



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru

Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

Annual Monitoring Report
April 2022 - March 2023



WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
Executive Summary	4
Background and current situation	5
Accountability and responsibility for the Welsh language	5
Arrangements for approving this report.	5
Complaints	5
Matters arising during the reporting period.	6
Record keeping Standards	14
Complaints	14
Conclusion	14

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

Introduction

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (MAWWFRA) recognises and values the rich diversity of our communities and the significance of our cultural heritage. We recognise that under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Welsh language has equal legal status with the English language, and we are committed to ensuring that in conducting our business, the Welsh and English languages are treated equally.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets out a legal framework which imposes a duty on MAWWFRA to comply with a set of Standards relating to the Welsh language.

As an Authority, we continue to work within the Welsh Language Standards, utilising them to further progress our commitment and aspiration to provide services equitably to all areas of mid and west Wales.

We also acknowledge our duty towards our own staff, most of whom are residents of mid and west Wales and whom themselves reflect the linguistic and cultural make-up of their own communities.

Despite the significant challenges we face, we recognise that to ensure we continue to provide an efficient and effective service to our communities, challenging and improving the way we work is important. We are always open to change and thrive on finding new and better ways of doing things. Through careful planning, we can consider what we want to do for the short, medium and long term to ensure we continually review our activities and build a representative workforce to help us deliver services that are fully inclusive, ensuring our staff and communities have access to our services in their language of need and choice.

Thank you,

Gwynfor Thomas.

Chair, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023



Executive Summary

At Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS), we are clear that in the conduct of public business in Wales, the Welsh and English languages should be treated based on equality. We take great pride in our ongoing commitment to the Welsh language, and to increasing bilingual services and language choice for both our staff and our communities year on year.

Our vision is for an ambitious Welsh language service where all staff working for MAWWFRS will be able to understand and use a level of Welsh appropriate for their role.

Our mission is to provide a Welsh language service which goes beyond legislative compliance and reflects the communities we serve and the staff we employ, recognising their rights, meeting their needs, and contributing to their development. Our organisational values underpin this approach.

Taking our lead from Welsh Government, we believe that Welsh belongs to us all whatever our linguistic background and that it is a vocational skill that all our staff should possess, at an appropriate level, according to their role and location, to enable us to develop, provide and promote appropriate Welsh language services.

This report provides details on the progress made in key service areas and notable achievements which will improve our capacity to deliver our services bilingually. However, it also recognises that while good progress has been made, there is ongoing work to be done to ensure we recognise language needs and provide real language choices to both our communities and our staff. We have identified key actions within this report which we will prioritise for improvement over the next twelve months. These key areas will continue to build on the work we have undertaken this year to enhance the bilingual capacity of our Service.

We want to ensure we have the optimum number of bilingual staff in key areas that reflect the language profile of our communities. We therefore remain committed to promoting bilingual workplaces and creating a positive environment for our staff and our communities to engage with us both formally and informally through the medium of Welsh.

Thank you.

Roger Thomas.

Chief Fire Officer

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

Background and current situation

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued MAWWFRA with its Compliance Notice, under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 on 30 September 2016. This notice sets out which Standards are imposed on us, along with any exemptions and their implementation dates. MAWWFRA's Compliance Notice is available [here](#) on our website.

As part of the Compliance Notice, MAWWFRA was required, by 30 March 2017, to publish a document noting how it intended to comply at a corporate level, with the Standards – and what its internal processes were for oversight and monitoring implementation. MAWWFRA's Implementation Plan is available [here](#) on our website.

Under the legislation, MAWWFRA is also required to publish an annual report on progress made towards meeting and maintaining the Welsh Language Standards.

This annual report for 2022/23 is MAWWFRA's own evaluation of how we have complied with the Standards and how we have promoted and facilitated opportunities to use the Welsh language, ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language. This report is available, together with previous reports, [here](#) on our website.

Accountability and responsibility for the Welsh language

At an MAWWFRA level, accountability for the Welsh language lies with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

Within MAWWFRS, the Executive Board has the highest management function and is led by the Chief Fire Officer. Within the Executive Board, executive lead for the Welsh language lies with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, who has line management responsibility for the Corporate Communications and Business Development department.

The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development has strategic and operational responsibility for the Welsh language.

The Welsh Language Officer has responsibility for implementing the Standards and for promoting and supporting the Welsh language from day to day.

Arrangements for approving this report.

This report was submitted to and approved by the MAWWFRA's Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 31 July 2023.

Complaints

Compliments, comments and complaints about the Welsh language can be made [here](#).

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

Matters arising during the reporting period.

The table below records action taken during 2022/23 and our plans for actions to be taken in 2023/24.

