



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Student Finance Wales service standards compliance notice

Report on Student Finance Wales' compliance with the service standards imposed on Welsh Ministers by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

First published: 8 February 2022

Last updated: 8 February 2022

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Introduction

The Student Loans Company (SLC) operates the Student Finance Wales service (SFW) on behalf of Welsh Ministers. The SFW service administers student support for all Welsh domiciled students. The SFW service must comply with the service standards imposed on Welsh Ministers by the Welsh Language Commissioner in the compliance notice found [here](#).

The standards have been embedded within the SFW service for some time now, and have become an operational reality for SLC. In accordance with Standard 157, the Welsh Government have produced the following report.

Overseeing SFW compliance with the service standards

To ensure SFW provides a high quality, right first time service to its Welsh customers in their preferred language (Welsh/English) at all times, SFW have embedded the Welsh Language into their processes and systems.

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Officials from the Higher Education Division oversee SFW's compliance with the Welsh language service standards. Where necessary, advice, guidance and support is drawn from the Welsh Government Safonau Standards team who are responsible for overseeing the Welsh Government's compliance with all Welsh language standards.

Welsh Government officials meet regularly with SLC to discuss SFW and the service performance. Statistics are provided about the number of applications for student support received in Welsh, their processing times and the number of website hits on Welsh language advice and guidance pages. This allows us to ensure that where customers seek a Welsh language service, they are provided with one and it is not treated less favourably than the English language service

SFW provide a fully bilingual telephone helpline ensuring customers seeking to discuss their case with SFW can do so in their preferred language.

Business processes are checked routinely to ensure any documents or articles are published simultaneously on the Welsh website and the English website. Social media is monitored to ensure any messaging is published in both Welsh and English.

Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards is discussed during monitoring meetings with Welsh Government officials. Each business area within SLC is responsible for compliance with the standards relevant to their area. At a corporate level, SLC have been tasked with identifying a Welsh Language Service Owner who will take responsibility for the Welsh Language across the SLC business and work with the SFW Business Operations Manager to monitor the compliance of the SFW service.

Where system or process changes are considered, SLC undertake a Welsh language impact assessment to ensure no detrimental impact or unintended consequence to the Welsh language service provision occurs. SLC maintains records to ensure compliance with record keeping and operational standards.

Student surveys are issued to all service users in their preferred language. Data collected in response to the student survey is used to make improvements where necessary.

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Welsh Government are currently commissioning a full compliance review, against each of the service standards in the compliance notice, it is anticipated this work will start in February 2022; the findings of the review will help us and SFW strengthen our commitment to providing a right first time, bilingual service to Welsh customers. This compliance report will be updated following completion of the review.

Promotion of services

It is important to us that SFW customers, and individuals seeking information about student finance products, understand that the SFW service is available in their preferred language (Welsh/English).

Both the Welsh Government and SFW regularly promote the bilingual service highlighting that customers are welcome to use the Welsh language in their communications. Messaging to promote the Welsh language services are available throughout the year but are boosted prior to academic year service launch dates when customers are most likely to be seeking out information about applying for student finance.

Students are reminded that they can access their accounts, apply online and communicate with SFW advisors through the medium of Welsh if they so choose via social media messaging and videos. Social media messages contain the Welsh flag logo to reinforce the services available.

The SFW helpline operates an automated system where the caller is asked to select their preferred language option to continue the call.

In the event a student wishes to raise a complaint about the service they have received, SLC have a published complaints procedure that enables students to submit their complaint in their preferred language.

All SFW helpline advisors are Welsh speakers. The SFW service is administered from the Welsh Government Llandudno Junction office and has a Welsh-first reception function. Non-customer facing staff within the SFW service are

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encouraged to use bilingual greetings and to promote Welsh in the workplace. The Iaith Gwaith badge has been highlighted to SFW representatives that provide the Welsh service.

The SLC celebrate Welsh Language Rights Day with promotional and encouraging messaging to their staff published on their intranet.

Facilitating the use of services

SFW maintains both a Welsh and English medium website. The functionality to toggle between the two is present on each page.

Students can make an application for student support through the medium of Welsh in the same way they can in English. Students can access online applications and create an online account in Welsh and, if they choose, they can submit a paper application in Welsh.

SFW record the language of preference as stated on the student application and create a flag in their system to ensure that all and any future correspondence to that student is provided in the language of their choice.

Social media messages promoting the Welsh service availability contain links to the Welsh website and application services.

SLC operate a helpline for customers' resident of Wales. This helpline is automated and is Welsh-first asking the caller to select their language preference to proceed.

About this document

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