

Welsh Language Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since 31 July 2020, I have committed to comply with the Welsh Language Standards ('the Standards'), as set out by the Welsh Government, under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. I have committed to comply with most of the Standards by 31 January 2021. Later compliance dates apply in some circumstances.
- 1.2 The key principle of the Standards, and the principle that underpins my approach to the Welsh language, is that it will not be treated less favourably than the English language both within the workplace and when dealing with the public and other stakeholders.
- 1.3 The Standards are published on my website. The Standards set out the legal duties of the Ombudsman. This policy outlines **how** I intend to comply with the legal duties under the Standards and intended to provide readily accessible details of the Welsh language services in place. Whilst I have, in this Policy, endeavoured to reflect accurately the requirements of the Standards, the Standards take precedence and set out my definitive legal duties.
- 1.4 This policy also sets out how I facilitate and promote the use of the Welsh language internally. This includes information on arrangements for translation as well as our Welsh language training provision and available resources.

2. Service Delivery

2.1 Correspondence

- 2.1.1 I welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. My normal practice will be that, when someone writes to me in Welsh, I will issue a reply in Welsh (if a reply is required). My target time for replying will be the same as for replying to letters written in English.
- 2.1.2 Where I have received correspondence in Welsh or English, I will treat that language as the preferred language. I will make all who access the Ombudsman's services aware that services are available in Welsh and English.
- 2.1.3 I will issue bilingual correspondence to individuals until their language preference is known. When I issue a Welsh language version and corresponding English language version of correspondence, I will not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.
- 2.1.4 Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual, when available. Enclosures sent with Welsh letters will be Welsh or bilingual, when available.

Exceptions could be circumstances where, for example, the enclosures are authored by third parties and/or where no Welsh language version exists. This will apply to e-mail correspondence as well as paper correspondence.

- 2.1.5 When I initiate correspondence with an individual who has not previously contacted me, I will establish whether they wish to correspond in Welsh. If they do, I will keep a record of their wish and correspond with them in Welsh from then onwards.
- 2.1.6 Where there is more than one complainant, my normal practice is to correspond with the lead complainant in the language of her/his choice. If, however, I send correspondence addressed to two individuals who are members of the same household for the first time, I will state that each individual may choose to receive correspondence in Welsh or English. I will keep a record of their wish and correspond with them in Welsh or English, as appropriate, from then onwards.
- 2.1.7 I will contact relevant bodies in my jurisdiction on a regular basis, to establish whether they wish to correspond in Welsh. If they do, I will keep a record of their wish and correspond with them in Welsh from then onwards.
- 2.1.8 When I send standard or circular correspondence to several recipients, it will be bilingual.
- 2.1.9 All hard-copy Welsh correspondence (including e-mail correspondence) that I issue will bear a bilingual electronic signature.

2.2 Telephone

- 2.2.1 My normal practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or English when dealing with my office by telephone. When someone contacts me on my main telephone number, I will greet the individual in Welsh.
- 2.2.2 The telephone numbers for the Welsh language service will be same as for the corresponding English language service.
- 2.2.3 Callers to the Complaints Assessment Team (that is, the office frontline service) will hear an automated bilingual greeting with a choice to continue in Welsh or English. If the caller selects the Welsh language option, calls will be routed to a Welsh speaking member of staff to deal with the enquiry. My main phone number will use a bilingual message on its answerphone.
- 2.2.4 If a caller rings one of my office's direct lines and wishes to speak about a complaint against a service provider or councillor in Welsh, but the person taking the call cannot do so, they will transfer the call to a Welsh speaking

colleague qualified to deal with the enquiry.

2.2.5 If the call is not related to a complaint about a service provider or councillor, the call will be dealt with in Welsh until it becomes necessary to transfer the call to another member of staff who does not speak Welsh (i.e. if no Welsh speaking member of staff is available to provide a service on the specific subject matter).

2.2.6 If my office initiates a call to an individual for the first time, we will ask whether that person wishes to receive telephone calls from us in Welsh. If they say that they do, we will keep a record of that wish and conduct telephone calls with them from then onwards in Welsh.

2.3 Meetings

2.3.1 When I send an invitation to a meeting or public event, I will ask all invited attendees and guest speakers whether they wish to use the Welsh language at the meeting. I will also inform them that I will provide a translation service from Welsh to English for that purpose if required.

2.3.2 If I have been informed that an invited attendee wishes to use the Welsh language at a meeting, I will arrange simultaneous translation from Welsh to English at that meeting (unless the meeting can be conducted in Welsh without the assistance of a simultaneous translation service).

2.3.3 All documentation related to public meetings that I arrange, (e.g. invitations and advertisements) will be bilingual. Any individual can contribute at a public meeting arranged by me in Welsh and simultaneous translation will be provided to facilitate this. At the beginning of the meeting, I will orally inform those present that they are welcome to use the Welsh language and that a simultaneous translation service is available.

2.4 General Publications

2.4.1 When I produce a Welsh language version and a separate English language version of a document, I will ensure that the English language version clearly state that the document is also available in Welsh.

