

Welsh Language Scheme

Prepared under The Welsh Language Act 1993

FEBRUARY
2010



Dŵr Cymru
Welsh Water

Contents

1 Introduction	2
2 Service Planning and Delivery	2
2.1 New Policies & Initiatives	2
2.2 Delivery of Services	3
2.3 The Standard of Service in Welsh	4
3 Dealing with the Welsh-Speaking Public	4
3.1 Communications in Writing	4
3.2 Telephone Communications	4
3.3 Face to Face Communications	5
3.4 Public Meetings	5
4 Corporate Image	5
4.10 Publishing and Printing Public Materials.	6
4.11 Web-site	7
5 Operating the Scheme	7
5.1 Staffing	7
5.2 Recruitment	7
5.3 Learning Welsh	8
5.4 Information and Communications Technology	8
5.5 Partnership working	8
5.6 Services Delivered on Behalf of Welsh Water by its Main Contractors	8
5.7 Translation facilities	9
6 Implementing and Monitoring	9
6.1 This scheme has the full approval of Welsh Water's Executive Board	9
6.2 Reviewing and amending the scheme	10
7 Publicising the Scheme	10
Main targets for scheme delivery	11

This scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board under Section 14 of the Act. It came into effect on 26/01/10, and replaces the scheme that was approved by the Board on 14/10/05.



Statement

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water published a voluntary Welsh Language scheme in 1997. Following an order by the Welsh Assembly Government, which specified companies providing water and sewerage services for customers in Wales as public bodies for the purposes of the Welsh Language Act 1993, Welsh Water has prepared a statutory Language Scheme.

Welsh Water has adopted the principle that in the conduct of its public business and the administration of justice in Wales, it will treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality. This scheme sets out how Welsh Water will give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales.

1 Introduction

Welsh Water is owned by Glas Cymru, a single purpose company with no shareholders. Under Glas Cymru's ownership, Welsh Water's only concern is providing high quality water and sewerage services at least cost to the communities served by Welsh Water.

Welsh Water is the provider of water and sewerage services to 1.3 million household and business premises in the greater part of Wales and in neighbouring areas in England, serving in total some 3 million customers over an area of some 21,300 square kilometres.

Welsh Water's head office is at Nelson and there are other offices and operational sites throughout Wales.

Welsh Water aims to deliver an equally high standard of service to its customers through the medium of both languages, and will aim to ensure that facilities

are available at customer contact locations so as to ensure completeness and consistency in the standard of service provided to Welsh speaking customers.

Welsh Water will implement this policy by adopting the following principles so that customers in Wales can conduct their business with us in the language of their choice:

- it is recognised that members of the public can express their needs and views better in their preferred language of communication;
- we acknowledge that welcoming the public to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice and customer care;
- it is accepted that in the spirit of equality expressed in the Welsh Language Act, our customers have the right to choose whether they wish to communicate with us in English or Welsh.

2 Service Planning and Delivery

2.1 New Policies & Initiatives

2.1.1 When Welsh Water plans and formulates new policies or initiatives, it will assess the linguistic consequences to make sure that they meet the commitments given in this scheme. Welsh Water will use new policies and initiatives to facilitate the use of Welsh wherever possible and to move the organisation closer to implementing the principle of equality at every opportunity.

Welsh Water will ensure that the measures contained in this scheme are applied to new policies and initiatives when they are implemented.

2.1.2 Welsh Water will consult with the Welsh Language Board before any new proposed policies or initiatives which could affect Welsh Water's Welsh language scheme, are made.

2.1.3 Staff involved in formulating and implementing new policies and initiatives will be made aware of the requirements of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh language scheme. Guidelines will be issued to staff concerning the likely impacts of new proposals on the scheme and the steps required to ensure that these measures are complied with.

2.1.4 The Directors of Welsh Water, are fully aware of the requirements of this scheme and will ensure that these requirements are reflected in the provision of customer services by Welsh Water, and its main contractors, and they will ensure that all employees of Welsh Water are made aware of the requirements of this scheme.

2.1.5 This scheme will be monitored by Welsh Water's Welsh Language Panel under the chairmanship of a Senior Manager. The Panel will report to the Welsh Water's Executive Board.

2.2 Delivery of Services

2.2.1 Service delivery to customers varies, with some services provided direct to the customer and others provided from main office centres, depots and other workplaces.

