

Ofcom

Welsh Language Scheme

Prepared under the Welsh Language Act 1993

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Section 1

Introduction

1.1 Under section 5 of the Welsh Language Act 1993, some public bodies¹ must prepare Welsh Language Schemes that specify the measures they propose to take as to the use of the Welsh language in connection with the services they provide to the public in Wales. In particular, the purpose of such schemes is to give effect, so far as is appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, to the principle that in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

1.2 Ofcom has had a voluntary Welsh Language Scheme since 30 March 2006.

1.3 On 17 July 2008, Ofcom was specified by the Welsh Ministers as a public body for the purposes of Part II of the Welsh Language Act 1993, and on 15 December 2008 Ofcom was notified by the Welsh Language Board under section 7 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 that Ofcom was required to prepare a Welsh Language Scheme.

1.4 On 26 March 2010, Ofcom, under section 12 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 submitted to the Welsh Language Board its proposed Welsh Language Scheme. The proposed Welsh Language Scheme was not approved by the Welsh Language Board because the Board wished to see an additional measure included in the Welsh Language Scheme about Ofcom's exercise of its function of issuing local radio licences.

1.5 On 28 May 2010, in exercise of its powers under section 14(2) of the Welsh Language Act 1993, the Board referred the matter of Ofcom's Welsh Language Scheme to the Welsh Ministers. On 29 May 2012, the Welsh Ministers decided upon the terms of this, Ofcom's, Welsh Language Scheme, in exercise of their powers under section 14(5) of the Welsh Language Act 1993. This amended Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Commissioner on 04 February 2014 and comes into force with immediate effect.

1.6 This Scheme deals with the services Ofcom provides to the public in Wales and specifies the measures we propose to take as to the use of the Welsh language to fulfil our duties under section 5 of the Act.

1.7 In this Scheme, the term 'public' means 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. It includes voluntary organisations and charities. Directors and others representing limited companies are also included within the meaning of the term 'public'. The definition does not,

¹ That is, those bodies which are listed in section 6 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 as public bodies or have been specified as being public bodies by order made under section 6(1)(o) of the Welsh Language Act 1993, which provide services to the public in Wales or exercise statutory functions in relation to the provision by other public bodies of services to the public

in Wales and which have received a notice under section 7 of the Act.

however, include persons who are acting in a capacity which is representative of the Crown, Government or the State. Consequently, persons who fulfil official functions of a public nature, even though they are legal persons, do not come within the definition of the word *public* when they are fulfilling those official functions.

1.8 More information about the remit and purpose of Welsh Language Schemes is available in the Welsh Language Board's guidelines issued under section 9 of the Welsh Language Act 1993. (see <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20120330013458/http://www.byg-wlb.org.uk/english/publications/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?puburl=/English/publications/Publications/120.pdf>)

Section 2

Background

2.1 Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the United Kingdom's communications industries, with responsibilities for television, radio, telecommunications through fixed lines and mobile phones, as well as the airwaves used by wireless devices. Established under the Office of Communications Act 2002, Ofcom has a general duty under the Communications Act 2003 to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters and to further the interest of consumers in relevant markets where appropriate by promoting competition.²

2.2 In performing its general duty, Ofcom must consider a number of matters which appears to it to be relevant in the circumstances. These includes the opinions of consumers in relevant markets and of members of the public generally, as well as the different interests of persons in the different parts of the UK, the different ethnic communities within the UK and the interests of persons living in rural and in urban areas.³

2.3 As well as its headquarters in London, Ofcom has a UK wide presence with regional offices across England and national offices in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This structure gives the organisation flexibility to get to grips with matters affecting one part of the UK or all parts of the UK.

2.4 This structure also enables Ofcom to target and develop a unique relationship with Wales's stakeholders in every sector through meetings and communications. These include organisations with departments in Wales such as BBC Cymru/Wales, ITV Wales and BT as well as Welsh bodies such as S4C and Consumer Focus Wales. A good working relationship has been established with the National Assembly for Wales and discussions are regularly held with the Assembly and elected members across government. This framework also enables us to consult extensively with citizens and consumers in Wales through public seminars and events.

2.5 Ofcom has representatives from Wales on its Communications Consumer Panel and its Content Board. Ofcom also has an Advisory Committee for Wales which was established to advise Ofcom about the interests and opinions of people living in Wales on all communication matters as well as the opportunity to influence regulatory policies.

2.6 Ofcom has a Welsh language telephone line in its Contact Centre to deal with customer complaints. The Welsh language service can be contacted on 0300 123 2023 or 029 7981 3042.

2.7 More information about Ofcom can be obtained on Ofcom's website at www.ofcom.org.uk. Contact details for Ofcom are at the end of this Scheme.

