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**Welsh Language Standards Annual Report by the Big Lottery Fund – September 2018**

**Background**

The Big Lottery Fund is a UK wide non departmental public body (NDPB) responsible for the distribution of money raised by The National Lottery. We help communities achieve their ambitions by awarding grants to projects that are led by people in those communities, making them stronger and more vibrant. Over the last year, we have distributed £35 million in Wales to more than 1,000 projects.

**How we have complied with our Welsh Language Standards**

The Big Lottery Fund is a truly bilingual organisation and we have implemented Welsh Language Standards since January 25th 2017. Prior to this we implemented a very successful Welsh Language Scheme.

Implementing the Standards within the organisation has been a very positive experience for us as it has strengthened the bilingual service that we offer to our customers and grant holders on a day to day basis, as well as enabling us to offer and provide services in Welsh to our Welsh speaking staff members for the first time.

It has enabled our Welsh Language Team to work more closely with some of our central teams which are based outside of Wales, including Human Resources, Procurement and UK Wide funding programmes teams.

The Big Lottery Fund are implementing Standards under the categories of Service Delivery, Policy Making, Operational and Record Keeping.

In order to make it clear to members of the public what services they can expect to receive from the Big Lottery Fund in Welsh, we worked with the company Ateb in 2016/2017 to put together a Siarter Iaith/Language Charter, which explains in simple terms what the Standards mean to us as an organisation, to our customers and to our staff.

Links to these documents are here:  

**Service Delivery Standards**

* We have always been very proud of the bilingual service that we offer our customers in Wales. Our grant applicants and grant holders can work and communicate with us entirely through the medium of Welsh throughout the life of their grant, if they wish to do so. Whilst we were confident with our pre-existing Welsh Language Scheme, we took the Welsh Language Standards as an opportunity to make improvements where we could. We ensured that the reception areas of both our offices made it clear to customers that they could communicate with us in either Welsh or English, by putting Iaith Gwaith merchandise up and making our standards clear to all.
* We are also currently in the process of building a new website which we see as an opportunity to ensure that the new website will be as a minimum, the same bilingual standards as our previous one.

We continue to ensure that our customers receive the best possible service from us in both Welsh and English.

**Policy Making Standards**

* To meet the Policy Making Standards we produced a policy that explains clearly how any research or consultation work will ensure that the Welsh Language is not treated any less favourably than the English language.
* We have also developed a policy on awarding grants and the Welsh language, which states how any funding we distribute to projects in Wales will treat the Welsh and English languages equally, and will give opportunities for people and communities to use the Welsh Language at any Big Lottery Funded projects.
* Please get in touch with us at welshlanguage.advice@biglotteryfund.org.uk if you would like to see a copy of these policies.

**Operational Standards**

* As a UK wide organisation, with the majority of our corporate services based in offices outside Wales, this set of Standards were the most challenging for us as an organisation. As a result, the deadlines for us to meet the Operational Standards were staggered over a period of 18 months to enable us to have sufficient time to meet them fully and confidently.
* Our internal language prior to January 2017 was predominantly English and introducing Welsh as an internal language has been a very positive experience for many staff, based in and outside Wales. The process has enabled our Welsh Language Team to work more closely with our HR and Procurement teams, which has been a positive experience for all.

As a result during the last year and a half our achievements include the following:

* Our core Workplace Essentials training for all staff is now available in Welsh and was rolled out for the first time in 2018;
* For the first time we have a dedicated Welsh language page on our intranet, with more and more information being made available in Welsh;
* We published a guide for our staff titled ‘Our promise to our staff’ which explains which services staff can expect and ask for in Welsh from the Big Lottery Fund;
* Whenever we recruit new members of staff, all applicants can now ask to be interviewed in Welsh on our online application system;
* We have a procedure in place where any new online systems that are for staff use will now be procured for as bilingual systems from the outset, wherever possible, ensuring that staff can use these system in either Welsh or English in the future;
* All our staff have access to Welsh Language awareness training and training to learn or improve their Welsh skills;
* We have updated our Language Skills Strategy in 2018 and will continue to update this document to ensure it helps us to maintain our required number of Welsh speaking members of staff.

Over the past year we have also been working in partnership with the Hybu team of the Welsh Language Commissioner’s office to run training specifically for our funded projects. The training is to help our funded projects meet the Terms and Conditions of their grant, as well as to learn how to develop the Welsh language further in their organisation. We have a further 4 training session arranged for 2018-2019.