2.2.2 It is Welsh Water's aim to provide a consistent and reliable service for Welsh speakers across each department and service area. Workplaces and service providers in areas with significant numbers of Welsh speaking customers will be staffed to such a level as will be consistent with satisfying the demand and aspirations of customers wishing to communicate in the Welsh language. In those areas where the requirement for a service in Welsh is likely to be infrequent, the Company will arrange, generally by telephone, for customers to have access to a service in Welsh when required.

2.2.3 Whilst it will not be practicable to provide for some specialist and technical services to be fully available in Welsh, Welsh Water's

intention is to provide a comprehensive service. Employees who do not speak Welsh will be provided with information on the services that are available and as to how they may be accessed. All employees will be made aware of the scheme, the commitments contained within it and the systems, procedures and services in place to meet those commitments. Employees will be made aware of the scheme through all normal communication media including team briefings and staff newspapers.

2.2.4 Welsh Water has outsourced a large part of its operation, including the day to day operation of water and sewerage assets and the management of customer billing activities. Welsh Water will expect any of its main contractors carrying out customer services on its behalf to comply with the scheme.

2.3 The Standard of Service in Welsh

2.3.1 Welsh Water welcomes dealings in Welsh or English and aims to provide an equally effective standard of service in both languages.

The principle of delivering an equally high service in both languages will be stated in key documents such as annual reports, customer reports, business plans and policy documents.

2.3.2 Welsh Water's aim is to provide a high standard of service and customer care in every aspect of its work in accordance with the commitments contained in this scheme. Standards of service are subject to regular review and the Guaranteed Standards of Service Scheme will apply equally to the provision of services in Welsh as well as English.

3 Dealing with the Welsh-Speaking Public

3.1 Communications in Writing

3.1.1 Customers are welcome to correspond with Welsh Water in Welsh and those

who write in Welsh will receive a reply in Welsh on bilingual headed note paper and in accordance with Welsh Water's Guaranteed Standards of Services.

3.1.2 Any correspondence sent to a customer in consequence of a conversation held in Welsh, whether face to face or over the telephone, will be forwarded in the Welsh language.

3.1.3 Where it is known that a customer prefers to receive correspondence in Welsh we will wherever practical, ensure that we communicate with that person in Welsh.

3.1.4 A database of customers preferring to receive communications in Welsh will be maintained on Welsh Water's Billing System.

3.1.5 To facilitate corresponding with customers in Welsh, Welsh Water's Communications Department will maintain and make available to employees an approved list of translators.

3.2 Telephone Communications

3.2.1 Customers wishing to conduct a telephone conversation in Welsh are welcome to do so. Welsh Water operates a freephone Welsh language line for billing and account enquiries, the number for which is printed on the front of our bills alongside the general accounts number, and in our Guaranteed Standards of Service booklet issued with annual bills.

3.2.2 For operational water and sewerage enquiries there are two separate 24hr freephone numbers. If customers ring either of these numbers they can request to be put through to a Welsh speaker, and whilst we aim to ensure there is always a Welsh speaker available, outside normal business hours there is no guarantee that a Welsh speaker will be available.

3.2.3 If a customer wishes to discuss a matter which requires specialist knowledge and no Welsh speaker with such knowledge is available

the customer's message will be relayed to a relevant person so that a written translated response in Welsh can be provided within the timescale for generally dealing with such requests.

3.2.4 On the rare occasion where a customer is unable to be dealt with immediately by a Welsh speaker and alternative means of satisfying the enquiry are employed, the customer should be left feeling that every effort had been made to satisfy the initial request.

3.2.5 Staff will be provided with guidance on handling telephone calls from Welsh speakers including details of employees able to deal with calls in Welsh.

3.2.6 Answer-phone messages for customers will be bilingual, except in exceptional circumstances where a temporary line has been set up for a specific reason and the message becomes too lengthy. The Welsh Language Board will be informed under any such circumstances.

3.3 Face to Face Communications

3.3.1 Customers visiting those offices of Welsh Water in Wales which are open to the public are welcome to discuss their business in Welsh if they wish to do so. Welsh Water will make every effort to ensure the presence of Welsh speaking employees to deal with Welsh language enquiries at such offices. If the enquiry relates to a matter which cannot be dealt with by the receiving employee every effort will be made to find an appropriate employee either in person or by telephone link. If this cannot be done the customer will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter in English or else the customer's enquiry will be noted and passed to an appropriate employee so that a written translated response in Welsh can be sent to the customer.

