## REPORT OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

**SUBJECT:**
**WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS: ANNUAL REPORT**

On the 30th September 2015, the Welsh Language Commissioner issued the Authority with a Compliance Notice in accordance with Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The Compliance Notice sets out the Welsh Language Standards with which the Authority has to comply in the course of carrying out its business and the dates from which the Authority has to comply with the Standards.

The Authority is required to produce an Annual Report by the 30th June every year in line with Standards 158, 164 and 170 of the Compliance Notice and a copy of that report is appended.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Members endorse the Annual Report as the Authority's submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.**

Background papers:
Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice issued to the Authority on the 20th September 2015
Amended Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice issued to the Authority on the 23rd January 2017

*(For further information, please contact Caroline Llewellyn, Democratic Services Manager on 01646 624804, or by e-mailing carolinel@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)*

# PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY



# WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT

## April 2023 – March 2024

This report is also available in Welsh

We can also provide this report in alternative formats on request.  Please contact:


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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets out a legal framework which imposes a duty on all local authorities and National Park Authorities in Wales, together with the Welsh Ministers, to comply with the Standards relating to the Welsh Language.

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is fully committed to the principle of allowing Welsh speakers to use their language in all aspects of their lives and recognises its responsibility to facilitate and promote this use.

In complying with the Welsh Language Standards the Authority's aim is to enable our stakeholders to use the language (Welsh or English) that they are most comfortable with.  This report sets out how the Authority is complying with the Standards imposed under the Measure.  The Authority recognises that it has made progress but there are improvements still to be made.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Welsh Language Standards mean that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, and should promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language to make it easier for people to use it in their day-to-day lives.

1.2 The Standards fall into five broad areas:

- **Service Delivery**, which focus on providing services, procurement, corporate identity
- **Policy Making**, which focus on carrying out an impact assessment of the Welsh language when making policy decisions, and taking positive action to promote use of the Welsh language
- **Operational**, which focus on promoting and facilitating the Welsh language in relation to the Authority's staff and internal activities
- **Promotion**, which focus on promoting or facilitating the use of the Welsh language more widely and
- **Record Keeping**, which focus on keeping records on how the Authority complies with the Standards imposed.

1.3 A total of 170 Standards have been imposed on the Authority, with an initial implementation date of the 30th March 2016. A full list of the Standards with which the Authority is required to comply is available on our website and on our intranet for staff.

1.4 Standards 158, 164 and 170 stipulate that the Authority must produce an annual report by the 30th June in relation to each preceding financial year. This is the ninth annual report since the introduction of the Standards and the report focuses on the period from the 01 April 2023 to the 31 March 2024.

1.5 This report has been considered by the Authority's Management Team and presented to the National Park Authority for approval.

## 2. MATTERS ARISING DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

2.1 During the year the Welsh Language Commissioner received a complaint that the Authority had published its "Coast to Coast" publication almost exclusively in English, in contravention of the Standards. This was investigated and the complaint upheld. The 2024 edition of "Coast to Coast" has been published bilingually.

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3.1 To ensure that all staff are aware of the Service Delivery Standards, we have distributed guidance on the delivery of Welsh language services. All Team Leaders and Managers have a duty to ensure that their services comply with the requirements.

3.2 **Answering the telephone (Standards 8 – 22)**
3.2.1 Training has recently been provided to Customer Service staff to increase their ability to answer more calls in Welsh as the first point of contact.

3.3 **Public Meetings (Standards 24 – 36)**
3.3.1 The Authority holds its Authority/Committee meetings either online or as multi-location meetings (in accordance with the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021). During the reporting period the Authority has begun to hold some of its meetings bilingually with the assistance of simultaneous translation. Consideration will be given to holding more bilingual meetings, although it is an established principle that any member of the public who requests it can address the Authority's Development Management Committee (the only meeting where public speaking is allowed) through the medium of Welsh.

3.4 **Documents, Forms and Publicity Material (Standards 37 – 51)**
3.4.1 Views of the public have been sought in respect of the special qualities of the National Park as part of the review of the National Park Management Plan and in relation to the future of Traeth Mawr, Newport. The consultation exercises were conducted bilingually and responses were received in both Welsh and English.

