

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report

September 2020 – September 2021

Background

The National Lottery Community 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 £588.2 million to 14,000 projects in the UK. We have now been operating under our new name, The National Lottery Community Fund, since 31st January 2019, having formerly operated as the Big Lottery Fund since 2004.

How we have complied with our Welsh Language Standards

The National Lottery Community 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 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. It has also enabled us to work more closely with external Welsh language organisations to promote our Welsh services to them and support them to make full use of these.

The National Lottery Community Fund is 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 National Lottery Community 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. Following our rebrand in January 2019, our Language Charter and other supporting documents have been updated. Our Language Charter posters are displayed in the reception areas of both our offices in Wales so that it is clear to our customers that a bilingual service is available to them from us. The Charters are also displayed in our offices in Birmingham and London.

We also have small A5 versions of the Charter that we share at events with projects, applicants and stakeholders.

Links to all our documents that highlight our bilingual service to our customers in Wales can be seen on the Welsh Language Standards page on our website.

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/welsh/about/customer-service/welsh-language-scheme>

How we have ensured compliance with our Welsh Language Standards under each heading:

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. 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.
- We have made good use of the Iaith Gwaith merchandise to promote the active offer and we ensure that all our Welsh speaking members of staff and Welsh learners have the Iaith Gwaith logo on their lanyards and at the bottom of their e-mail signatures. We have taken advantage of the opportunity to ensure that our new office in Newtown shows clearly that we are a bilingual organisation and that we openly welcome visitors to our office to speak to us in Welsh. We have purchased large vinyl versions of the Iaith Gwaith logo which are displayed on the door to our main office and our main meeting room. Over the past year with us working from home, we've made use of the Iaith Gwaith logo in a different way by encouraging staff to wear it in online meetings and by putting the logo on pictures of our

Welsh speaking staff. In 2018, we launched our new UK website, which, in line with Standards 48, 51 and 52, is available fully in both Welsh and English and both languages are treated equally. This includes all our branding, and our funding pages for both UK-wide and Wales programmes.

- On January 30th 2019, we launched our new name and new branding, changing our name from the Big Lottery Fund to The National Lottery Community Fund / Cronfa Gymunedol y Loteri Genedlaethol. Our name, brand and whole identity have been maintained bilingually throughout this change, in line with Standard 79.
- Since 2017, we have held training for our funded projects on how to work bilingually. We have held these in partnership with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Hybu team and they've been a huge success. We hoped to hold 4 sessions in partnership with The National Lottery Heritage Fund at the end of March 2020. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 we had to postpone those sessions and they were held on Teams in June. Since then, during 2020-2021, we have continued to hold the training sessions every 2-3 months on Teams to begin with and later, on Zoom. Both Welsh and English sessions are held every time between 10-11.30 in the morning usually. We held 8 sessions over the past year and have trained and spoken to 77 community projects across Wales. (Since 2017, we've held a total of 18 sessions with 121 organisations from the voluntary and community sector and the private sector) As we funded many small businesses through our Coastal Communities programme in March 2021, we invited Helo Blod to take part in the June sessions too. We also offered and held 1 to 1 sessions and sessions tailored for different organisations with the Hybu team. The sessions will continue in the same way next year.
- The first online sessions received very positive feedback with Karen Rees Roberts from the Penparcau Partnership saying: "A big thank you to the National Lottery Community Fund and the Welsh Language Commissioner for holding a training session on developing bilingual services. The session was beneficial to us in Penparcau and the information was clear and very effective. Many simple tips and the information was conveyed in a coherent manner. If these sessions are offered to your project, go for it."

In all aspects of our work, we continue to ensure that our customers receive the best possible service from us in both Welsh and English.

Covid – 19

- The lockdown period has been very challenging for us as for many other organisations across Wales. Despite this, we have continued to offer and provide a truly bilingual service for our customers and grant holders in the same way as usual. At the beginning of lockdown, we made quick changes to ensure that our advice line, which was usually answered in the office, continued to offer a service to our customers from home. A specific team of

staff are responsible for answering the advice line number and all of them are Welsh speakers or Welsh learners.

