



Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

Welsh Language Scheme

This scheme was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and was approved by the Welsh Language Board on 15 July 2010



BWRDD YR IAITH
GYMRAEG • WELSH
LANGUAGE BOARD

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A. Introduction

Introduction

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales (the Commission) has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality.

This Scheme sets out how the Commission will give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales. It has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance on the preparation of Welsh language Schemes.

'Public' means those persons with whom the Commission has dealings in the course of discharging its functions. The term 'public' extends to individuals, legal persons and corporate bodies. It includes the public as a whole, or a section of the public, as well as individual members of the public. The term also includes voluntary organisations and charities.

Introductory section describing the organisation

The post of Commissioner was created under the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006 as the independent advocate for the rights of older people in Wales. Ruth Marks was appointed as the first Commissioner on 21 April 2008. Her role is to promote awareness of the interests of older people, to promote the end of age discrimination, to encourage good practice in the treatment of older people and to review the law affecting the interests of older people.

The Commission has its premises in Cardiff. The office has a current total staff of about 25, whose roles include management, policy and research, enquiry handling, participation and communication, and administrative functions. It is the Commission's normal practice to ensure that its public facing services, such as its website and information and enquiries service, are available to members of the public in Welsh, and that services provided in Welsh and English are of equal quality and provided within the same timescale. The Commission currently employs a number of bilingual staff across the range of its services to support this.

Any agreements or arrangements made by the Commission with third parties will be consistent with this policy.

The aim of this Scheme is to give effect to the principle of equality between the English and Welsh languages in the conduct of the Commission's business. Its purpose is to ensure that the Commission provides a full range of high standard services through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh Language Scheme Coordinator can be contacted with any queries about this Scheme at the contact details provided in Part C.

B. Steps taken by the Commission to comply with Welsh Language Board guidelines

1. Service planning and delivery

The Commission's priorities are determined by older people in Wales. This Scheme will enable older people in Wales to deal with the Commission in the language of their choice and we will give consideration to Welsh language issues raised by older people when planning and delivering our services.

It will be the practice of the Commission to assess the linguistic consequences of any new policies and initiatives when formulating them. The Commission is committed to ensuring that new policies and initiatives promote and facilitate the use of Welsh wherever possible and implement the principle of equality. Welsh will be a consideration in the exercise of the Commission's functions, for example in promoting awareness of the interests of older people in Wales. The Commission will ensure that new policies and initiatives are consistent with the scheme, and do not undermine it.

The Commission will adopt procedures to ensure that Welsh language implications and the requirements of this scheme are considered and factored in at an early stage of the development of policies and initiatives.

Training will be provided to ensure that staff are aware of this Scheme and the Commission's responsibilities under it. The measures contained in this Scheme will be applied to new policies and initiatives when they are implemented.

The Commission will consult with the Board in advance regarding proposals which will affect this Scheme, or will affect the Schemes of other organisations. This Scheme will not be altered without the Board's agreement.

2. The delivery of services through the medium of Welsh

The Commission is committed to providing its services in the language chosen by the service user. The office is organised so that Welsh-speaking staff are able to deal with the Welsh speaking public. This is achieved through the recruitment of Welsh speaking staff, in particular reception and information and enquiry staff. Service delivery is supported through the use of professional external translators as required.

Procedures are in place, set down in guidance for reception staff and through the use of the Business Management System, to ensure service provision in the language chosen by the service user.

The Commission is committed to delivering an equally high quality service in both languages. The Commission will produce customer service guidelines which will set out service standards, such as timescales for responding to correspondence, and these will apply equally to services in English and Welsh.

3. Communication with the public

a) Written

The Commission welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

It will be the Commission's practice to ensure that, when someone writes to us in Welsh, we will issue a reply in Welsh, where a reply is required, within the same timescale as for replying to letters in English.

