
Ofcom's Annual Report for the Welsh Language Commissioner

Our progress complying with the Welsh language Standards 2019-20

Welsh version is available here

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1. Overview

This document sets out our annual progress on complying with Welsh language legislation, over the course of 2019-2020.¹

Known as 'The Welsh language Standards', this legislation was issued to Ofcom in a compliance notice by the Welsh Language Commissioner in January 2017.² These included 141 additions to our work in Welsh, such as more consumer research and information about our work.

We remain committed to promoting the Welsh language and enabling people to interact with Ofcom in their preferred language – whether that is Welsh or English. We've achieved this in a way that's proportionate and consistent with our existing duties.

Ofcom's Welsh language achievements

Ofcom is committed to meeting our Welsh language obligations. We are proud of the way we integrate the Welsh language into our work in a practical manner. Our work in Welsh has continued without interruption during the challenging Covid-19 period, with high awareness, understanding and commitment among our staff to comply with the standards. We've adapted successfully to the restrictions of Covid-19 on events for example whilst remaining compliant with Welsh language legislation. We held our first virtual webinar, which was fully bilingual, 'Unlocking connectivity in Rural Wales', at the virtual Royal Welsh Show, in July 2020.

Ofcom's final compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner carries Ofcom's full authority, support and approval. We have a dedicated Senior Welsh Language Advisor in place to manage Ofcom's Welsh language activities. This includes translation requirements, social media, print and online production.

When producing our Welsh language communications, we tailor our approach to ensure that content is relevant to our audiences in Wales and communicated in an engaging way. Our key activities working in the Welsh language over the past year include:

- Translating over 735,000 words into Welsh including key publications such as Connected Nations Wales³, offering analysis of availability of telecoms services in Wales.
- Producing several Welsh language videos which we've shared on Social Media including our '[I Create](#)' video, part of our Online Nation campaign, which attracted close to 800 views
- Launching a new bilingual website, '[Small Screen, Big Debate](#)'
- Running a bilingual multimedia campaign, [Stay Connected](#)
- Launching a new [digital complaints hub](#)

Full details of our Welsh language activities over the past year are available in Section 3.

¹ From July 2019 to July 2020.

² https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/96920/Hysbysiad-Cydymffurfio44-Y-Swyddfa-Gyfathrebiadau-cy.pdf

³ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/186476/2019-cysylltur-gwledydd-cymru.pdf

2. About Ofcom

- 2.1 Ofcom is the independent communications regulator in the UK. Headquartered in London, we regulate the TV, radio and video on demand sectors, fixed line and mobile telecoms, postal services, plus the airwaves over which wireless devices operate. Ofcom makes sure that people in the UK get the best from their communications services and are protected from scams and sharp practices, while ensuring that competition can thrive. Our powers and duties are set out in several Acts of Parliament.
- 2.2 Ofcom is funded by fees from industry for regulating broadcasting, communications networks and postal services. Our budget is set by the UK Government and, as a public body, we seek efficiencies wherever possible. In recent years we have delivered like-for-like, real-terms reductions in our spending.

Ofcom in Wales

- 2.3 While Ofcom's headquarters are in London, we ensure that we have a perspective across the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. We have a statutory duty to have regard to, among other things, the views and interests of those who live in different parts of the UK. Our operations in the nations are led by senior Directors in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. Our National offices can draw on the full resources of the whole organisation to tackle issues that affect one part of the UK.
- 2.4 The Ofcom Wales office is based in Cardiff, employing four full-time staff who are fluent Welsh speakers and one part-time staff member who is not. Ofcom provides information to encourage staff to learn Welsh on the staff intranet. Welsh lessons for staff, when needed for business reasons, are also funded by the organisation,
- 2.5 Ofcom advertised a new Welsh essential post, Welsh language Associate, in August 2020 reflecting our increasing digital output and ongoing commitment to developing our work in the Welsh language. This new role will support the Senior Welsh language Advisor in our Welsh language activities.

