
Ofcom's Annual Report for the Welsh Language Commissioner

Our progress complying with the Welsh language
Standards 2017-18

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1. About Ofcom

- 1.1 Ofcom is the independent communications regulator in the UK. Headquartered in London, we regulate the TV, radio and video on demand sectors, fixed line telecoms, mobiles, 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 a number of Acts of Parliament.
- 1.2 Ofcom is funded by fees from industry for regulating broadcasting, communications networks and postal services. Our budget is set by 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

- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 The Ofcom Wales office is based in Cardiff, employing four full-time staff and one part-time. Most of these colleagues are fluent Welsh speakers, while another is learning Welsh – alongside a member of Ofcom's Advisory Committee for Wales, and a member of Ofcom's main Broadcast team who has recently relocated to Wales.¹ Ofcom provides information to encourage staff to learn Welsh on the staff intranet. Welsh lessons for staff are also funded by the organisation.

Ofcom's commitment to the Welsh language

- 1.5 Ofcom works hard to meet our Welsh language obligations. We are proud of our commitment and the way in which we integrate the Welsh language into our work in a practical manner. We actively encourage people to communicate with Ofcom in the language of their choice, be it in English or Welsh.
- 1.6 In 2017, we increased our commitment to the Welsh language by implementing the new Standards. These included 141 commitments to our work in Welsh, such as more consumer research and information about our work.

¹ Ofcom funds these Welsh lessons, which are provided twice weekly for staff by an external tutor who visits the Ofcom Wales office.

- 1.7 Ofcom's final compliance notice ² from the Welsh Language Commissioner carries Ofcom's full authority, support and approval. ³
- 1.8 To reflect this ongoing commitment, the creation of the new role of Senior Welsh language Advisor was approved by the Ofcom Board and filled in July 2017.
- 1.9 The Senior Welsh Language Advisor manages Ofcom's Welsh language activities – including translation requirements, social media, print and online production – and ensures the organisation is compliant with Welsh language standards legislation.

Engaging with the Welsh language Commissioner

- 1.10 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.
- 1.11 We have attended briefing sessions arranged by the Commissioner, responded in a timely manner to all queries and arranged regular meetings with the Welsh Language Commissioner to update on recent developments in our work.

² https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0034/96919/Hysbysiad-Cydydffurfio44-Y-Swyddfa-Gyfathrebiadau-en.pdf

³ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2016/ofcom-supports-new-welsh-language-standards>

2. Our approach

2.1 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 citizens and consumers to engage with communications issues through the Welsh language.

2.2 We aim to innovate in our communications, and to encourage greater engagement from Welsh speakers. As part of this approach, our first Annual Report to the Welsh Language Commissioner is an interactive digital document which is available to view online in the Welsh language.⁴ This aims to present our Welsh language activities in a visual and engaging way.

2.3 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 are likely to be of particular relevance to – consumers, citizens and businesses in Wales, then we will provide a Welsh language service as standard practice.

Our progress over the past year

2.4 We have increased our provision of services in the Welsh language. We retain our commitment to promoting the Welsh language and enabling consumers to interact with Ofcom in their preferred language, be it Welsh or English. We have achieved this in a way that is proportionate and consistent with our existing duties.

2.5 By implementing new Welsh language Standards in 2017, we initiated a step change in the number of words we translate. A total of 450,000 words were translated by Ofcom into the Welsh language over the past year⁵. We are committed to complying with the Standards pertaining to translation.

2.6 Since implementing the Welsh Language Standards we have significantly increased production of our publications, news releases, web pages, videos and apps. Full details are provided in our interactive Annual Report to the Welsh language Commissioner.⁶

⁴ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/how-ofcom-is-run/nations-and-regions/wales/welsh-language-commitment>

⁵ From July 2017 to July 2018

⁶ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/how-ofcom-is-run/nations-and-regions/wales/welsh-language-commitment>

- 2.7 Our Welsh language Twitter account, @OfcomCymraeg⁷ was launched in December 2017. This account was created to share Ofcom's work in Welsh. It provides tailor-made information for the Welsh speaker. Welsh speakers are also fluent English speakers and appreciate bespoke messages in Welsh, rather than reading translations of the English messages on the @Ofcom account. As an example, we produced short videos in Welsh on digital dependency from the National Eisteddfod in Cardiff. These were shared on @ofcomcymraeg and were successful in promoting engagement.
- 2.8 Our approach to translating tweets is the same as when we produce a Welsh version of a document. The decision is based on the relevance and likely interest to the consumer in Wales. The @OfcomCymraeg account is proving valuable in promoting our activities in the Welsh language but it is still in its infancy and we have work to do to increase followers.
- 2.9 We have innovated by producing our first Welsh language data visualisation tool⁸. The Ofcom Mobile/Broadband Checker is also available in Welsh and is regularly updated alongside the English version.⁹
- 2.10 We have produced six new Welsh language videos on a variety of topics, from explaining 'net neutrality' to promoting our Welsh language helpline (0300 123 2023.) These videos are shared with our audience on @OfcomCymraeg, our web-pages and our YouTube Channel. Our videos can be viewed in full on our interactive Annual Report to the Welsh Language Commissioner.¹⁰ Healthy viewing figures for our Welsh videos demonstrate that our Welsh-speaking audience appreciates and engages with this method of communication.
- 2.11 We have significantly developed our Welsh language website,¹¹ through a year-long project, to ensure its features are equivalent to the English language site. This includes refining Welsh 'search', improving language switching across mobile versions, and making it easier to filter and find Welsh language news and consultations. A total of 280 webpages have also been updated and/or translated over the past year.¹² Further details are provided in our interactive Welsh Language Annual Report.
- 2.12 Welsh is seen and heard every day at Ofcom Wales. Our events are naturally bilingual to ensure that we meet stakeholders' expectations to communicate with us in Welsh. Our stakeholder events in Wales are fully bilingual. Presentations are displayed bilingually using two screens. Simultaneous Welsh to English translation is provided at each event. A video which was filmed at our 2018 Annual Plan event and included in our interactive Annual Report, demonstrates this clearly.

⁷ <https://twitter.com/OfcomCymraeg>

⁸ Data visualization is a general term that describes technology that helps people understand the significance of data by placing it in a visual context by use of interactive graphics, graphs etc: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/cymru/research-and-data/telecoms-research/mobile-smartphones/consumer-mobile-experience/interactive-data-2018>

⁹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/cymru/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/advice/ofcom-checker>

¹⁰ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/how-ofcom-is-run/nations-and-regions/wales/welsh-language-commitment>

¹¹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/cymru/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/website-update>

¹² From July 2017-July 2018.

- 2.13 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.¹³ This is modelled on a framework used across Ofcom to evaluate outcomes for consumers. It means we can now audit how Ofcom takes the interests of Welsh language speakers into account when we make regulatory decisions. Details are provided in our interactive Welsh language Annual Report.
- 2.14 Our major consultations¹⁴ include a Welsh language response form, to ensure Welsh speakers can provide feedback and comments in the language of their choice.

Complaints

- 2.15 We have not received any complaints about our Welsh language activities during the past year. Ofcom's Complaints Procedure explains how we intend to deal with complaints relating to our compliance with the service delivery standards with which we are under a duty to comply. The Complaints Procedure can be viewed on our website¹⁵ 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.

¹³ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/103023/welsh-language-standards-implementation-plan.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements>

¹⁵ <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.