2.4.2 Any publicity or guidance documents, (for example, brochures, leaflets, pamphlets or cards), that I produce to provide information to the public will be available in Welsh.

2.4.3 My normal practice will be to publish general material of the kind described above with the Welsh and English versions together in one document.

- 2.4.4 If the Welsh and English versions need to be published separately, (for example, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), both versions will be of equal size and quality. I will ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will clearly state that the material is available in the other language.
- 2.4.5 If not available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be greater than that of a single language publication. The price of separate, Welsh and English versions will be the same. This will also apply to general publications made available electronically on my website, on CD-ROM or otherwise.
- 2.4.6 When I undertake public surveys, I will ensure that all aspects of the survey will be bilingual and that the respondents are able to respond in Welsh if that is their wish.
- 2.4.7 When I invite the public to respond to me in relation to the business of my office, for example, whilst conducting a consultation, I will do so bilingually. I will make it clear that I welcome receiving responses in Welsh.
- 2.4.8 All policies, strategies, annual reports, corporate plans, guidelines and codes of practice that I make available to the public will be available bilingually.

2.5 Press releases and contact with the media

- 2.5.1 When I issue a statement to the press and broadcasting media in Wales, I will issue it bilingually. When I respond to a specific media enquiry, I will respond in the language of the enquiry.
- 2.5.2 When press releases are posted on my website, I will post them in Welsh and English.
- 2.5.3 Where possible, I will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.

2.6 Website and Social Media

- 2.6.1 My website and its interactive pages are available bilingually. Where a Welsh language web page corresponds to an English language web page, I clearly state that the page is also available in Welsh and provide a direct link to the corresponding Welsh page.
- 2.6.2 When I post English language publications produced by my office on my website, the Welsh version will be posted at the same time.

2.6.3 When I use social media, I will not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language. I will operate one bilingual account for each channel.

2.6.4 When a person contacts me by social media in Welsh, I will reply in Welsh (where a reply is required).

2.7 Forms and associated explanatory material

2.7.1 All forms and associated explanatory material that I make available to the public (for example, complaints form), will be available bilingually. This includes interactive forms published on my website.

2.7.2 My normal practice will be to ensure that the Welsh and English versions are produced together in one document. However, where this is not possible (for example, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), both versions will be of equal size and quality. I will also ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will clearly state that the material is available in the other language.

2.7.3 Completing the Welsh language form will not lead to a delay. The English language version of the form will clearly state that the form is also available in Welsh.

2.7.4 When other organisations distribute forms on my behalf, I will ensure that they do so in accordance with the above.

2.8 Corporate Identity and Signage

2.8.1 I have adopted a bilingual corporate identity. My name, contact details, logo, slogans and other standard information will appear in Welsh and English on all material which displays my corporate identity. This includes my stationery and material such as business cards, identity badges, passes, tickets, acknowledgement cards, compliment slips and invitations.

2.8.2 When I erect a new sign or notice or renew a sign or notice (including temporary signs), outside or in public areas of my offices, the sign will be available in Welsh and English (either on the same sign or on separate signs). I will ensure that the Welsh language will not be treated less favourably than the English language and that the Welsh language text is positioned so that it is likely to be read first. I will also ensure that the Welsh language text on signs is accurate in terms of meaning and expression.

2.9 Reception service

2.9.1 I do not operate a staffed reception service. However, I have a sign displayed in my reception area that states that persons are welcome to use the Welsh language at the reception. If a person wishes to use the Welsh language, I will arrange for a suitable Welsh speaking officer to attend.

2.10 Invitations to Tender

2.10.1 When I publish invitations to tender for a contract, I will do so bilingually.

2.10.2 A tender submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than a tender submitted in English. In particular, the closing date for receiving tenders will be the same for tenders submitted in Welsh and English and the time scale for informing tenderers of my decision will be the same.

2.10.3 I will clearly state in the invitation that tenders may be submitted in Welsh and that a tender submitted in Welsh will be treated no less favourably than a tender submitted in English.

2.10.4 If it is necessary to interview the tenderer as part of my assessment of the tender, I will ask the tenderer whether they wish to be interviewed in Welsh and will provide a simultaneous translation service for that purpose if required and unless the interview can be conducted in Welsh without the need of a simultaneous translation service.

2.10.5 When I inform a tenderer of my decision in relation to a tender, I will do so in Welsh if the tender was submitted in Welsh.

3 Policy Making

3.1 When I formulate a new policy, or review or revise an existing policy, I will assess the positive and negative impact of the new or revised policy on:

- Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and
- Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

3.2 I will also consider how a new policy, or review or revision of an existing policy should be formulated to minimise the negative impact and maximise the positive impact on:

- Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and
- Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

- 3.3 I will also apply these principles when publishing any consultation documents that relate to a policy decision and when I commission or undertake research that is intended to assist me in making a policy decision.
- 3.4 These considerations will take place as part of my Equality Impact Assessment on new and existing policies. My Equality Impact Assessment Policy & Procedure is available on my website.

