

Welsh Language Impact Assessment Tool

Introduction

The Welsh language standards require Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to consider the effects of policy decisions on:

- creating opportunities to use the Welsh language;
- treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English; and
- direct or indirect positive and negative effects on the Welsh language.

The findings of the Welsh Language Commissioner's monitoring work and investigation of complaints have found that:

- 'Inconsistencies exist in the way bodies consider the effects of policy decisions on the Welsh language and the processes in place are inadequate'.
- 'There is a need for bodies to consider all relevant Welsh language factors when developing policy'¹.

The Service has previously included the Welsh language as a characteristic within its Equality Impact Assessment. However, the Welsh Language Commissioner has clarified that this does not comply with the Welsh language standards requirements and it is therefore necessary to develop an alternative assessment tool.

Definition and requirements

'Section 29(6) of the Welsh Language measure states that a 'policy decision' means 'a decision by a person about the exercise of its functions or the conduct of its business or other undertaking'.²

The Welsh Language Commissioner notes that:

'consideration of the effect of policy decisions on the Welsh language is expected to be a fundamental part of producing, reviewing or revising policies from the outset. This should be undertaken before the final policy decision is made'.³

Policy decisions may include the following:

- The content of legislation.
- Exercise of statutory powers.

¹ Policy Making Standards: Creating opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. Good practice advice document <http://www.comisiynyddygymraeg.cymru/English/Publications%20List/20200921%20DG%20S%20Policy%20making%20standards%20FINAL.pdf> p.2

² ibid p.5

³ The Commissioner's Code of Practice for the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015

- Content of policy statements.
- Strategies or strategic plans.
- Internal structures.
- Activities undertaken in the conduct of business e.g. holding events to publicise a policy decision.

The policy making standards imposed require Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to consider:

- what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the policy decision would have;
- how the decision might be made so that the decision has positive, or increased positive effects;
- how the decision might be made so that the decision does not have adverse effects, or so that the decision has decreased adverse effects:
 - on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, or
 - on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

The record keeping standards imposed also require Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to:

- keep a record of the steps it has taken to ensure compliance with the policy making standards with which it is under a duty to comply.

‘The Welsh language standards require bodies’ consultation documents to consider and seek views on the potential effects that the policy decision under consideration would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.’⁴

Welsh language impact assessment tool

The following Welsh language assessment tool has been developed using the Welsh Language Commissioner’s guidance document on the policy making standards published in September 2020⁵.

⁴ Policy Making Standards: Creating opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. Good practice advice document <http://www.comisiynyddygymraeg.cymru/English/Publications%20List/20200921%20DG%20S%20Policy%20making%20standards%20FINAL.pdf> p.17

⁵ ibid

Please provide brief background information of proposed paper:

The CRMP 2040 was produced to highlight how we intend on addressing the risks, threats and challenges facing our communities and how we propose to meet and reduce them. We intend on reviewing the services vision, mission and values outlined in the CRMP every year to make sure we are still serving the communities of Mid and West Wales the best we can.

Through a series of workshops, a new vision was created one that is more aligned to the longer-term aspirations of the service and was more reflective of the identified key priorities outlined within the draft CRMP 2040.

The feedback received from the workshops, also indicated that it was appropriate to remove the previous Mission and Values and introduce Behaviours. It was agreed to adopt a suite of Behaviours, which after careful consideration, were aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council, Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services, Leadership Framework and Seven Principles of Public Life, informally known as the Nolan Principles.

It was recognised that the achievement of the priorities and objectives outlined in the CRMP 2040, was dependent upon a range of enabling functions, which play a critical role in the day-to-day function of the organisation. The outcome of this was the introduction of a set of enablers, which will not only assist with the achievement of the objectives but ensure we have the provisions in place to support continuous and meaningful improvement.

The 8 improvement and well-being objectives and their actions are listed below and will be assessed yearly by the Welsh language officer to ensure our commitment to the Welsh language is adhered to.

Objective 1-We will improve our organisational culture to ensure we operate within the standards expected of a modern-day Fire and Rescue Service.

Actions

1.1: Design and implement a long-term organisational plan aimed at fostering cultural improvement, with on-going evaluation of progress and impact.

1.2: Undertake an independent review of Professional Standards and associated internal processes, embedding any identified improvements.

1.3: Embed the Well-being Strategy and Well-being Action Plan to support the health and wellbeing of our staff and evaluate their effectiveness.

1.4: Review the employee and career lifecycles to enhance recruitment, retention, and development opportunities for staff. Key areas of focus will include:

- Attraction, Recruitment and Retention
- Onboarding
- Training and Development opportunities, including organisational pathways
- Staff Appraisal and Performance Management

1.5: Review and action the findings of our recruitment processes to improve staffing numbers.

1.6: Implement the recommendations from our Cultural Audit survey and evaluate the progress being made.

1.7: Introduce new training opportunities for staff that wish to progress.

Objective 2- We will remain committed to making improvements to our On-Call Duty system to support the needs of our communities.

Actions

2.1: Involve all our staff in research to improve working practices and promote a fully inclusive workforce culture.

2.2: Identify the improvements required to improve our On-Call Duty system.

2.3: Evaluate the improvements implemented to understand their effectiveness.

Objective 3- We will review the risks within our communities and to our people.

Actions

3.1: Review our specialist skills across the Service area.

3.2: Review of fire station locations to reflect the change in demographic and community risk.

3.3: Review and evaluate the way in which our prevention and protection services are delivered.

3.4: Maintain and continually improve Health and Safety for our personnel, assets, and workplaces.