- Meetings with projects on funding sources have continued virtually over the past year with sessions being held across our three regions. We have held a funding session specifically for our Welsh speaking customers which was very successful as well as sessions held in partnership with specific organisations. So far we've held 3 funding workshops with Mentrau Iaith Cymru, 2 with Mudiad Meithrin in North Wales with and 1 with Merched y Wawr. We look forward to holding more of these over the coming months.
- 3 Gloywi Iaith training sessions were held virtually last year with Cwmni Iaith, following a request by members of staff for this kind of training. Our survey of staff's Welsh language skills for 2020-2021 also raised the need from staff for further Gloywi Iaith training so this will be arranged for staff from September 2021 onwards.
- Apart from losing the one to one contact with colleagues and customers, lockdown has enabled the Welsh language to develop much faster in the organisation. Working from home has meant the Welsh Language Officer and Translator have been able to join team meetings across the Fund which wouldn't normally be possible and we've been able to work closer with various teams as travelling there isn't an issue. We've also been able to reach many more Welsh speakers in communities throughout Wales through our training, funding sessions and testing work. On the whole, the Welsh language is in a much stronger position in the Fund because of the changes over the past year.

Policy Making Standards

- Following a virtual meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office in 2020, one of our priorities over the coming year will be re-looking at our policy making standards and updating it so it corresponds with the Fund's working method.
- In January 2020, we published our new policy on the Welsh language and our grant making processes. The policy has been well received by the public and our projects and can be seen on our website here:
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/Welsh-language-in-grants-policy-w.pdf?mtime=20200213123702&focal=none>
- All the information about our Standards and the Fund's compliance procedures can be seen on this web page:
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/welsh/about/customer-service/welsh-language-scheme>
- If you'd like further information about any one of our policies on the Welsh language please get in touch at:
welshlanguage.advice@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Operational Standards

- As a UK wide organisation, with the majority of our corporate services based in offices outside Wales, this set of Standards continues to be 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.

- Though they were challenging, we have made significant progress in the internal use of the Welsh language over the last 4 and a half years since we started implementing the Standards and all our Standards have been met within the given timescales.
- 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, Procurement and IT teams, which has been a positive experience for all.

As a result, our achievements include the following:

- Over half of the Wales directorate staff are Welsh speakers (25 out of 48) with three others learning the language. We've seen a large increase in the number of Welsh speakers we attract to work at the Fund over the past few years following our close work with the HR team and developing new recruitment methods.
- Staff members in Wales have the option to complete our core Workplace Essentials training in Welsh. This was introduced for the first time in 2018. The Language Awareness module is part of this training package completed by every member of staff across the UK - since we introduced this module, we've seen an increase in the number of staff who contact the Welsh Language team to ask for more information on our bilingual work and details on how to go about learning Welsh.
- We have a dedicated Welsh language page on our intranet, with more and more information being made available in Welsh all the time. This page will be re-designed in 2021.
- As well as our Welsh language page on the intranet, most of our HR policies are available in Welsh and English now as well as all our Hub which holds our Health and Safety policies.
- An introduction to our Welsh Language service has always been an important part of our induction process to new staff in Wales, and continues to be, but since 2018, the Welsh language has become part of our corporate induction to all staff that join the Fund across the UK. Usually, we have bi-monthly induction sessions to new staff which are held alternatively in our Birmingham and Newcastle offices but as our offices are now closed due to Covid-19, this induction session now takes place on Teams. When a new member of staff joins us in Wales or works in a team which has a close relationship with the Wales office, such as the UK funding team, the HR or Procurement team, a specific session will be arranged on the Welsh

Language with our Welsh Language Officer. Since March 2020, this induction session on the Welsh language and the Standards is held on Teams.