When we initiate correspondence, it will be in Welsh if we know that the recipient would prefer to correspond in Welsh. If someone submits an enquiry to us in Welsh, then we will carry out any resultant investigation in Welsh as far as is practicable. In order to facilitate a timely response to enquiries, we will request, whenever possible, that any organisations we correspond with conduct correspondence in the preferred language of the enquirer. This request will be made to avoid delays caused by having to commission large amounts of translation.

Whenever we send standard or circular correspondence to several recipients in Wales, it will be bilingual unless the preferred language of all the recipients is known.

Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual, and enclosures sent with Welsh letters will be Welsh or bilingual, whenever possible.

All of the above will apply to email correspondence as well as paper correspondence.

All hard copy Welsh correspondence will be signed, and any Welsh email correspondence will carry a Welsh (or bilingual) electronic signature.

Staff induction training will include guidance on corresponding with the public in accordance with these commitments.

The Commission maintains a record of those who wish to deal with the organisation in Welsh within its electronic Business Management System.

b) Telephone

We will ensure that when contacting the Commission by telephone, members of the public are able to speak in Welsh or English.

Reception staff will answer the phone with a bilingual greeting and all answer phone messages will be bilingual. If the caller wishes to speak Welsh, they will be connected to a Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry.

The Commission employs a Welsh speaking receptionist and administrative support to ensure that calls are dealt with bilingually. If a caller phoning a direct line wishes to speak Welsh, but the person taking the call cannot do so, the caller will be transferred to a suitably-qualified Welsh-speaker. We will keep a central record of staff who are able to speak Welsh, so that calls may be transferred to them when necessary.

If no suitably qualified Welsh speakers can be found, the caller will be given the choice to either continue the call in English, have a Welsh

speaker call them back, or submit their enquiry in Welsh by letter or email.

Guidance for reception staff on dealing with calls received in Welsh will be provided within the Commission's Reception Handbook.

c) In person

At public meetings, arrangements will be made for the provision of simultaneous Welsh-English translation, unless it has been established that everyone at the meeting is likely to use the same language.

Invitations and advertisements for public meetings will be bilingual and either note that translation facilities will be available or invite the public to let the Commission know in advance which language they wish to speak.

People attending public meetings will be informed when translation services are available, and contributions in Welsh will be encouraged.

Any papers and information for public meetings will be provided bilingually, as will reports or papers produced following the meetings.

When selecting staff to attend public meetings, it will be our normal practice to ensure that sufficient suitably qualified Welsh speakers are present.

Guidance on arranging bilingual public meetings will be made available and reference will be made to the Welsh Language Board's guidance on holding bilingual public meetings. The Commission is committed to providing face to face services, for example meetings and interviews, in Welsh. This will be achieved through the selection of suitably qualified bilingual staff to attend events.

4. The public face of the Commission

a) Corporate Identity

The Commission has a bilingual corporate identity. This means that all official letter headings, compliment slips, fax cover sheets, press release headings and business cards used by the Commission are fully bilingual; the logo includes the name of the Commission both in Welsh and English, and internal signs in public areas of the Commission's offices will be bilingual, as well as external signs for the office.

b) Signs

The Commission will provide fully bilingual information signs within the curtilage of its property. All other signs for which the Commission is responsible will also be fully bilingual. The size, quality, legibility and prominence of text on the signs will be the same in both languages.

c) Printed materials

As a matter of policy the Commission's normal practice will be to publish material in both Welsh and English, with both languages in one document.

Welsh and English versions may be published separately in exceptional circumstances, for example, due to the length of documents, cost, and known requirements of the intended audience.

When Welsh and English documents are published separately both documents will be of equal size and quality, will be made available at the same time, and will be equally accessible. Each language version will state clearly that the other version is available.

If not available free of charge, the price of a Welsh document will not exceed that of an English document, nor will the price of a bilingual document be greater than that of a single-language document.

