welsh Language Commissioner to commemorate the day in 2010 when the Welsh Language Legislation was passed by the National Assembly.

Welsh Language Rights Day provides the opportunity to inform people of their rights, in receiving services through the medium of Welsh. The Service published a list of its Rights which are permanently displayed in our Headquarters Reception area.

Service users and employees can access the Welsh Language Rights page on our website using the link below:

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/who-we-are/Welsh-language-Standards/Welsh-language-rights

With us, you have the right to the following:

1. Documents in Welsh
2. Websites in Welsh
3. Apply for a job in Welsh
4. Letters and emails in Welsh
5. Leaflets in Welsh
6. Social media messages in Welsh
7. Signs in Welsh
8. Speak Welsh in Reception
9. Use Welsh on the phone

Number of hits received to Welsh Language website pages

The Service's external website is fully bilingual and actively offers all visitors the option of accessing its content through the medium of Welsh or English. The performance of the Welsh language version of the site during April 2022 - March 2023 in comparison with the English version is recorded in the table below:

Criteria	Welsh Website		English Website	
REPORTING PERIOD	2022-2023	2021-2022	2022-2023	2021-2022
UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS	7,420	(8,832)*	544,281	(553,905)*
USERS	3,948	(5,064)*	189,929	(161,622)*
AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON WEBSITE (PER SESSION)	1^{mins} 16^{secs}	(1^{minute})*	1^{mins} 36^{secs}	(1^{mins} 53^{secs})*
MOST POPULAR PAGE	Latest vacancies	(DTDG 2022)*	Latest Vacancies	(Latest Vacancies)*

*Shows comparative data for 2021-2022

Analysis of interactions with social media pages

The Service has taken steps to ensure all its promotional and safety campaigns via its social media channels are as readily available to Welsh language speakers as they are to English language speakers. This has been achieved by creating separate channels for both languages, with a Welsh language dedicated Twitter account @TanDeCymru and a Welsh language dedicated Facebook page. Below is some performance data for each of the channels for April 2022 - March 2023.



Criteria

	@TanDeCymru		@SWFireandRescue	
REPORTING PERIOD	2022-2023	2021-2022	2022-2023	2021-2022
FOLLOWERS (APRIL - MARCH)	241	(219)*	37,367	(35,440)*
TWEETS	1,664	(1,337)*	2,045	(1,717)*
LIKES	653	(330)*	13,468	(17,587)*

*Shows comparative data for 2021-2022

Criteria	Welsh Page		English Page	
REPORTING PERIOD	2022-2023	2021-2022	2022-2023	2021-2022
INCREASE OF LIKES PER REPORTING PERIOD	401^{to} 424	(383^{to} 401)*	37,578^{to} 40,819	(36,563^{to} 37,578)*
NEW LIKES (APRIL - JUNE)	5	(0)*	1,202	(0)*
NEW LIKES (JULY - SEPTEMBER)	9	(0)*	814	(0)*
NEW LIKES (OCTOBER - DECEMBER)	2	(5)*	605	(180)*
NEW LIKES (JANUARY - MARCH)	7	(13)*	620	(835)*

*Shows comparative data for 2021-2022



Criteria

Bilingual Page (as of 31st March 2023)

FOLLOWERS

8,222

POST LIKES

21,345

POSTS

201

Number of staff who have Welsh Language Skills

The Service's HR Portal has the ability to record language skills. Each employee is asked to assess their level of skills from 0 - 5 in Welsh and English at reading, spoken, understanding and written language and state whether their preferred language is Welsh or English. The Service is working to increase the number of self-assessments completed with announcements on the Intranet site, global e-mails and guidance documents. Data was extracted from the CoreHR system March 2023, which revealed that 86 employees had indicated that they have Welsh Language Skills at Level 1 or above in one or more proficiencies.

2022-2023

Language Proficiency Description	Reading	Spoken	Understanding	Written
Level 1	31	40	33	25
Level 2	11	14	11	13
Level 3	12	10	5	12
Level 4	8	7	8	3
Level 5	11	8	11	7
TOTAL	73	79	68	60

Welsh Language Award for Firefighters

All new Wholetime Firefighters employed by the Service are required to enrol onto an Apprenticeship qualification facilitated by Cardiff and Vale College. The Level 3 Diploma in Emergency Fire and Rescue Services includes the Prentis-iaith General Course provided by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Prentis-iaith is a six-module course which covers Welsh Language and Culture.

The course is interactive and includes an automated self-marking system, allowing learners to work individually at a pace they are comfortable with. A variety of methods are used to engage the learner and guide them through the modules, including a verbal element to help the learner practice their pronunciation of Welsh phrases. Each learner is awarded a certificate on completion of the course. During September 2022 seventeen Wholetime Firefighters signed up for the Prentis-iaith General Course and so far, four of them have completed all of the modules.

Training and courses through the medium of Welsh

There are two main points of contact for staff training, the Learning and Development Team at Fire Service Headquarters and the Training and Development Centre in Cardiff Gate. There were no training courses carried out or requested through the medium of Welsh during 2022-2023.

Phone calls and correspondence received in Welsh

Phone calls

From April 2022 - March 2023 the Service received 21 Welsh Language phone calls to its main switchboard in Headquarters. A further 26 calls were received, requesting Home Fire Safety checks.

Correspondence

From April 2022 - March 2023 the Service received 19 emails. A further 9 emails were received, requesting Home Fire Safety checks.

During April 2022 - March 2023 no correspondence was received by the Service through the medium of Welsh, however the Business Support Department regularly receives bilingual correspondence from the Welsh Government and other external organisations.

Complaints received in relation to the Welsh Language Standards

The Business Support department records and initially deals with all complaints received by the Service through the 'Contact us' page. Complaints are then directed to the relevant department. The Authority did not receive any complaints regarding its compliance with the Welsh Language Standards during 2022-2023.



**Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru**

**South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service**

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South Wales Fire and Rescue Service would welcome feedback regarding the information contained in this report and the way in which it is presented.
Contact us by phone 01443 232000 or email WelshLanguage@southwales-fire.gov.uk