Welsh language scheme

Prepared under the Welsh Language Act 1993
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Under the Welsh Language Act 1993 (the Act), every public body providing services to the public in Wales has to prepare a scheme setting out how it will provide those services in Welsh.

1.2 This is the Welsh Language Scheme of the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). It describes how we will give effect, so far as is appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, to the principle established by the Act that Welsh and English should be treated on a basis of equality.

1.3 All requirements of this scheme also govern the provision of services offered by Consumer Direct, or services provided under the Consumer Direct brand, unless otherwise stated.

1.4 This scheme covers the services that we provide to the public in Wales.

1.5 In this scheme, the term public means individuals, legal persons, voluntary organisations and charities. It includes the public as a whole, a section of the public, and individual members of the public. It does not include persons who are acting in a capacity which is representative of the Crown, Government or State. Consequently, persons who fulfil official functions of a public nature, even though they are legal persons, do not come within the meaning of the word public when they are fulfilling those official functions.

1.6 More information about the scope and purpose of Welsh language schemes can be found on the Welsh Language Board’s website: www.byig-wlb.org.uk

1.7 This scheme was prepared under Section 21 of the Act and in accordance with guidelines issued by the Welsh Language Board under Section 9 of the Act. It came into effect on 17/03/10.
2 ROLE OF THE OFT

2.1 The OFT is the UK’s consumer and competition authority. We are a non-ministerial government department established by statute in 1973. Our main office is in central London with a satellite office in Edinburgh.

2.2 Our mission is to make markets work well for consumers. We pursue this goal by:

- encouraging businesses to comply with consumer and competition law and to improve their trading practices through self-regulation
- acting decisively to stop hardcore or flagrant offenders
- studying markets and recommending action where required
- empowering consumers with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices and get the best value from markets, and helping them resolve problems with suppliers through Consumer Direct.

2.3 Consumer Direct is a government funded telephone and online service offering information and advice on consumer issues. It is funded by the Office of Fair Trading and delivered in partnership with local authority Trading Standards Services.

2.4 Consumer Direct has 12 call centres. Ten in England, one in Scotland and one in Wales. The call centre in Wales fulfils its service obligations in conjunction with Cardiff City Council’s Welsh Language Scheme, and it is therefore not governed by this scheme. More information about Consumer Direct is available from www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

2.5 More information about the OFT is available from www.oft.gov.uk

2.6 Contact details are also available from our website and at the end of this document.
3 SERVICE, PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Policies, initiatives and services

3.1 Our policies, initiatives and services will be consistent with this scheme.

Delivering services

3.2 We will ensure that as many as possible of our services relating to the public in Wales are available in Welsh – and we will let the public know when they are.

Our regulatory functions – and services undertaken on our behalf by third parties

3.3 Any agreements or arrangements relating to services to the public in Wales which we make with third parties will be consistent with this scheme. This will ensure that third parties provide those services in accordance with this scheme.

Standards of quality

3.4 Services provided in Welsh and English will be of equal quality and will be provided within the same timescale.
4 DEALING WITH THE WELSH SPEAKING PUBLIC

Correspondence

4.1 Our normal practice will be as follows:

- When someone writes to us in Welsh we will issue a reply in Welsh (if a reply is required). Our target time for replying will be the same as for replying to letters written in English.

- When we initiate correspondence with an individual, group or organisation, we will do so in Welsh when we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh.

- We will use the scoring system (to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board) to identify objectively which standard and circular correspondence will be published in Welsh, or bilingually.

- If Welsh and English versions of any correspondence are published separately, our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time.

- Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual, when available.

- Enclosures sent with Welsh letters will be Welsh or bilingual, when available.

- The above will apply to email correspondence as well as paper correspondence.

- All hardcopy Welsh correspondence that we issue will be signed.
Telephone communications

4.2 Because of our location it would not be practicable for us to conduct phone conversations in Welsh. However, when we set up phone helplines, or similar facilities, to give information, services or support to the public in Wales we will provide a Welsh language service. This will be advertised alongside the English language service. Both services will share the same phone number.

Public meetings in Wales

4.3 We will provide simultaneous or consecutive translation from Welsh into English at our public meetings held in Wales unless we have established that all participants are likely to use the same language.

4.4 Invitations and advertisements for public meetings in Wales will be bilingual and invite participants to let us know in advance in which language they wish to speak.

4.5 We will let those attending public meetings know when translation facilities are available.

4.6 Papers and other information for public meetings in Wales where translation facilities will be provided will be available in Welsh and English. We will ensure that reports and papers produced following public meetings in Wales at which translation facilities were provided are published in Welsh and English.