Standards Group	Action taken during 2022/23	Action to be taken in 2023/24
Service delivery standards		
Correspondence 1, 4, 5-7	<p>We ensured that all departmental administration teams are familiar with guidance and resources available in respect of these specific Standards.</p> <p>Further to an issue identified during 2021/22 and clarification received from the Welsh Language commissioner's office, we reaffirmed requirements to ensure compliance with these Standards, modifying our guidance material as such.</p>	No actions planned for 2023/24 although monitoring of our compliance against these Standards will continue.
Telephone calls 8-10, 12-18, 20-22 Meetings 24, 25/A/D Interviews to assist with enquiries. 26/A, 27/A	<p>During 2022/23, a mystery shopper exercise was undertaken to assure ourselves of the broad approach to these Standards.</p> <p>Some issues were identified as part of this process, in particular regarding the use of a consistent and bilingual approach to answering telephone calls, and a communication and engagement exercise was undertaken to ensure staff are aware of their individual responsibilities.</p>	We will continue to monitor our approach to these Standards and will review and update our guidance material as part of this process so that all staff are continually aware of the expectations on them.
Public meetings 28-32	The first face to face meeting since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions was the MAWWFRA's AGM on the 4	We will continue to monitor the legislative expectation of the MAWWFRA to ensure we comply with the requirements

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

	<p>July 2022.</p> <p>As part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, we produced a Multi-locations Procedure for the Authority, which is now included within the Constitution. This includes guidance in respect of the use of simultaneous translation at full Authority and Committee meetings.</p>	<p>of the legislation itself as well as meeting the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards placed upon us.</p>
Public events 33-34	<p>During 2022/23, the MAWWFRS's Welsh Language Officer attended and participated in a variety of MAWWFRS led events to assure the Service of compliance against these Standards.</p> <p>It was pleasing to note that the use of the Welsh Language was exemplary, and in some cases was the primary language used to drive communication and engagement. All visual and audio materials were produced bilingually, and Welsh speakers were always on location and accessible to the public.</p>	<p>We will continue monitoring compliance and consider approaches for further developments and improvements beyond legislative compliance in this area.</p>

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

<p>Publicity & advertising 35,36 Public documents 38, 45-47 Forms 48/A/B</p>	<p>During 2022/23 we continued our annual Welsh language standards compliance review in this area, making small but meaningful changes to respective guidance and resources.</p>	<p>During 2023/24 the Service will be required to procure a new Welsh Language translation provision as a result of the current contract coming to an end.</p> <p>As part of this process, and in consultation with the successful company, the intention is to review language pitch used in both Welsh and English to ensure that language is not too formal and enables effective engagement with the public.</p> <p>Additionally, awareness across all Departments around the change of translation providers will need to take place, affirming the new translation process and timeline.</p>
<p>Website 49, 52, 53 Apps 54</p>	<p>During 2022/23 we continued to raise awareness within Departments that whilst the Corporate Communications and Business Development department is responsible for managing the Service’s external website, they are responsible for the content appropriate to their roles and remit and need to ensure that the content is current, correct and accessible in both Welsh and English.</p>	<p>As the Service is now looking to develop a new website during 2023/24, an exercise will be undertaken to ensure it is fully compliant with applicable Welsh Language Standards, as well as seeking opportunities to go beyond compliance and extending what is currently being offered through the medium of Welsh.</p>
<p>Social media 55-56</p>	<p>During 2022/23 we ensured that all Departments who have social media accounts understand that Standard 56, in relation to replying to correspondence received in Welsh, applies to them and</p>	<p>During 2023/24 we will continue Welsh language standards compliance review on our social media channels, utilising engagement analytics to consider and tailor our approach.</p>

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023



	that they should consider bilingual correspondence on their social media channels as best practice.	
Signs 58-60 Reception services 61,64-5 Notices 66,67 Tenders 73,74/A,75,77	<p>During 2022/23, an audit of workplace signage was undertaken and where issues were identified, signage was updated or changed.</p> <p>An assurance process of our procurement approach was also undertaken, and with credit to the MAWWFRS Procurement department, no issues were identified.</p>	No actions planned for 2023/24 although monitoring of our compliance against these Standards will continue.

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

Standards Group	Action taken during 2022/23	Action to be taken in 2023/24
Service delivery standards		
Education courses 81	As a result of a delay in go live, MAWWFRS was unable to support the launch of <i>Staywise Cymru</i> that it committed to but did continue the ongoing development of bilingual education resources in readiness for the eventual launch.	During 2023/24 we will support the launch of <i>Staywise Cymru</i> , scheduled to happen at the Urdd Eisteddfod, Llandovery in May 2023.
Policy making standards		
Policy making standards 85-90, 92-94	<p>MAWWFRS’s Welsh Language Impact Assessment Tool continues to be used effectively for any papers being drafted for decision making purposes for consideration by the Service and Executive Leadership Teams.</p> <p>A new Welsh Language Strategy has now been drafted and submitted through the Service’s governance process, and subject to some minor amendments is ready to be published. The final piece of work regarding the commitments and objectives made within this Strategy will be the development of an annual action plan which will outline the detail of what individuals, teams and departments will do to enable the Service to deliver against it.</p>	During 2023/24 we will undertake a formal launch and begin the process of embedding the new Welsh Language Strategy and its associated action plan.