3.5 **Website, apps and social media (Standards 52 and 55 – 59)**
3.5.1 Users of the Authority's website are able to choose their preferred language by clicking on a toggle button. During the reporting period there was an anomaly in February 2024 when there was a total of 11,548 views. There is no apparent reason for the anomaly. Nevertheless, web page views appear to have increased.

| Web page views by year | Welsh | English |
|---|---|---|
| 2023/24 | 33,088 (21,540)* | 1,340,919 |
| 2022/23 | 4,064 | 936,413 |
| 2021/22 | 5,583 | 1,096,366 |
| 2020/21 | 12,328 | 802,982 |

* Figure in brackets excludes the number of views in February 2024

3.6 **Signage and Notices (Standards 61 – 63 and 69 – 70)**
3.6.1 A signage audit was undertaken during the reporting period to identify those signs which need to be replaced.

3.7     **Reception services (Standards 64 – 70)**

3.7.1   Of the four staff (2.6 full-time equivalents) in the Authority's main reception area, two are entry level, one is a fluent Welsh speaker, while one has undertaken Welsh language courses to an intermediate level.  If staff have been unable to deal with a call themselves, they have referred the caller to another Welsh-speaking colleague without delay.  As noted in 3.2.1 training has been provided to customer service staff at the Authority's headquarters to improve the team's ability to deliver services bilingually.

3.7.2   Iaith Gwaith posters are displayed in all reception areas and employees who speak Welsh either wear Iaith Gwaith lanyards or badges to inform the public that a Welsh language service is available.  Welsh learners wear lanyards with "Dw i yn dysgu Cymraeg" on them.

3.8     **Grants (Standards 71 – 75)**

3.8.1   The Authority administers the Sustainable Development Fund, the Greening Agriculture Fund and Connecting the Coast Scheme.  Guidance notes and the application form for these are available bilingually or in both Welsh and English, and correspondence is responded to in the applicant's language of choice.  Any promotional material is available either bilingually or in both Welsh and English languages and are treated equally in terms of font, size, format, etc.

3.8.2   The grants policy has been considered by the Authority's Management Team to include a requirement to promote and facilitate use of the Welsh language as part of the grant awarding criteria.

3.9     **Education courses (Standards 84 and 86)**

3.9.1   The Authority does not run education courses *per se*.  The activities and events programme for 2023/24 provides for activities/events through the medium of Welsh and all schools/groups who take part are able to do so through their preferred language.

3.9.2   286 sessions were undertaken with schools during the reporting period (this includes Duke of Edinburgh Award, Further Education and University sessions), 49 of which (17%) were carried out through the medium of Welsh; an increase of 1.1% on the previous reporting period.  1,435 children and young people attended these sessions; a 16.7% increase on the previous reporting period.  A bilingual session was also held for Home Education Day at Castell Henllys.

3.9.3   1,445 activities and events (including volunteering sessions) were held during the reporting period, 90 of which (6.2%) were carried out through the medium of Welsh; an increase of 3.2% on the previous reporting period.  These included a Wesh Language Walk at Craig Talfynydd, talks to Merched y Wawr Groups and volunteering sessions.  1620 people attended these sessions; an increase of 60.4% on the previous reporting period.

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3.9.4    341 sessions were bilingual with 29,874 participants and in some case these have replaced separate Welsh/English sessions.   These mainly related to Experience the Iron Age at Castell Henllys, community events and Wednesday Art Club at Oriel y Parc, and some of the daily tours at Carew.