Other meetings in Wales

4.7 Because of our location it would not be practical for us to conduct face-to-face meetings in Welsh.
Other dealings with the public in Wales

4.8 When we undertake public surveys, we will ask respondents if they wish to respond to the survey in Welsh or English.

4.9 When we arrange seminars, training courses or similar events for the public in Wales, we will assess the need to provide them in Welsh. In making this assessment, we will consider the information we have about the preferred language of those the event is aimed at and the availability of Welsh speaking trainers.

4.10 We will ensure that announcements made on our behalf over public address systems in Wales are made in Welsh and English.
5 PUBLIC FACE

Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising

5.1 All publicity, public information, exhibition, promotional merchandise and advertising materials we use in Wales to target the general public will be produced bilingually or as separate Welsh and English versions. If the Welsh and English versions are published separately, both versions will be equal with regard to size, prominence and quality - and both versions will be available simultaneously and will be equally accessible.

5.2 Exceptions to the above will be:

- material used at events such as Wales' eisteddfods where Welsh only publicity, public information, exhibition and advertising material may be used

- material aimed at a limited and specialised audience. We will consider the need to translate this material in each case, bearing in mind the nature of the audience and the subject being dealt with, and in conjunction with the scoring system (to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board).

5.3 Advertisements placed in English language newspapers (or similar material) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual, or will appear as separate Welsh and English versions (with both versions appearing simultaneously, and being equal in size, prominence and quality).

5.4 Advertisements in Welsh language publications will be in Welsh only.

5.5 Television campaigns which appear on S4C during Welsh programming hours will be in Welsh. Radio campaigns broadcast during Welsh language programmes on commercial radio stations will be in Welsh.

5.6 Phone response lines and other ways of responding to campaigns in Wales will be bilingual or will include a separate Welsh response service.
Publications

5.7 Subject to the scoring system - referred to below - we will publish material made available to the public either bilingually (with the Welsh and English versions together in one document) or in separate English and Welsh versions.

5.8 If the Welsh and English versions are published separately both versions will be of equal size and quality, and our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will note clearly that the material is available in the other language.

5.9 We will use the scoring system (to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board), to identify objectively when material should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents.

5.10 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 a separate Welsh and English version will be the same.

5.11 The above will also apply to material made available electronically on our website, on CD Rom or otherwise.

Websites

5.12 Our websites will include pages in both Welsh and English.

5.13 When designing new websites, or redeveloping our existing websites, we will take into account the Welsh Language Board’s Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards and any other guidance issued by the Welsh Language Board with regard to developing websites.

5.14 Whenever we publish English language publications on our websites, the Welsh versions will be posted at the same time, if available.
Forms and associated explanatory material

5.15 We will ensure that all forms and associated explanatory material for use by the public in Wales will be available in English and Welsh, subject to the scoring system - referred to below. This will include interactive forms published on our websites.

5.16 If the Welsh and English versions are published separately, both versions will be of equal size and quality, and we will ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will note clearly that the material is available in the other language.

5.17 We will use the scoring system (to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board) to identify objectively when forms and associated explanatory material should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents.

5.18 When we enter information on Welsh versions of forms that are sent to the public, we will do so in Welsh.

5.19 When we enter information on bilingual forms that are sent to the public, we will do so bilingually unless we know that the recipients would prefer to receive the information in Welsh or English only.

5.20 When other organisations distribute forms on our behalf, we will ensure that they do so in accordance with the above.

Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices

5.21 Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices placed in English language newspapers (or similar media) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual, or appear as separate Welsh and English versions. Notices will be in Welsh in Welsh language publications.

5.22 The Welsh and English versions will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence – whether produced as a single bilingual version, or as separate Welsh and English notices.
5.23 Recruitment notices placed in English language publications with a UK-wide distribution may be in English, unless the post is one where the ability to speak Welsh is essential, in which case the notice may be fully bilingual, or in Welsh with a brief explanation in English.

Press releases and contact with the media

5.24 Press releases to the Welsh language press and broadcasting media in Wales will be issued in Welsh where deadlines permit.
6 IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME

Staffing

6.1 We have no offices in Wales to operate under this scheme. Even so, we will seek information about the Welsh language skills of job applicants and existing staff.

Recruitment

6.2 For any posts having extensive and regular contact with the public in Wales we will consider whether fluency in Welsh should be a desirable or essential skill – and this will be stated in job competencies and advertisements.

