



# **Welsh Language Standards**

**Annual Report 2018/2019**

## **Context**

Welsh National Opera (WNO) exists to bring the power, drama and raw emotion of opera to as wide an audience as possible.

WNO is proud to be the national opera company of Wales and the largest provider of touring opera across the UK. At our heart lies a passion for singing and for sharing a love of opera with as many people as possible.

WNO recognises that the culture of Wales is rooted in the Welsh language and the rich choral and musical tradition that is associated with the Welsh language and its communities.

As a national company with international status, we sit at the heart of music-making in Wales. From our iconic home at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff, we keep opera accessible through opera and concert performances right across Wales.

Beyond the theatre, WNO connects with young people, schools and communities through its extensive education work and digital projects.

The largest arts employer in Wales, WNO employs over 250 musicians, craftspeople, technicians and administrators, thereby supporting and contributing to the economy.

## **WNO and the Welsh language**

WNO is very aware of Welsh Government's ambitions to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales, as embodied in the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy, underpinned by the vision to see the Welsh language thriving, with a million people able to speak Welsh by 2050.

WNO recognises that Wales is a bilingual nation, culturally, socially and legally. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established the principle that the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality in the conduct of public business. WNO fully recognises its responsibility to align to the Welsh Language Standards.

WNO recognises that the Welsh language is a key component of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and in particular: 'A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language – a society that promotes culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, sports and recreation'.

**This report has been produced in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.**

## **Contact**

Please contact us on [cymraeg@wno.org.uk](mailto:cymraeg@wno.org.uk) if you would like further information about this report.

## Introduction

The Welsh language standards, introduced as part of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, provides a legal framework which gives individuals the right to access certain services from organisations through the medium of Welsh.

Welsh National Opera (WNO) is subject to the standards, and as of January 2017, we have been complying with a total of 136 standards, which cover the following areas:

| Standards   | Total     |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Service Delivery</b> – Relating to the way we deliver services to the public | <b>57</b> |
| <b>Policy Making</b> – Relating to our policy decisions                         | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Operational</b> – Relating to provisions for our staff                       | <b>42</b> |
| <b>Record Keeping</b> – Relating to how we keep records                         | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Supplementary</b> – Relating to how we report on progress                    | <b>20</b> |

For WNO the Welsh Language Standards are only part of the story, we strive to go beyond compliance, exceeding our commitments and seeking new ways of embracing and promoting the Welsh Language.

Some examples of our current practice include:

- Ensuring that our external communications are fully bilingual in Wales, and we are increasingly using bilingual communications when we are working in England as part of our promotion of the Welsh language.
- Surtitling all WNO mainscale opera performances in Cardiff and Llandudno in both Welsh and English.
- Offering our Youth & Community programme in North Wales bilingually with WNO Community Chorus and WNO Youth Opera sessions led in Welsh. We have translated classic opera choruses into Welsh including choruses from *Carmen* and *The Magic Flute*.
- Working with the Eisteddfod over the past three years, running ‘Come and Sing’ participatory public events and small Chorus concerts and we are looking to extend our partnership with them over the forthcoming years.
- Producing our mainscale opera programme books in bilingual format, whether sold at performances in Wales or England. We also produce free bilingual cast lists.
- Providing free pre-performance talks in Welsh at Venue Cymru in Llandudno launched in the Autumn Season 2019, with a similar offering planned for Cardiff from Autumn Season 2020.

- Maintaining a strong level of Welsh language proficiency amongst Trustees on the WNO Board of Directors with a quarter of the Board fluent Welsh speakers

## **Overview**

We continue to be pleased in the way our staff have approached the standards, compliance is considered to be 'business as usual' in key departments. The Director of Marketing & Sales continues to provide the organisational leadership on the standards from an operational perspective.

## **Service Delivery Standards**

### Compliance

We believe that we are successfully complying with the requirements of all standards imposed within this class.

