

Ceredigion County Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards
Produced in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards
Regulations (No. 1) 2015

This document has been produced in order to comply with the following standards to which Ceredigion County Council have a duty to comply – Standards 157, 163, 169 and 159, 165, 171. This document sets out how the Council proposes to comply with service delivery standards, policy making standards and operational standards, set by the Welsh Language Commissioner. The document also sets out our arrangements for overseeing, promoting and facilitating our Welsh-medium services.

Compliance Notice (Standards 155,161,167,173,175)

Ceredigion County Council's compliance notice (detailing Service Delivery, Policy Making, Operational, and Record Keeping Standards with which Ceredigion County Council must comply) has also been published on the Ceredigion County Council website, and on Cardinet, which is the staff intranet of Ceredigion County Council. A copy of the Standards (Compliance Notice) placed on Ceredigion County Council and referred to in this document can be found here:

<https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/5278/ceredigion-welsh-language-standards-compliance-notice.pdf>

Overseeing compliance of the Welsh Language Standards (Standards 157,163 and 169)

We ensure that we oversee the standards with which Ceredigion County Council must comply with in the following ways:

The strategic responsibility for the Welsh Language sits with the Corporate Lead Officer for Democratic Services; The Lead Political Member is the Leader of the Council, namely Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn. The work of dealing with Welsh language issues at an operational level is the responsibility of the Welsh Language Policy Officer. The Chief Executive, together with the Corporate Lead Officer and Group Managers are responsible for ensuring that all officers within the Council comply with the Welsh language standards.

Committees are in place to inform and monitor the efforts to improve the use of the Welsh Language, and to oversee compliance with the Welsh Language Standards as follows:-

• Welsh in the Workplace Group

A Welsh in the Workplace Group has been established in order to oversee the operational requirements of the Welsh Standards. The group is chaired by the Corporate Lead Officer for Democratic Services, and membership includes officers who represent the Council's Service Areas. The group discusses and examines methods in order to be able to fulfil the requirements of the standards effectively, and also receives progress reports on the implementation of some of the other standards. Reports are submitted where a policy decision is required for the attention of the Corporate Leadership Group, prior to receiving final approval through the Council's Democratic Process.

The group contributes to the Annual Report of the Welsh Language Standards. The draft annual report goes through a consultation period, is then submitted to the Welsh Language Committee, followed by final Cabinet approval, before being published on 30 June, on an annual basis.

- Welsh Language Committee

The Council's Welsh Language Committee scrutinises matters relating to complying with the Welsh Language Standards. This Committee has the powers to make recommendations to Cabinet and full Council. The Committee is chaired by the Leader of the Council, and is made up of cross-party elected members. Officers representing the Council's services are invited to report on the implementation of the Standards when appropriate or timely to do so.

Complaints procedure (Standards 156,162 and 168)

The Concerns and Complaints Information Booklet 'How to Make a Complaint': The Council's Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy has been amended to include the procedure as to how the Council deals with complaints relating to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. This guide has been published on the Council's corporate website. Furthermore, a link to the Welsh page of the Council's website informs members of the public how they can make a complaint relating to compliance with the standards or a failure to receive Welsh medium services.

Service users are able to present their concerns in Welsh or English in accordance with the language of choice. Complaints can be made about the level or standard of provision of Council services provided through the medium of Welsh, or in relation to implementation and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. The guide states that if the complainant is dissatisfied with the response from the Council, the complainant may seek further advice from the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The Council records and monitors all complaints received and seeks to learn lessons when preparing solutions. As part of the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure, the Welsh Language Policy Officer is notified of all complaints relating to the Welsh Language; in order to advise officials and consider further action.

As part of the Council's *complaints training* programme, officers are informed of the procedure for dealing with complaints relating to Welsh language matters.

Promoting and Facilitating Services through the medium of Welsh (Standards 157 and 163)

All the services we offer, in accordance with these Standards, are promoted through the Council's social media, publicity materials and website. We have publicised the Council's *Welsh Language Policy Statement*, and will further promote our campaign '*You're welcome to use the Welsh language when contacting the Council*'. We raise staff's awareness relating to facilitating Welsh-medium services, and actively encourage the use of these services.