3.3.2 On the rare occasion where an appointment is made to visit a customer at home or at some other location away from an establishment of the Company and the customer wishes the visit to be

conducted in Welsh, a Welsh speaking employee will be used wherever practicable. Where this service is not available, contact with a Welsh speaking member of staff will be arranged by telephone.

3.4 Public Meetings

3.4.1 On the rare occasion when localised public meetings are held, bilingual notices are issued and the organisers of the meeting will assess the need for a bilingual service based on the linguistic needs of the local community.

4 Corporate Image (The Company's Public Face)

4.1 Welsh Water and its main contractors will adopt a full bilingual corporate identity and operate under the name Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, and ensure that all letterheads, logos and slogans are bilingual.

4.2 All general and public notices, press releases and situations vacant advertised in the press, on radio or television, or notice boards will be bilingual.

4.3 Display and information material used by Welsh Water at exhibitions and promotional events open to the public will be bilingual.

4.4 At displays and exhibitions Welsh Water will endeavour to ensure the presence of a Welsh speaking employee.

4.5 Signs outside all installations of Welsh Water in Wales, and on all vehicles used by Welsh Water and its main contractors, will be bilingual. Where for reasons of safety or space or easier reading it is necessary to have separate signs in Welsh and English, the signs will be equal in format, size, legibility and prominence. Where a sign refers to a place name or address and it is usual for that place name or address to be referred to in the Welsh language only then any sign will be in that language alone.

4.6 All internal signs imparting information to customers, will be bilingual.

All other internal signs will be bilingual where appropriate and practical.

Where for reasons of safety or space or easier reading it is necessary to have separate signs in Welsh and English the signs will be equal in format, size, legibility and prominence.

4.7 All road traffic signs used by Welsh Water, or by contractors undertaking work on its behalf, in Wales will be bilingual and in accordance with the policy of local highway authorities.

4.8 Emergency announcements or warnings to customers and the public at large in Wales will be bilingual in areas where there is a linguistic need and at the discretion of the manager.

4.10 Publishing and Printing Public Materials.

4.10.1 When Welsh Water prints and publishes material for the public, its standard practice will be to do so bilingually.

4.10.2 Documents which will be published bilingually include those which are issued or made available to the public generally, and

- provide information on Welsh Water's services;
- explain and give guidance on Welsh Water's policies, initiatives, developments and new services;
- seek the views of the public through consultation.

4.10.3 Materials to be issued bilingually will include pamphlets, booklets, circulars, letterheads, compliment slips, standard letters, appointment cards, interruption of supply and other notices, and billing literature, corporate publications and published literature in general distributed to customers in Wales by Welsh Water or on behalf of Welsh Water.

The base stationery for bills is bilingual, and customers have the choice of receiving the personalisation text, ie the charges information in either Welsh or English.

4.10.4 The base stationery for miscellaneous services bills other than water and sewerage services, is bilingual however the information relating to the service is in English.

4.10.5 All business cards, identity cards, authority to enter premises or upon land and any other document which may be presented by an employee to a customer will incorporate both the Welsh and English languages.

4.10.6 Where it is not possible or appropriate to produce bilingual printed materials, separate Welsh and English versions will be produced. In such cases both versions will be of the same standard, published simultaneously, distributed together and be equally accessible and will carry a message stating that a Welsh/English version is also available.

4.10.7 Welsh Water reserves the right to produce material in a single language only version in respect of items produced for a specialist audience or items of a complex scientific or technical nature.

4.11 Web-site

4.11.1 Welsh Water's web-site is fully bilingual, anyone accessing the Welsh Water web-site is given the option

of entering the English language or Welsh language service.

4.11.2 Anyone wishing to communicate with us is Welsh via the web-site will receive a response in Welsh.

5 Operating the Scheme

5.1 Staffing

5.1.1 Welsh Water recognises the need to employ sufficient Welsh speaking employees of appropriate skills so as to be able to operate this scheme, and particularly in respect of employees having regular contact with customers and employees at establishments open to the public.

5.1.2 Welsh Water will identify those locations, roles and posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential or desirable, and ensure that appointments are made accordingly.

5.1.3 So as to facilitate the operation of this scheme the Human Resources Departments of Welsh Water and its main contractors will maintain a list of all employees able to speak Welsh, and ensure that job

advertisements and job descriptions in the media reflect the requirements of this scheme as appropriate.

5.2 Recruitment

5.2.1 Where no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for a post where Welsh is desirable, the person appointed will be encouraged to learn Welsh.