Language training

6.3 We will support and fund Welsh language and Welsh vocational training where these skills are relevant for the post holder, in line with our current learning and development policy.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

6.4 We will take into account the need to provide information and services in Welsh, and operate in accordance with this scheme, as we develop, design and buy ICT products and services.

6.5 As we develop or buy ICT systems we will take into account the Welsh Language Board’s Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards.

Partnership working

6.6 When we are the strategic and financial leader within a formal partnership, we will ensure that any public service aspects comply with this scheme.
6.7 When we join a formal partnership led by another organisation, our input to the partnership will comply with this scheme and encourage the other partners to comply.

6.8 When we are a partner in a consortium, we will encourage the consortium to comply with this scheme.

6.9 The above refers only to formal partnerships dealing with services available to the public in Wales.

**Internal arrangements**

6.10 The measures in this scheme carry the full authority, support and approval of the OFT.

6.11 Managers will have the responsibility of implementing those aspects of the scheme relevant to their work.

6.12 We will task a senior member of staff with coordinating the work required to deliver, monitor and review this scheme.

6.13 Our main target dates for scheme delivery can be found at Annexe A. Our aim is to ensure that we deliver the commitments set out in this scheme as soon as practical.

6.14 The scheme will be publicised to our staff, and to the public in Wales. It will be published on our website in an appropriate place.

6.15 We will produce guidance for our staff to ensure that they know how to implement the measures contained in this scheme.

6.16 We will amend existing staff guidance that is affected by this scheme to reflect the measures contained in this scheme.

6.17 We will ensure that we use only competent translators or interpreters to help with the delivery of this scheme.
6.18 Any form of contact with the public in Wales, which is not specifically dealt with by this scheme, will be undertaken in a manner which is consistent with the general principles of this scheme.

**Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations**

6.19 When we release information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, we will translate them into the applicant’s preferred language provided that the number of words to be translated is less than 500.

**Monitoring**

6.20 We will monitor our progress in delivering this scheme against the targets set out at Annexe A.

6.21 Our existing monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this scheme, as appropriate.

6.22 We will report to the Welsh Language Board on our progress in delivering this scheme, when requested by them.

6.23 Our target is to ensure that we act in accordance with this scheme within four years of its coming into effect. We will use a self assessment procedure, to be agreed with Welsh Language Board, in order to monitor progress against this target.
7 REVIEWING AND AMENDING THE SCHEME

7.1 We will review this scheme within four years of its coming into effect.

7.2 From time to time, we may need to review this scheme, or propose amendments to this scheme, because of changes to our functions, or to the circumstances in which we undertake those functions, or for any other reason.

7.3 We will not make changes to this scheme without the Welsh Language Board’s approval.

Complaints and suggestions for improvement

7.4 Complaints related to this scheme, or suggestions for improvement, should be directed to:

Angharad Davies
Office of Fair Trading
Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury Square
London EC4Y 8JX

Email: angharad.davies@oft.gsi.gov.uk

7.5 We will cooperate with the Welsh Language Board to resolve complaints, and during any investigations held under Section 17 of the Welsh Language Act.
## A MAIN TARGETS DATES FOR SCHEME DELIVERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Completion date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dealing with the Welsh speaking public</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correspondence</strong> <em>(see page 7 of this scheme)</em></td>
<td>When this scheme is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public meeting in Wales</strong> <em>(see page 8 of this scheme)</em></td>
<td>When this scheme is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other dealings with the public in Wales</strong> <em>(see page 9 of this scheme)</em></td>
<td>When this scheme is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public face</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising</strong> <em>(see page 10 of this scheme)</em></td>
<td>When this scheme is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publications</strong> <em>(see page 11 of this scheme)</em></td>
<td>When this scheme is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Websites</strong> <em>(see pages 11 and 12 of this scheme)</em></td>
<td>Within 12 months of this scheme being published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forms and associated explanatory material</strong> <em>(see page 12 of this scheme)</em></td>
<td>When this scheme is published.</td>
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</table>
Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices (see pages 12 and 13 of this scheme) When this scheme is published.

Press releases and contact with the media (see page 13 of this scheme) When this scheme is published.

Implementing the scheme

Staffing and recruitment (see page 14 of this scheme) When this scheme is published.

Language training (see page 14 of this scheme) When this scheme is published.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) see page 14 of this scheme) When this scheme is published.

Partnership working (see page 14 of this scheme) When this scheme is published.

Internal arrangements (see pages 15 and 16 of this scheme) When this scheme is published.

Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Regulations (see page 16 of this scheme) When this scheme is published.

Monitoring When this scheme is published.