



**Ombwdsmon
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Cymru • Wales

Welsh Language Policy

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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1. Introduction

At PSOW, we embrace the Welsh language. We are committed to comply with our Welsh Language Standards. Click [here](#) to find information about the Standards that we must comply with.

This policy sets out how we will meet our duties under the Standards, to make sure that as a service provider and employer we:

- treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
- proactively seek to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language.

2. Service Delivery

General commitments

We will make all who access our services aware that our services are available in Welsh and English.

We will monitor how many people use our service in Welsh.

We will seek to take steps to understand better the language choices of our service users to improve how we promote our service in Welsh.

Correspondence

This section relates to all postal and email correspondence.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. If someone writes to us in Welsh, we will respond in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding.

If someone writes to us or submits a complaint in Welsh, we will assume that that is their preferred language and we will communicate with them in Welsh from then onwards, unless they tell us otherwise. If someone writes to us or submits a complaint in English, we will respond in English, but we will include in correspondence our statement that we welcome correspondence in Welsh and English.

Until we know someone's language preference, we will write to them bilingually. When we issue correspondence in Welsh and English, we will not treat the Welsh language version less favourably than the English language version.

If we include any attachments, they will be bilingual if accompanying bilingual correspondence, and in Welsh if we are writing to someone in Welsh. The only exception to this will be if the attachment is produced by a third party and there is no Welsh language version available.

If we write to someone for the first time, we will ask them if they want us to write to them in Welsh. If they do, we will record that preference and write to them in Welsh from then onwards.

If we are looking into a case where there is more than one complainant, we will normally correspond with the lead complainant in the language of their choice. If, however, we send correspondence for the first time addressed to two people who are members of the same household, we will state that each person may choose to receive correspondence in Welsh or English. We will keep a record of their preferences and correspond with them in Welsh or English, as appropriate, from then onwards.

When we send standard or circular correspondence to several people, we will send it in Welsh and in English, with the Welsh version appearing first.

All hard-copy Welsh correspondence (including external email correspondence) that we issue will bear a bilingual electronic signature.

Telephone

People who call us can speak to us in Welsh or English. When someone calls us on the main telephone number, they will be greeted in Welsh.

The telephone numbers for the Welsh language service will be same as for the corresponding English language service.

When someone calls our Intake Team (that is, our frontline service) they will hear an automated bilingual greeting with a choice to continue in Welsh or English. If they select the Welsh language option, the calls will be directed to a Welsh speaking member of staff. Our main phone number will use a bilingual message on its answerphone.

When some calls one of our direct lines and wishes to speak about a particular matter in Welsh, but the person taking the call cannot do so, the call will be transferred to a Welsh speaking colleague who is able to help. We will only deal with that call in English if there is no Welsh speaking colleague available to provide a service on the specific subject matter.

If we call someone for the first time, we will ask them if they want us to use Welsh over the phone. If they do, we will record that preference and communicate with them in Welsh from then onwards.

Meetings (not open to the public)

When we invite people to a meeting, we will ask them if they wish to use the Welsh language at the meeting.

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

We will not apply the steps outlined above when the meeting is outside Wales or organised for people located outside Wales.

Meetings (public)

When we invite people to a public meeting, we will ask all invited attendees and guest speakers whether they wish to use the Welsh language at the meeting. We will inform them that we can provide a translation service from Welsh to English if required.

If an invited attendee or guest wishes to use the Welsh language at a meeting, we 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).

When we send an invitation to a public meeting, we will state that we welcome the use of Welsh in the meeting and that we will provide a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English during the meeting.

At the beginning of a public meeting, we will inform the attendees that they are welcome to use the Welsh language and that a simultaneous translation service is available.

All documents related to our meetings (e.g., invitations, advertisements and presentations) will be bilingual.

We will not apply the steps outlined above when the meeting is outside Wales or organised for people located outside Wales.