3.5: Develop and maintain policies and procedures in relation to managing contaminants and embed these within the Service.

Objective 4- We will use an evidence-based approach to review and implement changes to the way in which we respond to emergencies to meet the changing demands of our community.

Actions

4.1: Undertake a comprehensive review of emergency cover arrangements, in line with community risks.

4.2: Review and implement changes to the way in which we staff our fire stations, departments and Joint Fire Control.

4.3: Implement new firefighting techniques and tactics in accordance with sector best practice.

4.4: Explore opportunities including the use of new technologies to enhance our understanding of risk at the point of mobilisation from Joint Fire Control.

4.5: Explore opportunities including the use of new technologies to modernise the way we plan, record and manage availability to both, intelligently alert and mobilise Service resources.

Objective 5: We will regularly review our Prevention (Community Safety) and Protection (Business Fire Safety) strategies to target and support the most vulnerable in our communities.

Actions

5.1: Ensure our home fire safety interventions are based on people, and the risks they face to provide economic and social value.

5.2: Provide key safety interventions to the children and young people of mid and west Wales, through a collaborative and targeted approach that meet the diverse needs of the communities.

5.3: Deliver Wildfire and Arson interventions that provide real community value while building on the knowledge and experience of our partners in dealing with their impacts, to make our communities safer.

5.4: Explore options and implement changes to meet the ever changing and complex demands regarding building safety and adapt to meet the needs of existing and new legislation.

5.5: Ensure our Protection arrangements meet current and emerging risks.

5.6: Deliver local and regional safety intervention activities, including enforcement to ensure that those with duties under fire safety legislation are aware of their responsibilities.

Objective 6- We will engage and consult with our communities to understand their expectations of us.

Actions

6.1: Improve our understanding of the expectations of our communities through consultation and engagement.

6.2: Identify and implement new approaches to staff and community engagement.

6.3: Design, develop, and implement new and innovative campaign and engagement strategies.

6.4: Review and implement changes captured from lessons learnt and act on the findings for approaches to staff and community engagement.

6.5: Embed the alignment with all trade unions in line with social partnership duties regarding organisational change.

Objective 7- We will work in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way.

Actions

7.1: Work towards objectives within the Service Net Zero Road Map 2030, which has considered Welsh Government targets in its development (and timeline)

7.2: Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of alternative fuels for our vehicles.

7.3: Embed and evaluate the benefits of the new Compartment Fire Behaviour Training Unit.

7.4: Regenerate our estate to make sure our workplaces are environmentally sustainable, and the green spaces encourage habitat restoration and creation.

7.5: Prepare, manage, and evaluate our organisational procedures to understand their environmental impact.

7.6: Identify new operational techniques and equipment to mitigate harmful impacts on the environment.

7.7: Work with our suppliers and end users to make our supply chain environmentally friendly.

7.8: Identify a means to digitise and streamline processes across the Service, to reduce paper usage.

7.9: Monitor all waste stream figures to ensure general waste is reduced and there is an improvement in all aspects of recycling.

Objective 8 – We will evolve our fleet and equipment requirements so we can effectively respond to emergencies.

8.1: Have vehicles and equipment that will support the effective management of contamination at emergencies.

8.2: Provide our firefighters with the appropriate vehicles to respond to the risks within our communities.

8.3: Ensure that our operational equipment enables us to be effective at emergency incidents.

Welsh language impact assessment

1. Would a decision to approve this paper have an effect on:

	Yes positively	Yes adversely	No	Comment
Opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in:				
▪ The family?			X	
▪ The community?			X	
▪ The workplace?			X	
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?			X	
Promoting and increasing the use of Welsh language services?			X	
Supporting the socio-economic infrastructure and sustainability of Welsh-speaking communities?			X	
Ensuring that the Welsh language is at the heart of innovation in digital technology, to enable the use of Welsh in all digital contexts?			X	

2. Would a decision to approve this paper:

	Yes	No	Comment
Lead to an increase in the number of jobs requiring Welsh language skills?		X	
Lead to a decrease in the number of jobs requiring Welsh language skills?		X	
Make it easier to recruit Welsh speakers?		X	
Make it harder to recruit Welsh speakers?		X	

3. If you have undertaken research in preparing this paper, did your research consider the impact on the Welsh language?

Yes	No	N/A	Comment
		X	

4. Has consultation been undertaken to:

	Yes	No	Comment
Consider and seek views on the potential effects that the decision will have on the Welsh language and opportunities to use it?		X	
Consider and seek views on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?		X	
Ensure that the consultation sample is representative of Welsh speakers?	X		Engagement was undertaken with members of the public through the medium of Welsh at their request.

Compliance with the Welsh language standards (to be completed by the Welsh Language Officer)

5. Which of the Welsh Language Standards apply?

	Yes	Standard Number/s	No
Service standards	X	73, 74, 74A, 75, 77	
Operational standards	X	101-116, 134-142	
Policy making standards	X	85-95	
Reporting standards			X

6. Could the policy / action result in non-compliance with the Welsh Language Standards?

	Yes	No	Comment
Service standards	X		<p>This comment applies across all four Standards areas.</p> <p>The work of the CRMP team, the actions within the CRMP and indeed wider key focus areas will all need to consider the Welsh Language when making policy decisions. Whether it's changing a crewing model, moving an appliance or closing a station, it is critically important a Welsh Language Impact assessment is undertaken as early as possible in the project so processes can be put in place to mitigate a negative impact on the Welsh Language, and the Service's compliance with its legislative requirements.</p>
Operational standards	X		As above
Policy making standards	X		As above
Reporting standards	X		As above