We ensure compliance with the Standards with which Ceredigion County Council must comply in the following ways:

Compliance with Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1-87)

- In order to ensure that all staff are aware of the service delivery standards, we have distributed guidance entitled '*Guidance on providing Welsh Language Services*'.
- Guidance relating to sending bilingual correspondence and emails is published on the Council's intranet page in order to assist staff in complying with requirements relating to correspondence.
- Corporate headed paper as well as the Council's external emails include the statement that the Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh.
- Telephone answering guidelines have been published on the Council's intranet page to assist staff in complying with the requirements.
- We have placed a recorded message on the phone line, Clic Service (the main contact centre), notifying callers that there is a Welsh language line available.
- We have ensured that when members of the public contact the Council, staff offer to transfer their call to a Welsh speaker (if they are not Welsh speakers themselves).
- In order to make it easier to identify Welsh speakers immediately, the electronic telephone directory displays language badges ('iaith gwaith/working Welsh badges) next to officers who can communicate through the medium of Welsh.
- We have provided a wording to encourage services to ask for language choice at first point of contact. If the first call is handled through the Clic Service (the main contact centre), that service records language choice.
- Guidelines regarding holding meetings have been published on the Council's intranet page in order to assist staff and elected members to comply with the requirements. The Chairs of all public meetings are encouraged to open and close meetings in both languages, and to welcome contributions in Welsh or English. A simultaneous translation service is provided at all public meetings.
- Officers are expected to make arrangements to ensure that the Welsh Language is treated no less favourably than English at public events. The Welsh Language Commissioner's Guidance has been circulated through the corporate bulletin: 'Including the Welsh Language in your event: How to use the Welsh language when arranging events'.
- All documents and forms produced for the public are bilingual. If a separate Welsh and English document or form needs to be issued, a disclaimer is placed on the English version: "*This document/form is available in Welsh*".
- The Council's website is bilingual and it is possible to navigate easily from one language to the other by clicking on the language button at the top of the page, on the right hand side of the screen.
- The Council has a separate Welsh and English account on Facebook and Twitter. We are raising awareness of the fact that there is a Welsh feed available.
- We ensure that every self-service machine owned by the Council works bilingually.
- The Council's policy is that all signs and notices are bilingual with the Welsh placed in such a position that it is read first.
- Signs are placed in the Council's main reception areas stating that people are welcome to communicate with the Council through the medium of Welsh, whether this is face-to-face, via the telephone, correspondence or online services. Reception staff who can provide a Welsh-language service wear lanyards or badges stating this.
- The grants policy has been revised in order to comply with the requirements of the standards. It is possible to submit a grant application in Welsh or English, and all grant forms received in Welsh receive a response in Welsh.

- Work is ongoing with the Procurement Service; Any invitation to tender (contract notice) is published bilingually, and the following disclaimer has been placed: *"The Council welcomes the submission of tenders in Welsh or English, and a tender submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than a tender submitted in English."* □
- Members of the public who are applying for courses through the Dysgu Bro Service are asked about their preferred language (English or Welsh) in order to assess the need for lessons to be provided through the medium of Welsh. A specific threshold level is required in order to provide a course.

Compliance with Policy Making Standards (Standards 88-98)

- When a new policy is made or revised, we ensure that all managers are aware of the need to consider the effects of policy decisions (whether positive or adverse)
 - (i) on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and
 - (ii) in ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language. This is done by ensuring that an Integrated Impact Assessment is completed. The Integrated Impact Assessment has been reviewed and amended to include a section on assessing the impact of the Welsh language.
- If research is commissioned that is intended to assist with policy making, we ensure that the research considers how the policy decision can be made so to ensure it does not have a negative impact on the Welsh language.
- Guidance on consultation is available on the intranet. The procedure states that any consultation process on a policy decision must offer people the opportunity to comment on the impact of that policy (whether positive or adverse)
 - (i) on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and
 - (ii) in ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language.
- The Community Grant Award policy has been amended to ensure compliance with the standards. The policy is available on the Council's website.

