

Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2020-2021

1. Foreword

This is the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (“the Tribunal”) fourth annual report on its compliance with the Welsh Language Standards since the standards came into force on 30 March 2017. The focus of this report is the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The Tribunal has two parts, the secretariat and Members. Both work together, during the appeal and claim process doing different tasks. The Members consist of:

- the Tribunal President i.e. the judicial lead;
- Legal chairpersons; and
- Lay members, who are on the Education Panel.

The tribunal, its members and decisions are independent from Government. The tribunal has several members with strong Welsh language skills and is able to convene a full panel (i.e. a legal chairperson and 2 lay members) that can hear and conduct a full hearing through the medium of Welsh.

The secretariat is responsible for tribunal administration and deal with all telephone and written enquiries. They are civil servants employed by Welsh Government and form part of the Welsh Tribunals Unit, who are responsible for administering six devolved tribunals across Wales. The secretariat team have no members who are fluent in Welsh, but are able to have assistance from other secretariats within the wider Welsh Tribunals Unit, when necessary. The Senior Operations Manager and the Head of Welsh Tribunals are fluent Welsh speakers.

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Contact details for enquiries: Tribunal.Enquiries@gov.wales

2. Compliance Oversight Arrangements

This Annual Report has been drafted by the Welsh Tribunals Unit and has been signed off by the President of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

This annual report appears on the Tribunal’s website and the Welsh Language Commissioner has been notified of its publication.

3. Compliance Assessment

Service Delivery Standards

The tribunal ensures compliance with the service delivery standards by:

- Providing staff with guidelines on responding to correspondence, telephone answering and e-mail messages.

- Letter templates offering Tribunal users an opportunity to receive correspondence in Welsh.
- All documents produced for public are available in Welsh and English, including application forms and guidance documents.
- Every page of our website is available in Welsh and English.
- The Welsh Government is due to roll out a new telephone system through Microsoft Teams in April 2021. The Tribunal will use this new system to ensure that it complies with standards 8 and 9 by ensuring that Tribunal users will have the option of pressing 1 to speak with a member of the team in Welsh and pressing 2 to speak with a member of the team in English.
 - At the time of publishing this report, the new telephone system has been successfully rolled out to the Tribunal

Use of our Services:

The tribunal received 116 applications in 2020-21 and of these applications, one was requested to be processed in Welsh. As a result, the tribunal held one hearing in Welsh.

Websites

Below is a breakdown of how many visits were made to the Tribunal home page of the internet, in both Welsh and English.

| | English | Welsh | Total |
|-------------------|---------|-------|--------|
| Page views | 11,595 | 1,629 | 13,224 |

Policy Making Standards

The Tribunal exercises its statutory functions as set out by its governing legislation. The Tribunal does not have a remit to develop policy. However, we consider the impact of our operational decisions on the delivery of our services in Welsh.

Record Keeping Standards

The Tribunal's Compliance Notice (that details the Service Delivery, Policy Making and Record Keeping Standards that the Tribunal must comply with) has been published on the Tribunal's website:

<https://specialeducationalneedtribunal.gov.wales/sites/specialeducationalneeds/files/2019-08/sentw-wls-compliance-notice.pdf>. We keep a record of the number of complaints we receive, if any, relating to our compliance with the Standards.

Complaints

The Tribunal received no complaints with regard to the implementation of the Standards during the reporting period.