Publication of reports will occur simultaneously in both languages, normally as one bilingual publication. In the case of more detailed briefings on issues which are not intended for general publication, if the

document is only available in English, translation will be arranged if a Welsh language version is requested.

The above will also apply to material made available electronically or on our website, or on CD rom, or otherwise.

d) Forms and questionnaires

All forms and explanatory material will be available bilingually. If, due to difficulties with presentation, the Welsh and English versions are printed separately, then both will be equally available and distributed together. The version in each language will state clearly that the other version is available.

Any review, survey or other study by, or conducted on behalf of the Commission, involving written response forms or questionnaires, will be issued bilingually.

e) Media releases

All press releases to the media in Wales will be issued in Welsh and English where deadlines permit or according to the language preference of the recipient media organisation or publication.

The Commission will ensure that a Welsh-speaking contact is available at all press and news conferences, and to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.

f) Website

The Commission's website will be available in English and Welsh, and accessible through a bilingual portal. All pages will be available in Welsh and English, and the content of the Welsh and English versions of the site will be identical in size, quality, and accessibility.

Whenever we make English language documents and publications available for download on our website, they will also be available in Welsh, both versions of a document or publication will be uploaded at the same time.

When designing or redesigning our website, we will take into account the Welsh Language Board's Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards.

g) Publicity and promotional materials

The Commission's publicity and promotional activities will be conducted bilingually, treating the two languages equally.

Exhibitions will be fully bilingual. Exhibitions and public exhibition stands prepared by the Commission will always include bilingual material.

All of the Commission's banners and display materials will either be bilingual or in both Welsh and English, with an instruction that both banners should be used together.

h) Official notices, public notices, and staff recruitment advertising

Public notices in the press in Wales will be in both languages, with Welsh and English versions shown together and given equal prominence.

All recruitment advertising for staff to work at the Commission will be bilingual. Welsh and English recruitment advertisements will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence. Job descriptions will note clearly whether Welsh skills are considered essential or desirable. Welsh skills requirements will be expressed in job descriptions with the following standard wording: 'Welsh Language skills are essential/desirable for this post'.

In the English language media, when advertising posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential, jobs may be advertised solely in Welsh, with a brief description in English.

i) Partnerships

The Commission often works in partnership with public bodies, organisations from the voluntary sector, and other agencies, on many levels. When this is the case, we will ensure that:

- When the Commission is the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, it will ensure that the public service provision is compliant with the Welsh Language Scheme;
- When the Commission is involved in a partnership where another agency is leading, we will ensure that the Commission's input complies with the Welsh Language Scheme;
- When the Commission is acting as part of a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt a bilingual policy. When acting publicly in the name of the consortium, the Commission will act in accordance with its Welsh Language Scheme;
- When the Commission joins or forms a partnership or consortium, it will ask prospective partners about their Welsh Language Schemes, language policies, or the means by which they will operate bilingually. Within any partnership, the Commission will offer advice and support to the other partner organisations.

5. Implementation and monitoring

a) Recruitment

The Commission will have sufficient and appropriately skilled Welsh speakers to ensure that it is possible to provide a full service through the medium of Welsh. The Commission currently has 5 public facing staff who are able to speak Welsh. This ensures that the Commission is able to offer services in accordance with this Scheme at present.

Communication skills are a key element of the Commission's competency framework. When drafting a person specification, managers will consider how far it would be essential or desirable for the successful applicant to communicate through the medium of Welsh.

Fluency in Welsh may be considered essential where the successful candidate will need to communicate directly with older people (or other stakeholders) in their language of choice.

Fluency in Welsh may be considered desirable where the successful candidate will need to process communications from older people (or other stakeholders) in their language of choice.

Generally, an ability to communicate in Welsh will be considered an advantage in an applicant so as to build capacity within the Commission.

Where competency in Welsh is essential for a post, this fact and the required levels of fluency and literacy will be specified when recruiting to that post.