General publications

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

The following general publications will be always available in Welsh:

- information or guidance documents, (for example, brochures, leaflets, pamphlets)
- policies published externally
- strategies, annual reports and corporate plans
- guidelines and codes of practice
- consultation papers.

If we do not publish the Welsh and English versions together in one document, both language versions will be of equal size and quality and equally accessible. We will make sure that the Welsh version is always published first.

When we organise public surveys, we will make the survey available in Welsh and in English, and we will make sure that the respondents are able to respond in Welsh if that is their wish.

When we organise a public consultation on any issue, we will do so in Welsh and in English. We will make it clear that we welcome receiving responses in Welsh.

Forms and associated explanatory material

All forms and related explanatory material that we publish (for example, complaints form), will be available bilingually. This includes interactive forms published on our website.

The English language version of our forms will clearly state that:

- the forms are also available in Welsh
- completing the forms in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Any form that we publish will feature the same requirements in Welsh and in English.

Press releases and contact with the media

When we issue a statement to the press and broadcasting media in Wales, we will issue it in Welsh and English, with the Welsh version issued first. The English version of the press release will state that the Welsh version is available.

When we receive a specific media enquiry in Welsh, we will respond in Welsh.

Where possible, we will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media. We will regularly review our training needs and offer any training required to make sure that we have staff members who can take part in media interviews in Welsh.

If there is a Welsh speaker available to take part in an interview on a specific issue, we will state that in the press release.

Website and social media

Our website and its interactive pages will be available bilingually. Users will be able to directly switch between Welsh and English language versions of each page.

New website content and updates to existing content will be posted in Welsh and English at the same time.

When we use social media, our preference will be to operate one bilingual account for each channel.

We will always post content in Welsh first. Two exceptions to this will be if:

- We intend to 'pin' a tweet post – in which case we will produce that post bilingually.
- We share a third party content that is available in English only. If possible, we will always aim to add to that content our comment bilingually, with Welsh first.

If someone contacts us on social media in Welsh, we will reply in Welsh.

Videos

Where possible, we will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to record video contributions.

When producing videos with contributions in English only, we will always produce a version with Welsh subtitles.

Corporate Identity and signage

Our corporate identity is bilingual. Our name, contact details, logo, slogans and other standard information will appear in Welsh and English on all communications material. This includes our stationery and material such as business cards, identity badges, passes, tickets, acknowledgement cards, compliment slips and invitations.

When we erect a new sign or notice or renew a sign or notice (including temporary signs), outside or in public areas of our offices, the sign will be available in Welsh and English (either on the same sign or on separate signs). We 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. We will also ensure that the Welsh language text on signs is accurate in terms of meaning and expression.

Reception service

We do not operate a staffed reception service. However, a sign displayed in our reception area states that people are welcome to use the Welsh language at the reception. If someone wishes to use the Welsh language, we will arrange for a suitable Welsh speaking officer to attend.

We will regularly review our training needs and offer any training required to make sure that we have staff members who can provide reception service in Welsh.

Invitations to tender

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

A tender submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than a tender submitted in English. All details, requirements and commitments, such as the closing date for receiving tenders or the time scale for informing tenderers of our decision will be the same for tenders submitted in Welsh and English.

We 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.

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

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

3. Policy making

When we formulate a new policy, or review or revise an existing policy, we will always strive to make a "conscientious effort" to consider the impact on the Welsh language, in line with the guidance published by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

We will assess the positive and negative impact (direct or indirect) of the new or revised policy on:

- opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language
- treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

We 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
- treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

We will consider these issues as part of our Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment on new and existing policies. Our assessment template considers the impact on the Welsh language separately from the equalities impacts.

We will apply the same principles when publishing any consultation documents that relate to a policy decision and when we commission or undertake research that is intended to assist us in making a policy decision.

When publishing a consultation document, we will include sufficient information for the stakeholders to be able to meaningfully consider the possible impact of the proposals on the Welsh language.

