

**BBC**

**Welsh Language Standards Annual Report**

**2023-24**

**Contact**

Please contact us if you would like further information on this report or on any aspect of the Welsh language standards within the BBC:

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***Mae'r adroddiad yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This report is available in Welsh***

## INTRODUCTION

The Welsh language standards set out the way we should consider the language in relation to the way we engage with, provide information and services to the public in Wales. This report, covering the 2023-24 financial year provides an overview of the way we have complied with the standards.

The BBC is committed in our efforts to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Welsh language standards, and we take our responsibility towards the language seriously. The standards help to ensure that we provide high quality and consistent Welsh language services to the public.

The Welsh language is a fundamental part of BBC Cymru Wales's mission and we have a crucial role in providing content which informs, educates and entertains through the medium of Welsh. We do so in a range of means, across BBC Radio Cymru, BBC Radio Cymru 2, BBC Cymru Fyw and our television and digital content for S4C.

Whilst editorial content does not fall under the legal scope of the standards, we see our work as vital in helping increase the use and promotion of the Welsh language.

### **Promoting the Welsh language**

The BBC has promoted the use of the Welsh language in various ways during the period in question (these activities sit outside the compass of the Welsh Language Standards).

The main development was the launch of Radio Cymru 2 as a full service with extended hours on 18 March 2024. This came following permission from the BBC's regulator, Ofcom. The purpose of the service is to offer an alternative to Radio Cymru for those who want entertainment and music throughout the day. The service is aimed at younger audiences and also those who are less fluent in Welsh or are learning Welsh.

Some of the other developments included:

- Welsh Learning Celebration Week during October 2023. The week provided content on Radio Cymru and other BBC Cymru services celebrating everything to do with learning Welsh. The week was developed in partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh.
- There was a Weekly Podcast for learners on BBC Sounds, which includes *Sgwrsio* with Nick Yeo and *Pigion* with Aled Hughes.
- A weekly article was developed on Cymru Fyw which has a useful vocabulary for learners at the end.
- A new URL has been created which contains resources for people learning Welsh - [www.bbc.co.uk/dysgucymraeg](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dysgucymraeg)

## Television Licensing

The TV Licensing Service annual report and can be found [here](#)

### 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS

During the year, and following consultation with the Welsh Language Commissioner, our compliance notice was varied to include an additional standard (standard 53) relating to apps. We agreed with the principle of the addition of the standard, the consultation provided valuable opportunity to agree a reasonable and proportional position in respect of the wording, and in effect, the way the standard would be imposed.

The new standard as agreed states that:

*“All apps that you publish must function full in Welsh, and the Welsh Language must be treated no less favourably than the English Language in relation to that app.*

- *You must comply fully with standard 53 in relation to the TV Licensing app by 9 May 2024.*
- *You must comply fully with standard 53 in relation to the administrative elements of the following mobile apps by 9 May 2024:*
  - *BBC Sounds*
  - *BBC iPlayer*
  - *BBC Cymru Fyw*
  - *BBC Bitesize*
  - *BBC News*
- *You must comply fully with standard 53 in relation to the administrative elements of the following television apps by 30 June 2025:*
  - *BBC Sounds*
  - *BBC iPlayer*

*The meaning of ‘administrative elements’ in this context is:*

1. *The interface as it relates to setting up an account, the administration of accounts and persistent navigation.*
2. *The confirmation of settings as part of setting up and administering an account only*
3. *Sign-in, including the setting up of a new account;*
4. *Menus within the context of creating and maintaining an account which relate to terms and conditions between a user and the BBC*
5. *General Information about the account which relates to terms and conditions between a user and the BBC”*

Whilst welcoming the addition of the standard as a way of clarifying our duties in this area, this is a significant undertaking for the BBC. At the end of the year, the work, led by the BBC product team was progressing well with the administrative elements of

mobile apps available in Welsh. The work related to the tv apps was still ongoing, this will be completed before the imposition date of June 2025.

Over the year, our focus remained on ensuring that our compliance processes remained robust, this included continuing to monitor our services and processes to ensure compliance with the standards and implementing improvement actions following our most recent compliance review. This included additional briefings and compliance guides for the security team.

## SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

### Overview

With the addition of standard 53, our Compliance Notice now requires the BBC to comply with 74 Service Delivery standards, which apply across a wide range of our service areas; however, they do not cover every aspect of our activities. Under Section 67 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, broadcasting is exempt as an activity – this includes radio, television, and digital media content and editorial decisions.

Our Compliance Notice confirms that the Service Delivery standards apply to the following areas:

- Audience Services – which means the provision of customer services by the BBC in response to feedback and queries received on its platforms from its audiences;
- Corporate Services – which means the provision of information, publicity and other services to the public as part of BBC Wales’s consultation, policy, strategy, HR, property and finance functions that do not directly relate to programmes;
- TV Licensing – which means the administration and enforcement of the television licence fee by the BBC and its agents.