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

Standards Group	Action taken during 2022/23	Action to be taken in 2023/24
Operational Standards		
Welsh language policy 95	As a result of staff sickness, little was progressed in this area and as such, we continue to commit to the development of a new Welsh Language policy for 2023/24	During 2023/24 we will design, develop and consult upon a new Welsh Language Policy for MAWWFRS.
Contracts and employment correspondence 96-101	<p>As we do regularly, during 2022/23, we reminded Managers in compliance review discussions that they have a role in knowing the language preferences of their staff and ensuring staff know what services are available to them through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Additionally, this year, the Services People and Organisational Development Department have been developing a new staff appraisals process and a considerable amount of support has been provided to ensure this new system is fully compliant with the requirements of the Standards</p>	During 2023/24 we will continue to liaise with the People and Organisational Development Department to ensure the Service's new Appraisal process, which is due to go live during quarter 1 of 2023/24, meets the requirements of the Standards in training delivery.
Publishing policies in Welsh 102-108	During 2022/23 we continued to review existing policies to ensure full compliance, which was indeed the case. As part of this process, we issue reminders to those responsible for managing and updating these policies that they need to ensure both the Welsh and English versions remain the same and are easily accessible to	During 2023/24 we will continue to review existing policies to ensure full compliance.

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

	all staff.	
Complaints by and against staff 109/A, 110, 112 Disciplinary process 113/A, 115-6	During 2022/23 we issued guidance on internal complaints, grievances, and disciplinary matters which includes reference to Welsh language Standards requirements. This guidance is shared with Department Heads and appropriate Managers.	No actions planned for 2023/24 although monitoring of our compliance against these Standards will continue.
Providing computer software and interfaces 117 Intranet 119, 121-2	During 2022/23 we continued to support the ICT department in ensuring compliance with the Welsh Language Standards as part of their project to develop a new Service intranet. This intranet went live during the latter part of the 2022 calendar year.	Recognising that the new intranet is still in its infancy, during 2023/24, we will continue to support the ICT department in ensuring compliance with the Welsh language standards, as well as beginning the process of understanding what more can be offered with this new modern ICT system.
Welsh language skills 124 Training delivery in Welsh 125-6 Welsh language lessons, training for managers and Welsh language awareness 127-129 Induction 130	During 2022/23, the Service's Welsh Language Officer embedded themselves as part of the induction process for new Firefighter recruits, and now regularly undertakes a Welsh Language Awareness training session as part of this process. In preparedness for the development of a new Welsh Language Strategy, the Welsh Language Officer also delivered a Welsh Language Awareness to the MAWWFRS's Executive Leadership team, an	During 2023/24 we intended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise our method for capturing Welsh language skills data. • Develop a Welsh language skills strategy. • Develop and trial bilingual training sessions to encourage staff to choose Welsh options and to develop their confidence and skill at using their Welsh in a training environment. • Expand support

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

	<p>exercise which was well received and played a vital role in developing what are now the strategic commitments and objectives contained within the Strategy.</p> <p>Due to staff sickness, other areas that were hoping to develop during 2022/23 have not been completed and so will be migrated to the 2023/24 reporting period.</p>	<p>sessions and buddy schemes for Welsh learners and improvers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise general Welsh induction content and materials across all staff contract types, building on the success of our approach with Firefighter roles.
Email signatures and contact details 131-2	No progress was made during 2022/23 due to a period of staff illness so actions will be progressed during 2023/24.	During 2023/24 we will carry out a Mystery Shopper exercise, examining compliance against these Standards.
Recruitment 134/A, 135/A/B, 137-8	No progress was made during 2022/23 due to a period of staff illness and, more primarily, the understanding that the Service's current translation provision was due to come to an end and a procurement exercise would need to be undertaken to secure a new translation provider.	Once a procurement exercise has been undertaken and a new translation provider has been secured, during 2023/24, an exercise will be undertaken to review and improve the business process associated with the translation of recruitment material.
Workplace signs 140/1	During 2022/23, an audit of workplace signage was undertaken and where issues were identified, signage was updated or changed.	No actions planned for 2023/24 although monitoring of our compliance against these Standards will continue.

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

Record keeping Standards

Complaints

The table below shows that no complaints were received during the reporting period:

Standards Group	Complaints received directly
Service delivery standards	0
Policy making standards	0
Operational standards	0

Conclusion

As outlined within the body of this report, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, supported by its governing body, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, is committed to increasing compliance levels with its Welsh Language Standards.

As a Service, we are proud of the significant steps we have already taken to improve our bilingual service provision for our service users, staff, stakeholders and members of the public. However, we recognise that there continues to be room for improvement, which we will address during 2023/24.

The Service remains committed to ensuring equality for the Welsh language and Welsh speakers and will continue to promote, support and encourage the use of Welsh within the Service and our communities at every opportunity.

For further information on the details of this report, or for further information on Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service's implementation of the Welsh Language Standards, please contact Clare Grist, Welsh Language Officer by emailing c.grist@tancgc.gov.uk

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

Annual Report
April 2022 – March
2023

www.mawwfire.gov.u



**Cyfathrebu Corfforaethol
a Datblygu Busnes**
Corporate Communications and
Business Development

JR1637