4. Internal use of the Welsh language

Recruitment

All vacant posts within our office will be assessed to determine whether the Welsh language is essential or desirable for the role.

All public communications related to staff recruitment will be bilingual, unless we publish in outlets beyond Wales for non-Welsh audiences.

When advertising a post, we will state clearly that we will not treat an application for a post made in Welsh less favourably than you treat an application made in English.

We will ensure that our application process gives applicants an opportunity to indicate that they wish to use the Welsh language at an interview or at any other method of assessment; and explain that we will provide a translation service from Welsh to English for that purpose if it is required. Where a post requires work to be undertaken in Welsh **and** English, both languages will be used in assessments and interviews.

When we inform a successful applicant of our decision, we will do so in Welsh if the application was made in Welsh.

HR documents and correspondence

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 so wish.

When we offer someone a new post, we will ask them if they wish to receive their contract of employment in Welsh. If that is their wish, they will receive the contract in Welsh.

We will ask each member of staff on appointment if they wish to receive any paper correspondence that relates to their employment (and which is addressed to them personally) in Welsh. Each member of staff may change this preference at any time.

Staff may use Welsh or English to record and seek authorisation for the following:

- annual leave
- absences from work
- flexible working hours.

Staff policies

All policies relating to employment and essential matters such as Health and Safety will be available in Welsh and English.

All members of staff can present complaints/grievances in Welsh or English and all cases will be dealt with in the preferred language of the member of staff.

All members of staff have the right to deal with any disciplinary or grievance issues in Welsh or English.

The relevant processes are set out in our [Disciplinary Policy](#) and [Grievance Policy](#).

Training

We will maintain a record of the Welsh language skills of staff, and we will update it every year.

We will encourage staff to access training to develop their Welsh language skills. This training will be available during working hours for staff who receive basic Welsh language lessons and manage others, to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

We will offer Welsh language awareness training to all staff members.

We will provide new members of staff with induction training, which will include a module designed to raise their awareness of the Welsh language.

All training that we offer to staff relating to key employment matters, dealing with the public and health and safety, will be available through the medium of Welsh if required.

We will keep a 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.

Before we arrange a training event, we will ask staff if they wish to take part in the training through the medium of Welsh.

On appointment, we will ask all new staff members if they wish to receive any correspondence that relates to their training needs or requirements and performance objectives in Welsh. Staff may change this preference at any time.

Resources

The homepage of our Intranet will be available in Welsh. Also available in Welsh will be the parts of the Intranet that are relevant to the use of the Welsh language, complaints made by staff and employment matters. Where a Welsh language page corresponds to an English language page, we will clearly state that the page is also available in Welsh and provide a direct link to the corresponding Welsh page.

Resources and material to support staff in the use of the Welsh language, the Welsh language standards and learning Welsh will be available on our Intranet.

All staff will be instructed to use a bilingual template for their email signature and out of office message.

We will provide Iaith Gwaith lanyards to all Welsh speaking members of staff to help them indicate that they speak Welsh.

Welsh language technologies

To assist staff to use the Welsh language correctly and confidently, we will provide all staff who request it a suite of software which includes:

- Cysill - a Welsh specific spell check
- Cysgeir - Welsh-English, English-Welsh dictionary
- Microsoft Office Welsh language proofing - Welsh language spell check.

5. Translation

We have a dedicated Communications & Translation Officer who handles all requests for translation. Staff should submit requests through the Translation Request Form on our Intranet, 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.

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.

6. Complaints about the Welsh Language Standards

We welcome feedback on how we comply with this Policy and the Welsh Language Standards, which we will use as an opportunity to learn and drive improvement. Click [here](#) to find our policy on how to comment or complain about our service.

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

7. Monitoring, review and publication

We will report annually on how we comply with the Welsh Language Standards to the Welsh Language Commissioner. We will publish this report, relating to the previous financial year, on our website by 30 September every year.

This Policy is reviewed every 2 years and published internally and externally.

All queries about this document can be directed to policycontrol@ombudsman.wales