² Section 3(1)

³ Sections 3(4)(k) and (l)

Section 3

Service planning and delivery

Policies, legislation and plans

3.1 Our policies, plans and services will be consistent with this Scheme.

3.2 When we contribute towards work led by another organisation to develop or introduce new policies, plans, services or legislation, we will do so in a manner that is consistent with this Scheme.

Service provision

3.3 Our normal practice will be to ensure that our services are available to the public in Welsh.

3.4 We will inform the public when services are available in Welsh.

Our regulatory functions - and services carried out on our behalf by third parties

3.5 We will give appropriate consideration to the use of the Welsh language in carrying out our functions involving services to the public. These services include the communication of radio format guidance.

3.6 Any arrangements or agreements we make with third parties will be consistent with the relevant parts of this Scheme where those agreements or arrangements are in connection with providing services to the public in Wales.

Quality standards

3.7 Services provided in Welsh and in English will be of equal standard and will be provided within the same timescale where that is reasonably practicable.

Section 4

Dealing with the Welsh speaking public

Correspondence

4.1 We welcome correspondence in Welsh and in English.

4.2 Our standard practice will be as follows:

- When someone writes to us in Welsh, we will respond in Welsh (if a response is required). Our target time for responding will be exactly the same as the target for responding to letters in English;
- When we begin communicating with an individual, a group or organisation in Wales, we will do so bilingually unless we know that they would rather correspond in Welsh only or English only;
- When we send standard correspondence or circulars to many recipients in Wales, they will be bilingual unless we know that they would all rather receive them in Welsh only or English only;
- If Welsh and English versions of any correspondence must be published separately, our standard practice will be to ensure the two versions are available at the same time;
- Documents sent along with bilingual letters will be bilingual, where they are available;
- Documents sent along with Welsh language letters will be in Welsh or will be bilingual where they are available;
- The above will be relevant to correspondence by e-mail as well as on paper;
- Every hard copy of Welsh language correspondence we send will be signed by the author or on the author's behalf;
- We will develop a system to record the preferred language of those who wish to correspond with us in Welsh and provide it to all of Ofcom's staff.

Communicating by telephone

4.3 We welcome telephone calls in Welsh and English.

4.4 In Wales, our standard practice is to ensure that the public in Wales may speak in Welsh or English when dealing with us over the telephone.

4.5 We will encourage our staff in Wales to greet callers bilingually when answering the phone and to use bilingual messages on their personal answerphones.

4.6 If anyone who telephones Ofcom wishes to speak Welsh, we will try to transfer the call to a Welsh speaker who can deal with the query.

4.7 If a caller calls one of our direct lines and wishes to speak in Welsh, but the person receiving the call cannot do so, they will try and transfer the call to a colleague who can speak Welsh and is proficient to deal with the query.

4.8 If a qualified Welsh speaker is not available to deal with the query, the caller will be given a choice, as appropriate, to have a Welsh speaker call back as soon as possible, to continue with the call in English or to make their query in Welsh by letter, fax or email.

4.9 When we establish telephone help lines, or similar facilities to give information, services or support to the public in Wales, we will provide a service in Welsh which will be advertised alongside the English language service.

4.10 It would not be practicable for our offices outside of Wales to conduct telephone calls in Welsh; however we have established a Welsh language telephone line in our Contact Centre in order to deal with queries from the public in Welsh.

Public meetings held in Wales

4.11 In our public meetings we will provide simultaneous translation facilities from Welsh to English unless we know that everyone who will be participating is likely to use the same language.

4.12 Invitations and advertisements for public meetings will be bilingual and we will invite the public to tell us in advance which language they wish to speak.

4.13 We will inform those attending public meetings when translation facilities are available - and encourage people to contribute in Welsh.

4.14 Our standard practice will be to prepare general papers and other associated information, such as speakers' details and the agenda, in Welsh and English for our public meetings held in Wales.

4.15 In selecting staff to attend public meetings in Wales, our standard practice will be to ensure that suitable members of staff who are proficient in Welsh attend, as appropriate. Welsh speakers will wear Iaith Gwaith badges, or similar items, to show that they are proficient in Welsh and English.

Other meetings with the public in Wales

4.16 When we arrange or attend meetings face to face with the public in Wales, we will establish their preferred language at the first possible opportunity and, where possible, ensure that a suitable member of staff who is proficient in Welsh deals with those who would prefer to speak Welsh.

4.17 If a suitable Welsh speaker is not available, we will offer a choice of continuing the meeting in English or dealing with the matter by corresponding in Welsh.

4.18 The above statements will also be relevant to meetings held using video-conferencing facilities and similar equipment.