5.2.2 A candidate unable to speak Welsh may be appointed to a post for which Welsh is considered essential, but where time can be allowed to learn the language. In these cases, learning the language to the required level of competence, within a reasonable agreed period, will be a specific performance criterion.

5.2.3 When no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for a post where Welsh is essential (or whilst a candidate unable to speak Welsh has been appointed and is learning the language) we will make temporary arrangements under which the Welsh language service can be provided (by using, for example, Welsh speaking staff from elsewhere in our

organisation to deliver parts of the service).

5.3 Learning Welsh

Welsh Water will encourage and support members of staff who wish to learn Welsh or improve their Welsh and will encourage Welsh speaking employees to use the language on all practicable occasions.

5.3.1 Welsh Water will undertake a training needs assessment of employees so as to identify staff who will benefit from training programmes established by Welsh Water designed to:

- assist Welsh speaking employees who need to further develop their language skills in carrying out their duties
- provide Welsh speaking employees with such administrative, technical or operational skills as they may require to provide customers with a Welsh language service
- issue specific information on aspects of services provided
- develop Welsh language ability amongst non-Welsh speakers.

5.3.2 Welsh Water will introduce measures to monitor the progress of those either developing or/ and learning Welsh language skills and the Human Resources Departments of Welsh Water and its main contractors will maintain a register of Welsh speakers and learners.

5.4 Information and Communications Technology

5.4.1 The need to provide information and services in Welsh, and operate in accordance with this scheme, will be catered for as we develop, design and purchase information and communications technology products and services.

5.4.2 We will modify our existing information and communications technology systems where appropriate to ensure that they enable us to provide information and services in Welsh - and operate in accordance with this scheme.

5.4.3 As we develop or procure ICT systems we will take into account the Board's Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards.

5.5 Partnership working

5.5.1 When we are the strategic and financial leader within a formal partnership, we will ensure that any aspects of the service provided for the public comply with this scheme

5.5.2 When we join a formal partnership which another organisation is leading, our input to the partnership will comply with this scheme and we will encourage the other partners to comply.

5.5.3 When we are a partner in a consortium, we will encourage the consortium to comply with this scheme. When acting in the name of the consortium, we will operate in accordance with this scheme

5.6 Services Delivered on Behalf of Welsh Water by its Main Contractors.

5.6.1 Welsh Water will ensure through its contracting arrangements that the

agencies or contractors implement all relevant elements of the scheme when dealing with customers or the public at large.

5.6.2 Provision will be made to monitor compliance with the relevant parts of this scheme by Welsh Water and its main contractors within the standard monitoring arrangements, including obtaining regular performance reports from main contractors and agents through contractors representatives on the Welsh Language Panel.

5.7 Translation facilities

5.7.1 The Communications Department of the Company will maintain:

- a list of official spokespersons who are able to represent the Company in the Welsh language
- a list of official translators providing services which are available to employees in dealing with responses to customers and in the preparation of published materials
- an index of suppliers of simultaneous translation

equipment for use at public meetings

- a computer based directory of official, technical and other words and phrases and standard paragraphs in plain Welsh accessible to employees dealing with customers in the Welsh language.

6 Implementing and Monitoring

6.1 This scheme has the full approval of Welsh Water's Executive Board

6.1.1 The Directors of Welsh Water are fully aware of the requirements of this scheme and will ensure that these requirements are reflected in the provision of customer services by Welsh Water and its main contractors on behalf of the Company.

6.1.2 This scheme will be monitored by a Welsh Language Panel under the Chairmanship of a Senior Manager of Welsh Water and will represent all areas of the business. The Panel has overall responsibility for co-ordinating all activities of the scheme but all managers have responsibility for implementing those aspects

of the scheme relevant to their area of the business.

6.1.3 The Directors, through the Welsh Language Panel, will ensure that all employees are made aware of the requirements of this scheme, and in particular that all Senior Managers adhere to the requirements of the scheme in respect of their areas of operational responsibility. Written instructions, guidance and other communications will be issued to employees of the requirements of the scheme.

6.1.4 Welsh Water ensures that all customer correspondence, enquiries and responses are logged for Levels of Service standards monitoring. All correspondence, in English or Welsh, is subject to the same standard of service.

6.1.5 The Welsh Language Panel will operate a continuous review of material published by Welsh Water and its main contractors, including signs, literature, notices, advertisements, press releases, display items at exhibitions, the arrangements for training

in the Welsh language, the appointment of and the maintenance of lists of Welsh speaking employees and facilities in general for dealing with Welsh speaking customers.