### Complaints

During the reporting period, we received no complaints in relation to the way we comply with the Service Delivery Standards.

## **Policy Making Standards**

### Compliance

We believe that we are successfully complying with the requirements of all imposed standards within this class.

Having developed a policy assessment matrix, we continue to make use of the tool to assess the impact of relevant new and revised policies on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language. The same tool ensures that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

### Complaints

During the reporting period, we received no complaints in relation to the way we comply with the Policy Making Standards.

## **Operational Standards**

### Compliance

We believe that we are successfully complying with the requirements of all imposed standards within this class.

### Complaints

During the reporting period, we received no complaints in relation to the way we comply with the Operational Standards.

## Operational Standards – specific reporting requirements

In line with the requirements of the standards, we consider the need for Welsh language skills for every new post or vacancy we advertise. During the reporting period we advertised a total of 51 posts, they were classed as follows:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Total No. of post advertised during reporting period</b>                      | <b>45</b> |
| Posts where Welsh language skills were essential                                 | <b>1</b>  |
| Posts where Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post | <b>0</b>  |
| Posts where Welsh language skills were desirable                                 | <b>44</b> |
| Posts where Welsh language skills were not necessary                             | <b>0</b>  |

In line with the requirements of the standards, we keep a record of the Welsh language skills of our staff. Based on a self-assessment questionnaire, the number of employees who assessed themselves as having Welsh language skills are as follows:

|  |            |             |
|--|------------|-------------|
| <b>Total number of staff at the end of the year</b>  | <b>274</b> |             |
| <b>Welsh language skills</b>   | <b>No.</b> | <b>%</b>    |
| Staff with Welsh language listening, reading, speaking and writing skills, based on self-assessment (level 3 and above)    | <b>18</b>  | <b>6.6</b>  |
| Staff with basic Welsh language listening, reading, speaking and writing skills, based on self-assessment (levels 1 and 2) | <b>94</b>  | <b>34.3</b> |
| Staff with no skills or yet to complete assessment at the end of the year  | <b>162</b> | <b>59.1</b> |

In line with the requirements of the standards, we offer training in Welsh in the following areas, when training is provided in English:

- Recruitment and interviewing
- Performance management
- Complaints and disciplinary procedures
- Induction
- Dealing with the public
- Health and safety

During the reporting period, none of the attendees for the relevant courses noted that they would wish to receive the training through the medium of Welsh. However, we confirm that we have procedures in place to respond should the offer be accepted.

As highlighted in our Annual Report for 2017/2018, we actively encourage our staff to learn or improve their Welsh skills. Due to an increasing level of interest in Welsh lessons, we were

committed in taking a more focussed and strategic approach by undertaking a whole staff mapping exercise to establish the requirement and demand.

In response, during June 2019, a Welsh language Beginner's course taster session was arranged with Cardiff University, attended by 24 people. As a result, regular lessons were arranged with Cardiff University, and these started in August 2019 with 23 people enrolled. This included people from across the WNO departments: chorus, orchestra, stage management, artistic administration, marketing, press, development, music staff and WNO's new General Director. This is an ongoing commitment.

In addition as at 30 August 2019, 26 people were enrolled in the 'Croeso Cymraeg Gwaith' online course with the National Centre for Learning Welsh

### **Future focus**

We will produce our first full Welsh Strategy and action plan by 31 March 2020. This work will be led by our new General Director, Aidan Lang. This Strategy will go beyond the Welsh language standards alone and will embrace both the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Cymraeg 2050. Our aim is to ensure we place the Welsh language and culture at the heart of our organisation and our work in Wales.

In relation to the standards, during 2019/2020 we plan to:

- Undertake a compliance audit including producing a report which will identify areas of strength as well as key risks, and recommended remedial actions for any 'non-compliance' matters
- Strengthen strategic leadership for the Welsh language at WNO
- Review processes around recording and sharing language choice (and record keeping in particular)