### Complaints received relating to compliance

During the reporting period, the BBC received 3 complaints in respect of potential failures around our Service Delivery Standards, the details of which are noted below.

Brief overview of complaint	Result/ Findings
CS1159 – The Welsh Language Commissioner received complaints from a member of the public about the lack of Welsh subtitles on BBC iPlayer.	The Welsh Language Commissioner confirmed that an investigation would not take place as the relevant standard as subtitles on programmes do not fall under the powers of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011. Section 67 of the Measure excludes broadcasting and refers specifically to subtitles.
CS1160 – The Welsh Language Commissioner received complaints from a member of the public about the lack of Welsh subtitles on BBC iPlayer.	As above, The Welsh Language Commissioner confirmed that an investigation would not take place as subtitles on programmes do not fall

	under the powers of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011. Section 67 of the Measure excludes broadcasting and refers specifically to subtitles.
CS1162 – A complaint was received in relation to the Singer of the World competition, specifically that. a) That the Welsh language has been removed from the official Singer of the World logo b) That the Welsh language has been omitted when the winners of each round are announced from the stage by the Dame. Kiri Te Kanawa c) That the BBC removed the broadcast of Hen Wlad fy Nhadau at the end of each opening round of the competition.	Following initial consideration, the Welsh Language Commissioner confirmed that an investigation would not take place in relation to the complaints due to the fact that television programmes do not fall under the powers of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Section 67 of the Measure excludes broadcasting.

## POLICY MAKING STANDARDS

### Overview

Our Compliance Notice requires the BBC to comply with 10 Policy Making standards. Our recently refreshed and strengthened approach to considering the Welsh language when reviewing and updating policies and making policy decisions became operational. The revised process includes the use of a screening tool and enhanced guidance to help colleagues.

### Complaints

No complaints were received from the public directly, or via the Welsh Language Commissioner relating to the BBC's compliance within this area.

## OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

### Overview

Our Compliance Notice requires the BBC to comply with 48 Operational Standards. The standards help shape our commitment that our staff in Wales can live their working lives through the medium of Welsh if that is their preference. This includes discussing matters in relation to their employment in Welsh.

As part of our recruitment process applicants can choose to submit application forms and being interviewed in Welsh.

BBC staff are encouraged and supported to learn the language, during the year we offered Welsh courses and refresher sessions. Staff are also released to attend 'laith Gwaith' courses.

Translation services are provided during our all—staff (hybrid) meetings, which allows staff to engage in their preferred language and improves the prominence of the language in our meetings.

### **Recruiting (Standard 164ch)**

In line with the requirements of standard 132, we have a process in place to identify roles within the BBC where there is a need for Welsh language skills. Our Resource and Talent Department leads on this work and a tool for identifying the roles has been developed. Managers are responsible for the initial assessment of a role prior to starting the recruitment process, and a matrix is completed to collate evidence. Once the matrix has been completed, roles are released for advertising.

During the reporting period, 236 new or vacant posts were advertised, these were categorised as follows:

Assessment	Total
Welsh language skills were essential	51
Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post	-
Welsh language skills were desirable	3
Welsh language skills were not necessary	182

### **Welsh language skills (Standard 164a)**

The approach taken by the BBC to collating the information is a framework for the self-assessment which is based on the ALTE framework (The Association of Language Testers of Europe) as referred to in the guidance document produced by the Welsh Language Commissioner 'Recruitment: Welsh Language Considerations'.

The results of the last online assessment undertaken, based on 352 responses (27% response rate) was as follows:

Assessment criteria	ALTE Level	Total
Speaking skills	1 (no skill)	49
	2	80
	3	13
	4	14
	5	21
	6 (fluent)	175
Listening skills	1 (no skill)	44
	2	69
	3	29

	4	12
	5	14
	6 (high)	184
Reading skills	1 (no skill)	44
	2	68
	3	26
	4	15
	5	21
	6	178
Writing skills	1 (no skill)	76
	2	57
	3	21
	4	17
	5	37
	6 (high)	144

## Complaints

No complaints were received from employees directly, or via the Welsh Language Commissioner relating to the BBC's compliance with the Operational standards.

### OUR FOCUS FOR THE COMING YEAR

Our priority to ensure we continue to comply with the standards remains. We are committed to providing high quality services to the public and BBC Wales staff, and over the coming year we will focus on:

- Ensure the delivery of our commitments in relation to the administrative elements of our tv apps, in line with the requirements of standard 53.
- Providing refresher briefing sessions for on Welsh language standards for all staff.
- Reviewing and refreshing all internal guidance and compliance processes to ensure that they reflect current working practices.
- Conduct a focussed assurance review of our HR services.