Compliance with Operational Standards (Standards 98-144)

- Officers have been made aware of the new standards and the rights of employees through items on the corporate news bulletin.
- The Council has developed a Policy on the use of the Welsh language internally and this document has been published on Cardinet (the Council's Intranet).
- The Council provides bilingual contracts of employment.
- The Council has developed a Ceredigion County Council Human Resources Information Portal – Ceri Net. It contains guidance on a range of issues relating to working for the Council, including a staff handbook and all workforce policies – they are available in English and Welsh.
- All general correspondence relating to staff employment is sent bilingually. Personal correspondence is sent in line with the worker's preferred language. There is a form on CeriNet that asks employees to indicate their preferred language.
- The policies set out in Standards 105-111 are available to employees in both English and Welsh.

- The Council's Complaints Procedure states that employees can make a complaint in Welsh, and they have the right to respond to a complaint made about them in Welsh. Employees have been informed of this right.
- Employees are offered the opportunity to hold any meetings regarding complaints made against them in Welsh (with or without the use of simultaneous translation). Any record of a complaint-related decision against an employee is published in Welsh, if the employee has chosen to communicate in Welsh.
- A computer software package for checking Welsh spelling and grammar (Cysgliad) has been installed on all computers, and we have notified staff through the corporate news bulletin that this software package is available. Advice on how to change language settings (Welsh interface) is available from the IT service.
- Work is being undertaken to ensure that the Council's intranet is fully bilingual.
- We have developed a 'Iaith ar Waith' page ('working Welsh' page) on the Council's intranet which provides support material to promote the Welsh language and to assist our employees to use the Welsh language.
- The Council has undertaken an assessment of the Welsh language skills of employees through self-assessment using the ALTE language level framework. Managers are required to review language skills as part of the annual performance assessment, and record any progress on the Ceri system. The Human Resources Service is responsible for recording the language skills of employees appointed to new or vacant posts.
- The Council increases opportunities during work hours for employees to attend Welsh medium courses.
- The Council offers wide-ranging opportunities for employees to learn or develop their language skills during work hours.
- Welsh language Awareness training sessions are offered to all members of staff. Furthermore, the Council has developed an e-learning programme, which is mandatory for new employees.
- Guidance on how to place the 'Iaith gwaith/work welsh' language logo on email signatures, how to set up a bilingual address along with tips on placing bilingual out of office messages has been distributed to staff.
- There is a process in place to assess and record Welsh language skills for new and vacant posts.
- Bilingual application forms are available via the electronic e-recruitment Ceri system, and an applicant is able to apply for any post in their preferred language. Letters offering interviews give individuals an opportunity to indicate if they wish to use the Welsh language in an interview.
- The Council's policy is to ensure that all signs are bilingual, including temporary signs, with the Welsh text placed in such a way that it is likely to be read first.
- Announcements are made in Welsh and English, the Welsh message is announced first.

Compliance with Record Keeping Standards (Standards 147-154)

We keep records of the following:

- The number of complaints relating to the provision of Welsh medium services and compliance with the Welsh language standards.
- The number of integrated impact assessments presented, which includes impact assessment of new policies on the Welsh language.
- The number and % of employees who possess language skills, on an annual basis.

- (i) the number of staff members who have attended training courses (in accordance with Standard 128) and
(ii) if a Welsh version of the course was offered in accordance with Standard 128, the % of staff who attended that course.
- The number of employees attending courses to learn or develop their Welsh language skills.
- The number of employees who are completing a language awareness training programme.
- The number of posts advertised during the year that require Welsh language skills, and which were categorised with ALTE levels.

We submit quarterly progress reports to the Council's Welsh Language Committee, and publish the Welsh Language Standards' Annual Report on the Council's website every year.