This is only the beginning for us and we look forward very much to developing the Welsh language further internally within the organisation.

**Record Keeping Standards**

To fulfil the requirements of the record keeping standards, we keep copies of:

* Complaints that we receive relating to our compliance with Standards
* Numbers of staff who have attended training courses provided in Welsh
* Assessments which we carry out in respect of the Welsh language skills that may be needed in relation to a new or vacant post and how many roles were advertised as needing Welsh essential or Welsh desirable skills.

**Numbers of Welsh Speaking staff**

In Wales (as at September 2018), the Big Lottery Fund has two offices, one in Cardiff and one in Newtown. We have 51 members of staff in the Wales Directorate and 17 of these are Welsh speakers with an additional 5 members of staff attending Welsh classes. More than half the staff in the Newtown office are Welsh speakers and we are very proud of the bilingual atmosphere in both our offices.

In September 2018 we conducted our latest language skills audit for our staff in Wales and the results were as follows:

* 21 members of staff completed the questionnaire in English and 14 completed it in Welsh.
* The results show that 12 members of staff see themselves as fluent Welsh speakers with excellent spoken, reading and writing skills, 17 members of staff had either confident or basic spoken skills in Welsh and only 5 members of staff had no Welsh skills at all
* 17 members of staff identified that they would like to receive some training with 11 stating that would benefit from confidence training to use their Welsh in conversation and to improve their written skills and 6 requested training to learn Welsh. Our Welsh Language Team will follow up the training requests during September / October 2018.

**Numbers of staff which attended training in Welsh, if it’s available in English.**

* Our Standards noted that only some training would need to be provided in Welsh, if it was provided in English. These training courses were: recruitment and interviewing; performance management; complaints and disciplinary procedures; induction; dealing with the public and health and safety. Most of this training is not currently offered in English to our staff and therefore hasn’t yet been made available in Welsh.
* However a core part of training for all our staff is the Workplace Essentials which all staff are required to do on an annual basis. It’s an online training resource and covers Code of Ethics, Anti-fraud and corruption awareness, Information security and data handling and Data Protection. In 2018 this online training was available in Welsh for the first time and 6 members of staff from the Wales Directorate completed the training either completely in Welsh or bilingually and a further 4 members of staff used the Welsh training as a reference while completing the English version.
* In 2017 we worked with Cwmni Iaith to deliver a training course specifically for the Welsh speaking members of staff in the Wales Directorate. The training was to prepare our Welsh speakers for the changes the Standards would bring as well as provide training on how to use Welsh effectively in meetings and while presenting. The training also touched on how to deal with difficult situations in Welsh, such as complaints or disciplinary meetings. The training was held in our Newtown office and the majority of our Welsh speaking members of staff at the time were able to attend.
* From September 2018 onwards, we have 6 members of staff who are attending a course to learn or improve their Welsh skills.

**Number of new roles assessed as needing Welsh essential skills, Welsh skills would be advantageous or no Welsh skills**

* Since our Welsh Language Standards have been in force on the January 25th 2017, we have advertised 8 roles where Welsh language skills were essential for the role. A further 6 roles were advertised with Welsh language being an advantage.
* The roles where Welsh was an essential skill were 4 Funding Officers, Corporate Assistant, Web and Social Media Officer, Communications Officer and one role for a Head of Campaigns for the National Lottery Promotions Unit in Wales, based mainly at our Cardiff office.
* We were also successful in recruiting a Welsh speaker for a Policy & Learning Advisor role, where Welsh skills were advantageous rather than essential.
* We have a Welsh Language Skills Strategy, which all managers, the HR team and the Welsh Language team refer to whenever we recruit for a new or replacement role.

**Number of complaints received by the organisation under each heading of Standards**

* Since we have implemented the Standards, the organisation has received one informal complaint about our Welsh language services in May 2018. The complaint was regarding a delay in processing a Welsh language application for funding, which happened as a result of a human error by a member of staff.

We undertook a prompt investigation, acknowledging that the quality of service received was below our high standards and wrote to those affected issuing an apology.

* No complaints have been received regarding the Welsh language service provided by the Big Lottery Fund.

**Contact details**

If you would like to contact us regarding our Welsh Language Standards or the contents of this annual report, please email us at welshlanguage.advice@biglotteryfund.org.uk.