4.19 Due to the location of our other offices, it would not be practicable for our staff in those offices to have face to face meetings in Welsh with the public.

Other dealings with the public in Wales

4.20 When conducting research in Wales, our standard practice will be to ensure that any communication with the public will be made bilingually.

4.21 Whenever it is practicable, respondents will be asked whether they wish to respond to our surveys in Welsh or in English.

4.22 When we arrange public seminars or similar events, we will assess whether there is a need to provide them in Welsh.

Section 5

Ofcom's public face

Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising

5.1 All publicity, public information, exhibition materials and advertising we use in Wales will be produced bilingually or in Welsh and English versions separately. If Welsh and English versions must be produced separately, both versions will be equal in size, prominence and quality - and the two versions will be available at the same time and it will be equally easy to obtain them.

5.2 Any adverts which are published in English language newspapers (or similar materials) and which are distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual, or appear as separate versions in Welsh and English (with both versions appearing at the same time and being equal in size, prominence and quality).

5.3 Adverts in Welsh language publications will appear in Welsh only.

5.4 Ofcom does not advertise regularly on television and radio, but if such adverts are broadcast during Welsh language programmes, they will be broadcast in Welsh.

5.5 In selecting staff for stands and exhibitions in Wales, our standard practice will be to ensure that suitable Welsh speakers attend, as appropriate. Welsh speakers will wear Iaith Gwaith badges, or similar items, to demonstrate that they can communicate in Welsh and English.

Publications

5.6 Ofcom publishes consultation documents and other publications on matters which affect consumers or which are directly relevant to consumers. When Ofcom produces a *Plain English* version of a publication, we will publish a Welsh language version at the same time where that is reasonable and practicable.

5.7 Where it is reasonable or practicable, we will publish material which will be available to the public in Welsh at the same time as in English.

5.8 Materials aimed at specific or restricted audiences are more likely to be available in one language. Unless the document is available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be more than a monolingual publication, and separate Welsh and English language versions will be the same price.

Websites

5.9 Our websites will include pages in Welsh and English.

5.10 Our standard practice will be to provide Welsh versions of interactive pages on our websites where that is reasonably practicable.

5.11 We will prepare a programme which will note how we will increase Welsh language content on our website over time, and invite the Welsh Language Commissioner to agree it. More details are provided in the action plan which we will prepare under paragraph 6.17 below.

Forms and associated explanatory material

5.12 Our standard practice will be to ensure that every form and associated explanatory material for the use of the public in Wales will be available in Welsh and English.

5.13 The two versions will be of the same size and quality - and we will ensure that the two versions are available at the same time and that it is equally easy to obtain them. Each version will state clearly that the material is available in the other language.

Corporate identity

5.14 We have a bilingual corporate identity in Wales. Our name, contact details, logo, slogans and other standard information will appear in Welsh and in English on all materials which display our corporate identity. This includes our headed paper and stationery and materials such as business cards, identity badges, licences, tickets, invitations, electronic communications and vehicles.

5.15 An electronic communications standard template for disclaimers, signatures and out of office responses is available on our intranet.

5.16 For some projects we may use branding materials in the Welsh language only.

Signs in Wales

5.17 Our standard practice will be to ensure that all our permanent and temporary signs which provide information to the public are bilingual and the Welsh and English text will be equal in terms of size, prominence and readability.

5.18 We will adhere to this practice whenever we install signs for the first time or whenever we renew signs.

5.19 If Welsh and English signs are provided separately, they will be equal in size, format, quality and prominence.

5.20 The above will be relevant to all kinds of signs, including electronic signs.

Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment advertisements

5.21 Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment advertisements which are published in English language newspapers (or similar media) which are distributed mainly or entirely in Wales, will be bilingual or appear as separate Welsh and English versions. Notices or advertisements will appear in Welsh only in Welsh language publications.

5.22 The Welsh and English versions will be the same in terms of format, size, quality and prominence - whether they are published as one bilingual version, or as separate notices or advertisements in Welsh and English.

5.23 In the English language media, posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential may be advertised in Welsh with a short description in English.

5.24 Recruitment advertisements published in English language journals (and other publications) which are distributed across the UK may be in English, unless the post is one where the ability to speak Welsh is essential and in that case the advertisement may be wholly bilingual.

5.25 Any official notices, public notices or staff recruitment advertisements published elsewhere in Wales will be bilingual.

Press statements and media liaison

5.26 Statements to the press and media in Wales will be published in Welsh and English when the content is relevant to Wales or where it is of specific interest to consumers and businesses in Wales.

5.27 We already ensure that Welsh speakers are available for interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcast media.

Section 6

Implementing the scheme

Staffing

6.1 We will determine the workplaces and posts where the ability to speak Welsh is desirable or essential, and review them regularly. This requirement could be defined as an element of a workplace or a team, or could be part of a specific post.