Where an appointment is made and the level of fluency or literacy of the person appointed needs further development, appropriate training and support will be offered.

When no suitable Welsh speaking candidate can be found for a post where Welsh is essential, we will consider restructuring the service, making a temporary appointment, or re-advertising the position. We may make temporary arrangements under which the Welsh language service can be provided by, for instance, using Welsh speaking staff from other parts of the Commission to provide part of the service.

If it is necessary to appoint a non-Welsh speaker to a post where the ability to speak Welsh is considered essential, it will be a condition of employment that they learn the language to the required level within a reasonable period, with the support of the Commission. This condition will be made known to the candidates at the time of the recruitment.

The Commission will encourage applications from Welsh speakers by ensuring that all recruitment advertising appears bilingually, consider placing additional recruitment advertising in Welsh language newspapers or magazines even when the ability to speak Welsh is not a requirement. A statement that applications from Welsh speakers are encouraged will be included in recruitment pack information.

The Commission will produce guidance on recruiting Welsh language speakers for HR staff.

Information packs will be provided in both languages for all job vacancies within the organisation.

b) Audit of Welsh Language skills in current staff

The Commission will undertake audits to establish, and will continuously monitor, the number, ability level, and location of staff that can speak, read and write Welsh (including staff who are learning Welsh). The Human Resources staff will be responsible for undertaking audits of Welsh Language skills.

Those roles where the ability to speak Welsh is desirable or essential will be identified. This requirement may be defined as a component of a workstream or team, or it may be attached to a particular job. Any decrease in the number of bilingual staff in posts closely related to this Scheme will be noted, and the Commission will rectify any deficiencies as and when the opportunity arises, for example through recruitment and by providing training for staff to learn Welsh. Our practice will be to ensure that our reception areas and main switchboards are always able to offer a service in Welsh.

c) Welsh training

The Commission encourages and supports staff who wish to learn Welsh, and supports Welsh speaking staff who wish to improve their linguistic abilities. The Commission will assess the need for vocational training through the medium of Welsh. Vocational training will be provided as necessary to facilitate implementation of this Scheme.

Members of staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate courses aimed at improving their Welsh. Where it is judged to be the best use of resources, courses will be provided in the workplace through utilising in-house Welsh speaking ability.

The Commission will also investigate training courses provided by local education providers. In appropriate cases, such as where a training need is identified, we will either fund or contribute to the cost of training and may allow staff to attend courses during work hours.

Welsh Language Awareness training will be provided to all staff as part of their induction training.

Welsh speaking members of staff will encourage staff known to be learning Welsh to use their Welsh in the workplace.

d) Administrative arrangements

Copies of the Welsh Language Scheme will be given to all Commission staff when it is issued for public consultation with guidance notes to explain its importance and relevance.

The commitments and arrangements outlined in this Scheme have been approved by the Commissioner and have her full support.

Training will be held to inform staff of their responsibilities within the Scheme, and the broader context in relation to delivering our services, equality of opportunity, and cultural issues.

All new members of staff will receive detailed guidance regarding the Scheme as part of their induction training programme.

The Commission will identify effective professional translation services and a list of such translators will be accessible on the Intranet to ensure

that written material can be speedily and correctly translated. A list of members of the Welsh Association of Translators and Interpreters is available at www.cyfieithwycymru.org.uk, and regard will be had to this.

Welsh-speaking staff of the Commission will not be expected to act as in-house translators. Where staff are accustomed to working bilingually, individual discretion may be used in relation to short passages of translation, particularly in relation to the translation of Welsh into English.

The Commission will ensure that Cysgliad is installed on the computers of staff who will be working through the medium of Welsh, and of all administrative staff who may be called to work on bilingual documents, and copies of the Welsh Academy English-Welsh dictionary and Y Geiriadur Mawr will be available in the office.

Staff may be offered a Welsh interface for Microsoft Office applications.