Engaging with the Welsh language Commissioner

- 2.6 Ofcom has engaged constructively with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office for many years, ensuring that we have a thorough understanding of the Commissioner's requirements.
- 2.7 We have attended briefing sessions arranged by the Commissioner, responded in a timely manner to all queries and arranged meetings with the Welsh Language Commissioner to update on recent developments in our work.

3. Our approach

- 3.1 Ofcom seeks to treat the Welsh and English languages equally. When providing a service in the Welsh language, we always ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language. This applies to:
- the visual presentation of material;
 - when and how the material is published, provided or exhibited;
 - the size, position and prominence of the material in any public place and its publication format.
- Our approach is designed to allow people to engage with communications issues through the Welsh language.
- 3.2 We aim to innovate in our communications, and to encourage greater engagement from Welsh speakers. This includes inviting a range of external Welsh speaking contributors to take part in our public events, producing Welsh language interactive content and engaging Wales related content on social media.
- 3.3 In deciding when to provide a Welsh language service, we apply a consistent criterion. If the service in question relates to matters that affect – or is likely to be of relevance to citizens and businesses in Wales, then we will provide a Welsh language service as standard practice.

Our progress over the past year

- 3.4 In total, Ofcom translated around 735,000 words into Welsh over the past year including reports, news releases, update emails and webpages⁴.
- 3.5 We've produced several Welsh language videos which we've shared on Social Media and our website on a variety of themes including '[Small Screen, Big Debate](#)', [5G and Mast Vandalism](#) and [Online Nation](#). Our '[I create](#)' video featuring Welsh speaking online creators attracted close to 800 views. This demonstrates that the audience prefers interactive content than large, text heavy publications which have low reading figures. We hope to develop more digital Welsh content in the future.
- 3.6 Our Welsh language Online Safety Worksheets for Children were selected for inclusion on the [Welsh Government's 'Hwb' learning resources website](#). Teachers can use the worksheets as part of lesson plans, inspiring classes to compare their results to that of our Online Safety survey in Wales.
- 3.7 In February 2020 we launched our bilingual website, '[Small Screen, Big Debate](#)'. This website allows users to access a wide variety of research, learn more about our work in this area and to submit their views directly to us on the future of public service broadcasting.

⁴ From July 2019 to July 2020

- 3.8 We launched our bilingual campaign, '[Stay Connected](#)' in March 2020, providing advice to people on how to stay connected at home during the Coronavirus pandemic. We also produced a bilingual advertising campaign over 10 weeks promoting our 'Stay Connected' tips on local commercial radio stations in Wales and social media. Throughout the campaign in Wales, the Welsh language content on social media generated higher engagement than the English, culminating in a high 0.15% click through rate.
- 3.9 We launched our new [Welsh language Online Complaints Hub](#) in July 2020. This new user-friendly site is fully functional in Welsh and aims to help users to find out how to complain to Ofcom easily.
- 3.10 Our Wales events include bilingual participants and presentations, with stakeholders choosing to speak Welsh in the Q and A sessions. We provide simultaneous translation at our Wales events which is never a hindrance and doesn't impede the flow of conversation. Our Wales events over the past year include our Small Screen, Big Debate event in December 2019; our Ofcom Annual Plan event in January 2020; and our first virtual webinar, 'Unlocking connectivity in Rural Wales', at the virtual Royal Welsh Show, in July 2020. Simultaneous translation was provided in the virtual webinar demonstrating our ability to adapt successfully to the Covid-19 restrictions on live events and remain compliant with Welsh language legislation.
- 3.11 In response to the Welsh language Commissioner's investigation and decision notice regarding Ofcom's compliance with standards 10, 15 and 17 in relation to telephone services, a new call routing system was put in place in January 2020. Automated messages in both English and Welsh direct calls in the most appropriate manner.
- 3.12 We have produced a range of major publications recently in the Welsh language, including Small Screen: Big Debate – a five-year review of Public Service Broadcasting (2014-18)⁵; Ofcom's Annual Report 2019-20⁶; Connected Nations Wales 2019⁷ and Media Nations Wales 2020⁸.
- 3.13 Our major consultations⁹ include a Welsh language response form, to ensure Welsh speakers can provide feedback and comments in the language of their choice.
- 3.14 Finally, Ofcom audits how we take the interests of Welsh language speakers into account when we make regulatory decisions. As outlined in Ofcom's compliance notice, we have adopted a formal process of identifying the outcomes for Welsh speakers in a more structured and measurable manner when making policy decisions. We do this through our Welsh Language Standards Implementation Plan.¹⁰ This is modelled on a framework used across Ofcom to evaluate outcomes for customers.