6.2 From time to time we will conduct audits to determine the number, level of ability and location of staff who can speak, read and write Welsh (including staff who are learning Welsh). We will also note the staff who wish to learn Welsh, if it is relevant and appropriate for carrying out their duties.

6.3 We will respond to any shortfall through our recruitment and development activities as outlined further in our action plan.

6.4 In our offices outside Wales, we will seek information about the Welsh language skills of applicants for posts and the present staff, where this is relevant to the specific post. This is discussed under Recruitment, below.

Recruitment

6.5 We welcome recruitment correspondence in Welsh and English and we will make this clear in recruitment advertisements which are specifically for posts in our office in Wales.

6.6 Our standard recruitment method is to ask applicants to make an application by providing a CV and application letter (in their preferred language) and so we do not provide information packs or application forms.

6.7 When recruiting staff for our office in Wales we will use the information obtained by following the procedures described under Staffing above.

6.8 When it is decided that the ability to speak and/or to write in Welsh is desirable or essential, this will be noted in advertisements and in the job competencies section.

6.9 If suitable Welsh speaking applicants cannot be found for a post where Welsh is desirable, the person appointed will be encouraged to learn Welsh. An individual who cannot speak Welsh may be appointed to a post where Welsh is considered essential if time can be allowed for that person to learn the language. In this case we will make temporary arrangements where the service can be provided in Welsh (by using, for example, staff who can speak Welsh from another part of our establishment to provide parts of the service).

Language training

6.10 We support and encourage our staff to learn Welsh or improve their Welsh, if this is relevant and appropriate for them to carry out their duties.

6.11 We will fund this training and allow staff to attend courses during their work hours and outside those hours if they prefer.

Vocational training

6.12 We will develop our Welsh speaking staff's ability to work through the medium of Welsh by providing vocational training in Welsh, whenever that is practicable.

Information technology and communication

6.13 We make provision for the need to provide information and services in Welsh, and for acting in line with this Scheme as we develop, design and buy products and information technology and communication services.

6.14 At every available opportunity we will adapt our current information technology and communication systems to ensure that they enable us to provide information and services in Welsh - and to act in accordance with this Scheme.

Internal arrangements

6.15 Managers will be responsible for carrying out those elements of this Scheme which are relevant to their work.

6.16 We will appoint a senior member of staff to coordinate the necessary work to introduce, monitor and revise this scheme.

6.17 We will prepare a detailed four year action plan which will note how we will ensure that we operate in accordance with this Scheme. The action plan comes into force on the date this Scheme comes into force. The plan will include targets and timescales for compliance.

6.18 All staff members in all our offices, and the public in Wales, will be informed about this Scheme's existence. It will be published on our website in a prominent place. This Scheme will also be available to all staff on the intranet. We will update the desk instructions and similar guidance documents, for our staff in each of our offices to ensure that they know how to implement the measures in this Scheme that are relevant to their responsibilities.

6.19 We will arrange training and briefing sessions for each relevant member of staff in each of our offices, to raise awareness of this Scheme - and to explain how it will affect their day to day work.

6.20 We will ensure that we use only proficient translators to help with the work of introducing this Scheme.

6.21 Any kind of contact with the public in Wales which is not specifically dealt with in this Scheme, will be conducted in a manner which is consistent with the general principles of this Scheme.

Monitoring

6.22 We will monitor our progress in fulfilling this Scheme against the targets set out in the action plan which accompanies this Scheme.

6.23 Our present monitoring and reporting procedures include reference to the progress made in implementing this Scheme, as appropriate.

6.24 We will send monitoring reports to the Welsh Language Commissioner when the Commissioner requests them, outlining the progress made in implementing this Scheme.

Revising and amending the Scheme

6.25 We will revise this Scheme within four years of its coming into force.

6.26 From time to time we may need to revise or propose amendments to this Scheme because of a change in our functions, or in the circumstances associated with those functions, or for any other reason.

6.27 No amendments will be made to this Scheme without the Welsh Language Commissioner's approval.

Section 7

Contacting Ofcom

7.1 If you want to write to Ofcom at our office in Wales, our address is:

Ofcom
3rd floor
2 Caspian Point
Caspian Way
CARDIFF
CF10 4DQ

7.2 If you want to write to Ofcom at our head office, our address is:

Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

7.3 If you want to contact Ofcom by telephone on our Welsh language line, please call us on 0300 123 2023 or 020 7981 3042.

7.4 We also take online submissions through our website in the '[Advice and complaints](#)' area.

7.5 Full contact information for Ofcom can be viewed on our website in the 'Contacting Ofcom' area.