

Welsh Language Standards Report 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

1. Introduction

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued a compliance notice to Colegau Cymru / Colleges Wales on 25 July 2016.

This compliance notice outlined Colegau Cymru's 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 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 Colegau Cymru 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 Colegau Cymru's progress towards complying with the Standards between from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Colegau Cymru believes that it is responding to the Standards in a positive manner. All staff have received Welsh Language Awareness training and their Welsh language ability formally assessed as part of their roles at Colegau Cymru. New recruits continue to be assessed and all attend a Welsh Language Awareness session as part of their induction process. Regular updates on how to improve working practices accordingly, as well as promoting and facilitating Welsh language use are included as part of our weekly communication team briefings.

Colegau Cymru 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.

2. 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 a number of public, charity and statutory bodies, including Colegau Cymru. Colegau Cymru 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 clearer to Welsh speakers about the services they can expect to receive in Welsh.
- Make Welsh language services more consistent and improve their quality.

3. Welsh Language Responsibility

During the period, the External Affairs Director took lead on this work across the organisation. Working with the Director of Business Administration, they both ensure procedures are in place to help staff understand their role in assisting ColegauCymru meet the Standards.

Desktop 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, taking participants language choice into consideration; and recording the language choice of our members and contacts.

Day to day Welsh language compliance matters are managed by the Director of Business and Administration.

4. Vision for Welsh Language

ColegauCymru's Welsh Language Scheme is still a working document that outlines the organisation's commitment to the Welsh language.

ColegauCymru and the Welsh Language Commissioner have an excellent working relationship that sees them supporting each other in events, guest speaking opportunities, joint publicity and the promotion of the Welsh language in post-16 education. The Welsh Language Commissioner and ColegauCymru and the wider college sector have worked together most recently on the 'Mae Gen ti Hawl / You have a right' campaign.

The aim of such collaboration and partnerships has been 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 thrive and achieve economic sustainability.

5. Developing our Welsh language learning offer

All staff are offered Welsh language training to support business operations and individual development. ColegauCymru covers this cost and or releases staff from work to invest in this training to support business need and personal/professional development of our staff.

We actively promote the 10 hour online Welsh course to staff.

<https://learnwelsh.cymru/work-welsh/about-work-welsh/work-welsh-welcome-course/>

6. 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 ColegauCymru's compliance with the Operational Standards.

7. Welsh language skills and learning - in accordance with Standard 145

Welsh language skills of ColegauCymru staff as of 31 March 2018. We carried out a Welsh language skills audit of staff resulting in the following findings:

- 4 of the 11 member of staff are fluent Welsh speakers
- 1 is a Welsh learner and attended a five day Work Welsh course
- 2 members of staff are going on Welsh courses shortly

8. 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 post
- (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post: 0 post
- (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. Where possible, we explain the level of skills required to match the responsibilities of the role.

Contacts

Iestyn Davies
Chief Executive
ColegauCymru

Julie Osman
Director of Business and Administration and Company Secretary
ColegauCymru

Claire Roberts
Public Affairs Director
ColegauCymru
U7, Cae Gwyrdd
Greenmeadow Springs
Tongwynlais
Cardiff CF15 7AB

Tel: 02920 522 500 (calls are welcomed in Welsh and in English).
email: helo@colegaucymru.ac.uk

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.

Registered Charity Number 1060 182, Registered Company Number 2832103.