4 Internal Use of the Welsh Language

4.1 Recruitment

- 4.1.1 All posts within my office will be assessed to determine whether the Welsh language is essential or desirable for that role.
- 4.1.2 Every advertisement for staff recruitment will be bilingual.

4.2 HR documents and correspondence

- 4.2.1 Any staff member can receive their contract and or correspondence that relates to their employment, which is addressed to them personally, in Welsh if they wish.
- 4.2.2 When I offer a new post to an individual, I will ask that individual whether he or she wishes for the contract of employment to be provided in Welsh. If that is the individual's wish, I will provide the contract in Welsh
- 4.2.3 I will ask each member of staff on appointment whether he or she wishes to receive any paper correspondence that relates to his or her employment and which is addressed to him or her personally in Welsh. Each member of staff may change this preference at any time.
- 4.2.4 I will also ask each member of staff whether he or she wishes to receive any forms that record and authorise the following in Welsh:
- Annual leave
 - Absences from work
 - Flexible working hours
- 4.3 My system for recording the above will be available in Welsh for those members of staff that have indicated their wish for the above to be recorded and authorised in Welsh.

4.4 Staff Policies

- 4.4.1 All policies relating to employment and essential matters such as Health and Safety will be available in Welsh and English.
- 4.4.2 All members of staff can present complaints in Welsh or English and all cases will be dealt with in the preferred language of the member of staff.
- 4.4.3 All members of staff have the right to deal with any disciplinary or grievance issues in Welsh or English.
- 4.4.4 The relevant processes are set out in my Disciplinary Policy and Grievance Policy.

4.5 Training

- 4.5.1 I maintain a record of the Welsh language skills of staff, which is completed on an annual basis.
- 4.5.2 I encourage staff to access training to develop their Welsh language skills. This training is available during working hours for staff who receive basic Welsh language lessons and, for those who manage others, to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.
- 4.5.3 Language awareness training will be provided for all staff members. This will raise awareness about the importance of the Welsh language and its history. New members of staff will be provided with induction training, which includes a module designed to raise their awareness of the Welsh language.
- 4.5.4 All staff can receive the training I provide or arrange, relating to key employment matters, dealing with the public and health and safety, through the medium of Welsh if that is their wish.
- 4.5.5 I will keep an annual record of the number of members of staff who attended training courses provided in Welsh and the percentage total of the number of staff attending the course who attended the Welsh version.
- 4.5.6 Prior to the training event being arranged, staff will be asked whether they wish to take part in the training through the medium of Welsh. Staff will also be asked, on appointment, whether they wish to receive any paper correspondence that relates to his or her training needs or requirements and performance objectives in Welsh. Staff may change this preference at any time.

4.6 Resources

- 4.6.1 The homepage of the Hub is available in Welsh. Parts of the Hub that are relevant to the use of the Welsh language, complaints made by staff and employment matters are available in Welsh. Where a Welsh language page corresponds to an English language page, I clearly state that the page is also available in Welsh and provide a direct link to the corresponding Welsh page.
- 4.6.2 Resources and material to support staff in the use of the Welsh language, the Welsh language standards and learning Welsh are available on the Hub.
- 4.6.3 All staff must use a bilingual template for their email signature and out of office message. These templates can be found in the instruction document '[Welsh language standards – Action to be taken by staff](#)', which is available to staff on the Hub.
- 4.6.4 Iaith Gwaith lanyards are available from Corporate Services. Welsh speaking members of staff can wear these lanyards to indicate that they speak Welsh.

4.7 Welsh language technologies

- 4.7.1 To assist staff to use the Welsh language correctly and confidently, a suite of software is available to all staff upon request. This includes:
- Cysill - a Welsh specific spell check;
 - Cysgeir - Welsh-English, English-Welsh dictionary; and
 - Microsoft Office Welsh language proofing - Welsh language spell check

4.8 Translation

- 4.8.1 Requests for translation should be made to the Communications & Translation Officer. Staff should submit requests through the Translation Request Form on the Hub, ensuring that they input the correct translation deadline date. If request is urgent and needs to be completed within the next 2 calendar days, staff should email the Communications Team.
- 4.8.2 The Communications & Translation Officer will decide whether the request for translation should be contracted to an external translation service or whether it can be achieved in-house.

5 Complaints about the Welsh Language Standards

- 5.1 I welcome complaints about my compliance with this Policy and the Welsh Language Standards, which I will use as an opportunity to learn and drive improvement. My [policy](#) on how to comment or complain about our service,

sets out how I deal with complaints about my compliance with the Standards.

- 5.2 I will keep a copy of any written complaint that I receive, that relates to my compliance with the Standards which I am under a duty to comply with. I will also keep a record, in relation to each financial year, of the number of complaints I have received relating to my compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

6 Monitoring and Reporting

- 6.1 I will report annually on my compliance with the Welsh Language Standards to the Welsh Language Commissioner. I will publish this report, relating to the previous financial year, on my website by 30 September annually.