6.1.6 The Panel will monitor the introduction, replacement or development of computer systems to ensure that the requirements of the scheme are included in new systems.

6.1.7 If requested by the Welsh Language Board, the Panel will prepare a report which Welsh Water will submit to the Board.

6.1.8 We will prepare and continuously update a detailed action plan setting out how we will ensure that we will operate in accordance with the scheme.

6.2 Reviewing and amending the scheme

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

6.2.2 Also, 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.

6.2.3 No changes will be made to this scheme without the Welsh Language Board's approval.

7 Publicising the Scheme

7.1 Welsh Water will refer to this Scheme in its published Annual Report, business plan, billing stationery and general customer information literature and will stress to customers that Welsh Water's customers are welcome at all times to use the Welsh language in dealing with the Company and its employees.

7.2 Welsh Water will post notices in prominent positions in the reception areas of all its establishments open to customers, drawing the attention of customers to Welsh Water's Scheme and such notices will include a summary of Welsh language services available to

customers, and copies of the scheme will be available to customers upon request.

7.3 Welsh Water will post notices at all exhibitions and displays, or else include with such exhibitions and displays, reference to this scheme and include a summary of Welsh language services available to customers.

7.4 Welsh Water welcomes suggestions for improvements in its scheme from customers and employees, and any comments concerning this Scheme or its operation should be addressed to **Welsh Language Panel, c/o Helen Smith, Welsh Water, Nelson, Treharris, Mid Glamorgan CF46 6LY.**

Main targets for scheme delivery

Target	Date of completion
New Policies and Initiatives The Company will ensure that the measures contained in this scheme are applied to new policies and initiatives when they are implemented. This will be highlighted when the updated scheme is publicised following WLB approval.	April 2010
Delivery of Service Staff involved in formulating and implementing new policies and initiatives will be made aware of the requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme. The Welsh Language Panel to identify areas of service delivery within the Welsh Water business and ensure that managers are made aware of the requirements of the scheme.	September 2010
Telephone communications Customers wishing to conduct a conversation in Welsh are welcome to do so. A new telephony system will be installed at our new Billing and Income centre in Cardiff. The Welsh Language Panel should ensure that the Welsh language service will continue to a high standard.	January 2011
Face to Face Meetings Customers visiting those offices of the Company in Wales which are open to the public are welcome to discuss their business in Welsh. A review of how this is managed will be undertaken.	January 2011

Target

Date of completion

Signs

September 2011

All internal signs imparting information to customers, will be bilingual.

All other internal signs will be bilingual where appropriate and practical.

With the move to new offices in Cardiff, the Welsh Language Panel should ensure we meet this measure. In addition, the Panel should establish whether this measure is being met in other buildings, and if not make recommendations for management.

Web site

April 2010

Welsh Water's web site is fully bilingual, anyone accessing the Welsh Water web-site is given the option of entering the English language or Welsh language service.

The Communications Team will be setting up a system to monitor the sites to ensure that they are kept up to date.

Staffing

April 2011

Welsh Water will identify those locations, roles and posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential or desirable, and ensure that appointments are made accordingly.

The Welsh Language Panel will liaise with HR representatives from throughout the business to ensure this work is completed.

Target

Date of completion

Recruitment

September 2011

Where no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for a post where Welsh is desirable, the person appointed will be encouraged to learn Welsh.

This will form part of the delivery in terms of identifying roles and posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential or desirable.

ITC

April 2011

The need to provide information and services in Welsh, and operate in accordance with the scheme, will be catered for as we develop, design and purchase information and communications technology products and services. Audit to be undertaken to ensure that all IT services comply.

Partnership Working

April 2010

When we are the strategic and financial leader within a formal partnership, we will ensure that any aspects of the service provided for the public comply with this scheme. The Welsh Language Panel to ensure that contracting partners are aware that this item has been included in the scheme.

Implementing and Monitoring

April 2010

The Welsh Language Panel will operate a continuous review of material published by Welsh Water and its main contractors, including signs, literature, notices, advertisements, press releases, display items at exhibitions, the arrangements for training in the Welsh language, the appointment of and the maintenance of lists of Welsh speaking employees and facilities in general for dealing with Welsh speaking customers.

Target

Date of completion

Publicising the Scheme

April 2010

The Welsh Language Panel will carry out a review of how and where we publicise the Scheme currently. The Panel will also ensure that following WLB approval the updated scheme will be well publicised throughout the Welsh Water business.