Any form of contact with the public in Wales which is not specifically dealt with by this scheme will be undertaken in a manner which is consistent with the general principles enshrined in this Scheme.

The Welsh Language Scheme will be publicised initially and on a continuing basis in workshops and presentations to Older People, in a newsletter sent out to organisations and individuals, in any relevant leaflets and publications produced after the date of adoption, and on our website. Copies of publications will be available from the Commission on request. Key agencies and those delivering services in conjunction with or on behalf of the Commission will receive copies of the Scheme.

e) Agreements or arrangements with third parties

Agreements or arrangements made with third parties which relate to the provision of services to the public will be consistent with the terms of this Scheme.

The Commission will ensure that third party contractors will implement any applicable elements of this Scheme when providing services to the public on the Commission's behalf or under its supervision.

Procedures will be developed for staff when dealing with third parties to ensure implementation of these commitments. Relevant requirements as to the use of the Welsh language will be specified in tendering documents and contracts. The implementation of the Scheme by agents and contractors will be monitored.

f) Monitoring and day to day responsibility

We will monitor our progress in delivering this Scheme against the targets set out in its accompanying action plan. Our existing monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this Scheme, as appropriate. We will provide the Welsh Language Board with annual monitoring reports on the date of approval of this Scheme.

Monitoring will cover :

- Forward planning and procurement: ensuring that new policies, procedures and publications will be compatible with the delivery of bilingual services on a basis of equality.
- Organising and delivering services: monitoring the implementation of arrangements made to deliver the Commission's services in Welsh, and their effectiveness, monitoring how well the Commission is encouraging and facilitating the use of Welsh by other parties.
- Dealing with the Welsh speaking public: response times for Welsh correspondence, quality of simultaneous translation services, arrangements for meetings.
- The Commission's public face: implementation of the Commission's corporate image, monitoring bilingual publications, forms, signs, notices and other published material.
- Staffing: monitoring the implementation of the staffing and training measures set out in this Scheme.
- Agents and contractors: monitoring the provision and administration of services by the Commission's agents and

contractors to ensure compliance with the Welsh language terms of agreements and arrangements.

- Timetable: monitoring achievement against the timetable in this Scheme.
- Grievances: monitoring the incidence and nature of complaints relating to the Commission's Welsh language service.

The Commissioner will have overall responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Scheme and will ensure that all monitoring is a structured and continuing activity and that it includes those who provide or administer services on behalf of the Commission.

Day to day responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Scheme will be the responsibility of the Welsh Language Scheme Co-ordinator. A staff forum will be established to undertake the annual monitoring of the Scheme. Members of this group will be from all staff groups within the organisation.

The Scheme will be reviewed within four years of its coming into effect.

From time to time, we may need to review this Scheme, or propose amendments to it, because of changes to our functions, or to the circumstances in which we undertake our functions, or for any other reason.

No changes will be made to this Scheme without the Welsh Language Board's approval.

6. Suggestions for improvement

The Commission welcomes suggestions for improvements to any part of the Welsh Language Scheme. Suggestions should be sent to the Older People's Commission's office. All suggestions received will be acknowledged in writing.

7. Complaints regarding the Welsh Language Scheme

Complaints regarding the scheme will be dealt with under the Commission's corporate complaints process, available at:

<http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/index.php?id=383&L=0>. Complaints should be directed to the Commission's Complaints Manager.

All publicity concerning the Scheme will state to whom complaints concerning the implementation of the Scheme should be made. The target time for clearance of complaints relating to the service provided in the Welsh language will be the same as for all other complaints. All complaints received will be acknowledged in writing.

Complaints about the Scheme may be directed to the Welsh Language Board if the complainant is not satisfied with a response given by the Commission to their complaint. The Commission will cooperate fully with the Welsh Language Board when it conducts an investigation under section 17 of the Welsh Language Act 1993.

