



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru

Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

Annual Monitoring Report
2018/19

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WHAT THE MEASURE REQUIRES THE AUTHORITY TO DO

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of the new legislation, in Wales, the Welsh language has equal status with the English language and must not be treated any less favourably.

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority with its Compliance Notice on 30 September 2016. This notice, sets out which Standards apply to Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, along with any exemptions and their implementation dates. [You can access a copy of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Compliance Notice here.](#)

As part of the Compliance Notice, the Authority was required, by 30 March 2017, to publish a document noting how it intends to comply at a corporate level, with the Standards – and what its internal processes are for oversight and monitoring implementation. You can access a copy of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Implementation Plan [here](#). Under the legislation, the Authority is also required to publish an annual monitoring report on progress made towards meeting and maintaining the Welsh Language Standards. This document outlines Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service's compliance during 2018/19.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that in conducting public business in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on the basis of equality in order to recognise and value the rich diversity of its communities, against a backdrop of significant natural and cultural heritage.

The Authority also acknowledges its duty towards its staff, most of whom are residents of mid and west Wales and who themselves reflect the linguistic and cultural make-up of their own communities. By acknowledging its moral and legal duties to protect the cultural heritage of the area and meet the expectations of the local community, the Authority continues to work towards ensuring that it conducts its public business in both languages. Throughout 2018/19, the Authority continued to comply with the set of Welsh Language Standards issued in its Compliance Notice on 30 September 2016. It also continued to work with the other two Fire and Rescue Services in Wales through a 'Grŵp Iaith' forum.

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MONITORING OF COMPLIANCE WITH WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

There are several Standards that relate to record keeping which the Authority must publish each year. They are detailed below:

Standards 147: The number of employees who have Welsh skills

Of the 1300 personnel (as at 31 March 2019), 412 confirmed that they had Welsh language skills (level 2 and above), 183 of whom identified as fluent Welsh speakers.

All reception posts are Welsh essential and all employees provide a bilingual greeting when answering the telephone to ascertain and record language choice. This applies to internal and external calls. Guidance has been produced and published internally and all employees are expected to take personal accountability for following the correct procedure to ensure that legal compliance is maintained at all times.

Standards 148: The number of staff members who attended specific training courses that must be provided in Welsh if it is available in English (namely training on recruitment and interviewing, performance management, complaints, induction, dealing with the public and health and safety.

Provision is in place to ensure that all training courses which must be provided in Welsh, if available in English, are provided in Welsh. However, during 2018/19, no requests were made for any of these courses to be undertaken in Welsh.

Standards 151: The number of new and vacant posts categorised as ones where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable, not necessary or need to be learnt.

During 2018/19, 29 vacant posts were advertised, none of which were classed as Welsh essential, but all were advertised as Welsh desirable.

During the same period Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service also employed 104 On-Call Firefighters and 34 Wholetime Firefighters – all of whom received a Welsh language awareness input during their induction period.

Standard 143: The number of complaints received by the organisation about each class of standards.

Complaints are monitored and dealt with by the Corporate Communications and Business Development Department. Complaints and letters of appreciation are reported upon annually to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

No complaints were received in 2018/19 in relation to the Welsh Language. Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service has published a Complaints procedure on its website and also has an internal policy for staff on how to raise a concern or complaint.

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PROMOTING THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Promotion of the Welsh language is maintained internally in a variety of different ways, including through the Service's Engagement Champions Scheme, as a standing item on the Service's Senior Leadership Team meetings, and via the Service's intranet news pages @connect.

The Human Resource Department ascertains the language choice of prospective employees at first point of contact and records this information for future use. It keeps a record of all members of staff who have requested to receive correspondence through the medium of Welsh and the language skills of all employees. This information is updated annually via a Welsh language skills questionnaire. All HR policies and forms relating to an individual's employment have been translated and published internally. Grievance and disciplinary processes can also be facilitated through the medium of Welsh upon request, with the language choice of the individual being respected at all time.

Welsh language courses are offered to all employees on an annual basis via their Individual Development Review interview. The Corporate Communications and Business Development Department maintains records of all the Welsh courses attended and assessments undertaken. As with the Service's previous Welsh language policy, work continues to proactively offer language choice to all Service users as this has always been beneficial and a gateway to improve engagement with all members of the community. Safe and Well checks continue to be promoted through the medium of Welsh or English and all Service promotional material is produced bilingually, with the Welsh language appearing first at all times.

Guidance has been provided to employees on the importance of offering language choice to all, whether face to face, or over the phone. This message is reiterated during the mandatory Welsh Awareness session that has been produced for employees, which is delivered during face to face induction sessions with new starters.

Guidance has also been produced for issuing correspondence to the public and all email signatures and letter-headed paper includes a statement welcoming correspondence in Welsh or English. Siarad Cymraeg and Dysgu Cymraeg logos have also been incorporated into standard email signatures, while Siarad Cymraeg and Dysgu Cymraeg lanyards have been distributed to employees accordingly.

The Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service website and corporate social media channels are fully bilingual, and enquiries received through these channels are dealt with in the language of choice of the recipient.

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a Datblygu Busnes**
Corporate Communications and
Business Development