⁵ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/192103/sgrin-fach-trafodaeth-fawr-adolygiad-pum-mlynedd.pdf

⁶ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/198516/adroddiad-blynnyddol-a-chyfrifol-2019-20.pdf

⁷ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/186476/2019-cysylltir-gwledydd-cymru.pdf

⁸ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/200500/cyfryngau-cenedl-2020-cymru.pdf

⁹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/cymru/consultations-and-statements>

¹⁰ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/103023/welsh-language-standards-implementation-plan.pdf

Our 2019 Statement on Localness on Commercial Radio ¹¹for example, noted:

In reaching our decision on approved areas in Wales, we have paid due regard to Ofcom's Welsh Language Standards on Policy Making as outlined in our compliance notice. The policy making standards are applicable at the point where they will have an impact regardless of where the policy decision is made. We anticipate that none of the changes to approved areas in Wales will have any effect on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, or in treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Complaints

- 3.15 Ofcom has not received any complaints related to our compliance with the service delivery standards during the past year.
- 3.16 Ofcom's Complaints Procedure explains how we aim to deal with complaints about our service delivery standards. The Complaints Procedure can be viewed on our website¹² and is also available as a hard copy in the Ofcom Wales office. Members of the public can contact us at any time to discuss Welsh language matters or related complaints, and we encourage them to do so on the website.

¹¹https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/139191/Statement-Localness-on-commercial-radio-Scotland-and-Wales-approved-areas.pdf

¹²<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/how-ofcom-is-run/nations-and-regions/wales>

A1. Our standard procedure for translating documents

- A.1.1 **Assessing the need for translation.** If a document (for example a consultation, report, executive summary, news release, web page, tweet or stakeholder-update email) relates to matters that affect – or are likely to be of particular relevance to – consumers and citizens in Wales, then we will publish a Welsh language version of the document simultaneously with the English.
- A.1.2 **Regular discussion about translation requirements.** Decisions to translate are discussed and agreed through a weekly meeting between Ofcom's Nations teams, including our Senior Welsh Language Advisor, and our main communications team based in London.
- A.1.3 **Working closely with policy teams.** The person leading a project is informed by the communications team, and the Senior Welsh Language Advisor, of the need to publish a Welsh language version of the document. This requirement is then incorporated into our publication schedule, to ensure the Welsh version is not treated 'less favourably' and is published at the same time as the English version.
- A.1.4 **Working closely with translators.** Ofcom Wales has a very positive working relationship with our translators. They are alerted as far as possible in advance of forthcoming translation requirements, and a timetable for turnaround is agreed to coincide with the publication date. An approximate word count is also provided when possible. Our translators consistently translate Ofcom documents to the highest standard on a timely basis. They also maintain a glossary of complex Ofcom terms, to ensure consistency across translations. They seek to ensure that Welsh translations are as clear and comprehensible as possible, by following "Cymraeg Clir" ("Clear Welsh") principles.
- A.1.5 **Checking for quality.** Welsh language documents are then proofed and edited by the Senior Welsh Language Advisor, before being forwarded to the communications team for simultaneous publication alongside the English versions.