- Our Welsh Language Officer sends regular updates and reminders to staff on our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards throughout the year. In Wales, this happens in a weekly meeting on Teams called 'The Huddle'. If the update is something which would be beneficial or of interest to staff across the Fund, it will also be shared on our internal network, Yammer.
- Whenever we recruit new members of staff, we now ask whether applicants would prefer to be interviewed in Welsh via a question on the application form.
 - Interviews will be held in Welsh with the panel of Welsh speakers and without using an interpreter.
- Every new job, be it an internal or external job, which is located in the Wales directorate or which can be located anywhere in the UK, is advertised bilingually on our website, on our social media channels and on Welsh language recruitment websites. The number of Welsh speakers in the Fund has increased significantly over the last few years and we're very keen for that increase to continue.
- During the last year we've developed a 'Recruitment Checklist' document to be used by our staff in Wales (Recruitment Managers, Welsh Language Officer) and HR staff who are responsible for the entire recruitment process. The checklist ensures that the Welsh Language is considered at every stage of the recruitment process and that information is easily passed to new members of staff on the HR team.
- We have a procedure in place where any new online systems that are for staff use, will now be procured for as bilingual systems, wherever possible, from the outset, ensuring that staff can use these system in either Welsh or English in the future. Our HR system to record holidays and staff objectives for the year will be available in Welsh by the end of 2021.
- All our staff have access to Welsh Language awareness training and training to learn or improve their Welsh skills. Our Welsh language team also hold bespoke Language Awareness training for specific teams within the organisation when needed;
- As an organisation we've enrolled on Cymraeg Gwaith courses which are a great resource for our staff. Many of our staff have taken advantage of the 10 hour online sessions and some have taken advantage of the other more formal courses which are available.
- We have various guides available to our staff, which are updated regularly. These include: Email signatures, out of office messages and useful contact details for Welsh language information.
- Following our annual staff survey in June 2021, some of our Welsh speaking staff asked for a handy document containing common terms, the names of funding programmes etc which is easy to find and use when on the phone or

in a virtual meeting for example. We've already started compiling this document which is saved on Teams and will be added to regularly.

- We continue to make excellent progress on developing a bilingual internal ethos in the organisation and we look forward to developing the Welsh language further internally within the organisation over the next year.

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.

Testing our materials with customers

- As we had a positive experience testing our new funding application form for Awards for All in 2019, since August 2020 we have been testing application forms for all our new programs across Britain with our Welsh speaking customers.
- To date we have tested the materials of 6 new funding programs with 15 customers over Teams which has been a very positive experience. We also tested our new Fairness, Diversity and Inclusion questions in 2021 working with Welsh speakers in specific equality areas to do this.
- The testing has strengthened our relationship with various organizations and individuals throughout Wales and we are very grateful to them for giving us their time. Many have also signed up to join our UK research panel, which ensures Welsh language representation on our new materials for the future.

Numbers of Welsh Speaking staff

Results of the staff Welsh language skills questionnaire 2020 - 2021

Number of staff

- Over 75% of staff completed the survey
- 16 members of staff completed the survey in Welsh and 18 in English
- Of the 45 staff in the Wales Directorate, 25 are Welsh speakers and we have 3 Welsh learners.
- More than half our staff in Wales are Welsh speakers, the highest number we've had, which puts us in a great position to be able to offer our customers a Welsh language service across all our regions.

Most of our Welsh speakers work in the North, Mid and West regions or are not part of a region

Staff Skills

- Most of the Welsh speakers in the Fund feel confident in their reading and listening skills but numbers vary in terms of writing and presentation skills in Welsh.
- A high proportion of non-Welsh speaking staff feel they have a basic understanding of simple Welsh words and phrases, can use some familiar everyday words in Welsh and can also read some Welsh, which is great.

Suggestions

1. It would be helpful to have a handout with useful everyday terms such as names of programmes, teams, themes etc to hand when discussing a topic in Welsh with a customer or member of staff: Our Translator has already started compiling a document for this purpose.
2. Gloywi laith training - The Welsh language team will investigate holding bespoke training for staff
3. Opportunities to have informal conversations in Welsh with colleagues - the first Welsh conversation session will be held in September where we will ask one of our learners' winning quiz questions at a community Eisteddfod.