8. Publishing Information on Performance

A summary of how the Commission is progressing with the implementation of this Scheme will be included in its annual reports each year.

C. Contact details of person to contact regarding this Scheme

Welsh Language Scheme Co-ordinator

Older People's Commission for Wales

Cambrian Buildings

Mount Stuart Square

Cardiff

CF10 5FL

08442 640670

ask@olderpeoplewales.com

D. Timetable for implementation of the scheme and team actions

Human Resources

Action	Target Date	WLS Reference
Produce guidance on recruitment of Welsh language speakers	March 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, a) recruitment
Develop bilingual job adverts and form of wording, and recruitment pack information	March 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, a) recruitment
Recruitment and retention of suitably qualified Welsh speaking staff: receptionist, administrative support and Information and Enquiries Officer	March 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, a) recruitment
Ongoing recruitment of Welsh speaking staff	March 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, a) recruitment
Audit of Welsh language skills in current staff	May 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, b) audit of welsh language skills in current staff
Maintain central record of staff who can speak Welsh	May 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, b) audit of welsh language skills in current staff
Staff induction programme to include WLS	March 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, c) welsh training

Develop ongoing/refresher Welsh language awareness training	March 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, c) welsh training
Investigate provision of Welsh language training – in-house and external options and make available to staff	May 2010	5. Implementing & monitoring, c) welsh training

Communications

Action	Target Date	WLS Reference
Identification of regular Welsh language translators	March 2010	5. Implementing and monitoring, d) administrative arrangements
Produce guidance on arranging/holding bilingual meetings (ref WLB guidance on holding bilingual public meetings)	March 2010	3. Communication with the public, c) in person
Develop event checklist to factor in Welsh language considerations	March 2010	3. Communications with the public, c) in person
Bilingual stationary e.g. letter headings, compliment slips, press release headings, business cards and signage	March 2010	4. Public face of the organisation, a) corporate id
Printed materials to be bilingual unless in exceptional	March 2010	4. Public face of the organisation, c)printed

circumstances		materials
Display materials to be bilingual or in both languages	March 2010	4. Public face of the organisation, g) publicity and promotional materials
Procedures to ensure Welsh and English documents are uploaded onto website simultaneously	March 2010	4. Public face of the organisation, f) website
Publication of WLS	March 2010	5. Implementation and monitoring, d) administrative arrangements
Consider WLB guidelines for web design in ongoing website development	March 2010	4. Public face of the organisation, f) website
Include update on WLS performance in Annual Report	May 2010	8. publishing information on performance
Brand development – OPC as a bilingual organisation	March 2010	4. the public face of the organisation, a) corporate identity

Information and Enquiries

Action	Target Date	WLS Reference
Produce customer service guidelines setting out service guidelines and procedures to ensure service provision in the language chosen by the service user & that both languages are treated equally	April 2010	2. The delivery of services through the medium of Welsh

Information and Resources

Action	Target Date	WLS Reference
Download Cysgliad, and but dictionaries, including Y Geiriadur Mawr, from Amazon	March 2010	5. Implementation and monitoring, d) Administrative arrangement
Explore possibility of Welsh interface for Microsoft Office applications	March 2010	5. Implementation and monitoring, d) Administrative arrangement
Develop procedure for partnership working, to include check for compliance with Scheme	March 2010	4. The public face of the organisation, i)partnership
Establish working group to undertake monitoring of scheme	March 2010	5. Implementation and monitoring, f)monitoring and day to day responsibility
Utilise reporting from BMS	March 2010, ongoing	5. Implementation and monitoring, f)monitoring and day to day responsibility
Review scheme every four years	March 2010, ongoing	5. Implementation and monitoring, f)monitoring and day to day responsibility

Administrative Support

Action	Target Date	WLS Reference
Maintain record of those who wish to deal with OPC in Welsh	March 2010	3. Communication with the public
Update Reception Handbook	March 2010	3. Communication with the public