3.9.5    Carew Castle have introduced a bilingual audio tour of the Castle which has proved very popular.

3.10    **Geiriau Diflanedig – The Lost Words exhibition in Oriel y Parc**
A unique partnership between Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia National Park Authorities has seen the best-selling book Geiriau Diflanedig - The Lost Words brought to life in two fully bilingual exhibitions for the first time in 2023/24.  Geiriau Diflanedig – The Lost Words explores the relationship between language and the living world, and of nature's power to spark the imagination. The touring exhibition, which was on display at the Authority's Oriel y Parc Gallery and Visitor Centre between 2 July 2023 and 2 June 2024, brought together, for the first time the original artwork by Jackie Morris alongside the English language poems by Robert Macfarlane and Welsh language poems written by Mererid Hopwood.

| **4.** | **POLICY MAKING STANDARDS (STANDARDS 88 – 97)** |
| --- | --- |

4.1    **Public consultation (Standards 91 – 93)**
4.1.1    2 Supplementary Planning Guidance documents concluded their period of Consultation. They complied with Welsh Language Standards as they are supplemental to the Local Development Plan 2 and therefore subject to the same impact assessment requirements:

- Tree and Woodland Guidance
- Seascapes Guidance

4.1.2    Having purchased Traeth Mawr / Newport Sands with the aim of improving the natural environment and beach safety by making the area car-free, the Authority undertook a bilingual online consultation in Autumn 2023. Responses were received in both English and Welsh and were presented to Members at the NPA meeting in March 2024 when a decision on how to progress physical works at Traeth Mawr was undertaken.   The feedback in both Welsh and English on the survey question 'What would make Traeth Mawr more accessible to you?' was captured as part of the assessment of equality issues for the project.  The report also noted that any new signage for the project will be in accordance with the Authority's Welsh language standards.

## 5.1 Human resources policies (Standards 105 – 111)

5.1.1 Work is currently ongoing to update a number of the Authority's policies, however all staffing policies covered by the Standards are available bilingually.

## 5.2 Intranet (Standards 122 – 126)

5.2.1 A new intranet has been introduced during the reporting period. The text on the home page of the Authority's intranet is bilingual.

## 5.3 Assessing staff's Welsh language skills (Standard 127)

5.3.1 All staff have been asked to input their Welsh language skills on the Authority's HR system. The skills levels now used are based on the Welsh language skills competence framework (CEFR):

Level
- Entry
- Foundation
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Proficient

5.3.2 On the 31 March 2024 the Authority employed 191 staff. 47.6% (an increase of 11.6%) have completed their language skills data:

| Level | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Entry | 45 | 23.6% |
| Foundation | 9 | 4.7% |
| Intermediate | 13 | 6.8% |
| Advanced | 9 | 4.7% |
| Proficient | 15 | 7.9% |

5.3.3 It is considered that, on the whole, the Authority is able to fulfil its obligations to the public in terms of providing a bilingual service. The Authority generally has a low turnover of staff and, when posts become vacant, they are assessed with regard to linguistic requirements (see paragraph 5.5). In the meantime, staff are encouraged to enrol on Welsh language courses to develop or improve their Welsh language skills.

5.3.4 A Welsh Language skills audit to identify the language needs and skills of each team will shortly be circulated to Team Leaders and this will further strengthen the Authority's language planning strategy.

5.3.5 18 Members serve on the National Park Authority, and they have self assessed their Welsh Language skills as follows:

| Level | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Entry | 5 | 28% |
| Foundation | 1 | 5.5% |
| Intermediate | 0 | 0% |
| Advanced | 1 | 5.5% |
| Proficient | 3 | 17% |
| No skills | 8 | 44% |

**5.4** **Welsh language courses (Standards 130 – 133)**

5.4.1 Wellbeing and Development reviews are undertaken with all staff, where the need (or opportunity) to learn Welsh is identified. Any staff wishing to attend a Welsh language course during work time is supported. A number of staff have received training to develop their language skills and Welsh language awareness training is provided to all new employees as part of their induction.

**5.5** **Assessing linguistic requirements for all vacant posts (Standard 136)**

5.5.1 Whenever a job description is prepared or amended, managers will be required to assess the linguistic requirements of the post using the Authority's adopted language framework. The following factors are used, together with the language framework, to set the level of skills required for the post:

   (a) Will the postholder work in a Service area that requires the service to be delivered through the medium of Welsh?
   (b) Is the Authority currently able to deliver this Service in Welsh?

5.5.2 If the answer to (b) is 'yes', the manager must explain how the Authority currently delivers through the medium of Welsh. If the answer to (a) is 'yes' and (b) is 'no', the post must be advertised as 'Welsh essential' with an indication of the skills level required.