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

- Our Standards note that training would need to be provided in Welsh if it was provided in English. These training courses are: recruitment and interviewing; performance management; complaints and disciplinary procedures; induction; dealing with the public and health and safety. Our Health & Safety training is done via an online system annually and this is available in both Welsh and English for staff to complete. Our induction in the Wales office is usually led by the new member of staff's line manager but this can be altered depending on the individual's language preference, therefore our induction in Wales can be held in either Welsh or English. Most of the other named training courses are not currently offered in English to our staff and therefore haven'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 complete on an annual basis. It's an online training resource and covers the areas of Code of Ethics, Anti-fraud and corruption awareness, Information security and data handling and Data Protection. In 2021, 6 members of staff from the Wales Directorate completed the training wholly in Welsh and 38 completed the training in English. The number of staff who have completed Welsh language training has increased by 2 since last year's report.
- Our Workplace Essentials Training includes a new module on Welsh language awareness this year which has to be completed by all new members of staff in the organisation and by every staff member annually. By September 2021,

672 members of staff across the UK had completed the Welsh language awareness training.

- Following the Gloywi laith training that was held in our offices in 2020 by Cwmni laith, many of our Welsh speakers are keen to have further similar sessions. Our Welsh Language Officer will work with our Welsh speakers and external providers to arrange a suitable course for the Fund.
- We currently have 3 members of staff learning Welsh through online courses, with several staff following the free 10 hour sessions offered by Cymraeg Gwaith. Some of our staff are very keen to support our learners by holding weekly virtual chats. Two of our learners (one from Cardiff and one from Birmingham) have recently been successful with written pieces for learners at the Llansannan Eisteddfod and we are very proud of them and the staff who have been supporting them. The virtual chats will continue and learners will be invited to attend the informal Welsh language talks to be arranged for staff during 2021.

Language skills of new roles at the Fund

The Fund operates a Language Skills Strategy which leads our work on ensuring that our workforce has the necessary skills to provide a bilingual service to the public in Wales.

- Since our last annual report in September 2020, we have advertised 7 roles within the Wales Directorate.
- The roles with Welsh language essential skills were:
Business Support Assistant x 3
Public Affairs Officer
North Wales Funding Officer (Conwy area)
South Wales Funding Officer
Wales Committee Members x 2
- The roles with Welsh language desirable skills were:
Knowledge & Learning Officer
Wales Committee Member x 1
Part time Funding Officer - role hasn't been filled yet

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

Complaint under the Service Delivery Standards: In July 2021, a complaint was received from a project that had been contacted by a company carrying out customer research on behalf of the Fund. Although the Fund had given clear instructions regarding the need to provide a service in Welsh to our grant holders who had stated that Welsh was their language of choice, and provided the

necessary translations, this was not reflected in the service received by the customer. The customer received calls in English first and not everything was available in Welsh as it should be.

When the Fund first received the complaint, we contacted the customer to thank them for raising the issue before contacting the department responsible for procuring the research. The customer received a written apology from the Fund with the assurance that we were looking into the matter.

Our Welsh Language Officer is working with our customer research and procurement team to put processes in place to ensure that the Welsh language is fully considered throughout the process in future and the Wales Office will work directly with those doing work for the Fund in the future.

What our customers think of the Fund

In the Summer of 2021, a set of questions about the Welsh language in the Fund was sent in one of our general customer questionnaires. These questions were intended to establish the public's perception of the Fund's bilingualism in general as well as to gather information about why a large number of our Welsh-speaking applicants submit their applications in English.

14% of Welsh respondents reported good oral and written Welsh language skills. The vast majority of these (12 out of 18) saw the Fund as a bilingual body that treats the Welsh and English languages equally. Although most completed the application form themselves, only 2 completed their form in Welsh. The main reason stated for this is that they usually write in English at work and when dealing with official matters.

We would like to see more applicants complete their application forms through the medium of Welsh and will continue to encourage this and monitor any progress.

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.