5.5.3 The requirements are recorded in the Request to Fill a Post form which is submitted to the Authority's Senior Leadership Team for approval.

5.5.4 Statistics relating to the categorisation of new or vacant posts can be found in paragraph 7.5.1.

**5.6** **Application forms (Standards 137A – 140)**

5.6.1 The Authority has introduced an online application process which is available in Welsh and English. The form asks individuals to note whether they wish to use the Welsh language at interview. One such request was made during the reporting period.

5.6.2 If the candidate wishes to be interviewed in Welsh, the interview panel will either be made up of Welsh speaking officers or simultaneous translation facilities will be provided. If the advertised post asks for Welsh language skills but the candidate – although indicating that s/he can speak Welsh –

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does not wish to be interviewed in Welsh, a procedure has been put in place to test the conversational level of the candidate prior to interview.

## 5.7 Signs displayed in the workplace (Standards 141 – 143)
5.7.1 The Authority's policy is to ensure that all signs are bilingual, with the Welsh text inserted in such a way that it is likely to be read first. Reception/Centre managers have received guidance on ensuring that they comply with these Standards. A signage audit was undertaken in the reporting period to identify any sign which needs to be replaced.

## 6. PROMOTION STANDARDS (STANDARDS 145 – 146)

### 6.1 5-year Welsh Language Strategy
6.1.1 The Authority has produced an Assessment of Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022 and adopted a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2023-2028. An Action Plan to implement actions to be undertaken in the coming year has been agreed and actions set out within it are monitored by the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee.

## 7. RECORD KEEPING STANDARDS (STANDARDS 147 – 154)

### 7.1 Complaints received (Standards 147 – 149)
7.1.1 One complaint was received by the Authority during the reporting period, regarding a failure to publish, on its website, the fact that calls would be welcomed in Welsh. A sentence was added in the appropriate place to address this. The complainant also objected to the monolingual name of the Authority's Twitter account. An initial change to a bilingual name resulted in a complaint from a non-Welsh speaking member of the public and as a result separate accounts for Welsh and English language messages have been created.

### 7.2 Welsh language skills (Standard 151)
7.2.1 All staff have been asked to input their Welsh language skills on the Authority's HR system. As noted in paragraph 5.3.4, it is intended to complete a Welsh Language Skills Audit in the coming year.

### 7.3 Training courses (Standards 152)
7.3.1 All staff are actively encouraged to learn Welsh and 19% of staff have completed online Work Welsh language courses during the reporting period. Completion of the basic module is now mandatory for all new starters to the Authority.

### 7.4 Welsh language assessments for new or vacant posts (Standard 153)
7.4.1 All requests to fill new or vacant posts have to be considered by the Authority's Senior Leadership Team (see 5.5 above). The statistics are recorded on the Authority's performance management system and reported

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to the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee and Operational Review Committee.

7.5 **Categorisation of new and vacant posts (Standard 154)**
7.5.1 63 posts were advertised during the reporting period. 15 were categorised as Welsh essential, 45 as Welsh desirable or advantageous and 3 staff were appointed with a requirement to learn Welsh.

## 8. SUPPLEMENTARY STANDARDS (STANDARDS 155 – 175)

8.1 A copy of the Compliance Notice issued to the Authority by the Welsh Language Commissioner is available on the Authority's website.

8.2 A document entitled "Welsh Language Standards: Comments and Complaints" is available on the Authority's website. This document sets out all the Standards with which the Authority has to comply, together with the process that will be adhered to should someone make a complaint to the Authority if it fails in that duty.

## 9. MONITORING COMPLIANCE

9.1 Ultimate responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Welsh Language Standards lies with the Authority's Chief Executive. However, any actions concerning the Standards on a day-to-day basis has been delegated to the Democratic Services Manager. In addition, every Director, Head of Service and Team Leader are fully aware of the obligations of the Standards and promoting the Welsh Language has been identified as a cross-cutting outcome throughout the Authority's Delivery Plans.

9.2 The Annual Monitoring Report is submitted to the Authority for approval prior to submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.