

**Welsh Language Scheme  
2006**



# Contents

Section		Page
1	Introduction	1
2	Background	2
3	Service planning and delivery	3
4	Dealing with the Welsh speaking public	4
5	Ofcom's public face	7
6	Implementing the scheme	11

## Section 1

# Introduction

- 1.1 This scheme describes how Ofcom will give effect, so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, to the principle established by the Welsh Language Act 1993 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 The scheme covers the services that Ofcom provides to the public in Wales.
- 1.3 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. The term includes voluntary organisations and charities. Directors and others representing limited companies are also within the meaning of the term 'public'. It does not, 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 meaning of the word public when they are fulfilling those official functions.
- 1.4 Further information about the scope and purpose of Welsh language schemes can be found in the Welsh Language Board's guidelines:  
[www.welsh-language-board.org.uk](http://www.welsh-language-board.org.uk).
- 1.5 This draft scheme was prepared in accordance with Sections 12 to 14 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 30 March, 2006

## Section 2

# Background

- 2.1 Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services. Established under the Communications Act 2003 it aims to further the interest of citizens in relation to communications matters and to further the interests of consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition.
- 2.2 Ofcom has a statutory duty to take into account the views and interests of those who live in different parts of the UK, and to ensure the needs and special circumstances of diverse areas receive full consideration throughout Ofcom's operations.
- 2.3 In addition to its headquarters in London, Ofcom has a presence throughout the UK with regional offices across England and national offices in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This structure gives the organisation the flexibility to tackle issues which affect one part or all of the UK equally.
- 2.4 This structure also enables Ofcom to target and develop unique relationships with Welsh stakeholders across all sectors through meetings and communications. These include Welsh divisions of organisations such as BBC Wales, ITV Wales and BT as well as indigenous bodies such as S4C, TAC and the Welsh Consumer Council. A good working relationship has been established and regular discussions are held with the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government and elected members across levels of government. This framework also allows us to consult widely with citizens in Wales through public events and seminars.
- 2.5 Ofcom's Wales office has ten members of staff and its Director Wales is a member of Ofcom's senior management group.
- 2.6 Ofcom has Welsh representatives on its Consumer Panel and Content Board. Furthermore, Ofcom has an Advisory Committee for Wales with nine members, established to provide advice to Ofcom about the interests and opinions of people living in Wales on all communications matters as well as the opportunity to shape regulatory policies.
- 2.7 Ofcom has a dedicated Welsh language line for customer complaints at its Contact Centre. The Welsh language service can be contacted on 020 7981 3042.
- 2.8 Further information about Ofcom can be obtained on Ofcom's website [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk). Full contact details for Ofcom appear at the end of this scheme.

## Section 3

# Service planning and delivery

### Policies, legislation and initiatives

- 3.1 Our policies, initiatives and services will be consistent with this scheme. They will support the use of Welsh and will, whenever possible, help the public in Wales use Welsh as part of their day to day lives.
- 3.2 When we contribute to the development or delivery of policies, initiatives, services or new legislation led by other organisations, we will do so in a way which is consistent with this scheme.
- 3.3 The introduction of new policies, initiatives and services can provide opportunities to promote the Welsh language. We will take advantage of these opportunities.

### Delivering services

- 3.4 Our standard practice will be to ensure that our services are available to the public in Welsh.
- 3.5 We will let the public know when services are available in Welsh.

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

- 3.6 Any agreements or arrangements which we make with third parties will be consistent with the relevant parts of this scheme, when those agreements or arrangements relate to the provision of services to the public in Wales.

### Standards of quality

- 3.7 Services provided in Welsh and English will be of equal quality and will be provided within the same timescale, where reasonably practicable

## Section 4

# Dealing with the Welsh speaking public

## Correspondence

- 4.1 We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English.
- 4.2 Our standard practice will be as follows:
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 When we initiate correspondence with an individual, group or organisation in Wales, we will do so bilingually unless we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh or English only.
- 4.5 When we send standard or circular correspondence to several recipients in Wales, it will be bilingual unless we know that all recipients would prefer to receive it in Welsh or English only.
- 4.6 If the Welsh and English versions of any correspondence have to be published separately, our standard practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time.
- 4.7 Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual, when available.
- 4.8 Enclosures sent with Welsh letters will be Welsh or bilingual, when available.
- 4.9 The above will apply to e-mail correspondence as well as paper correspondence.
- 4.10 All hard-copy Welsh correspondence that we issue will be signed by or on behalf of the author.
- 4.11 We will develop a system to record the language preference of those who wish to correspond with us in Welsh.
- 4.12 We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, to identify objectively any standard or circular correspondence which need not be published in Welsh, or bilingually (for instance, when the correspondence is very technical or lengthy).

## Decision letters

- 4.13 If a decision letter is intended to convey policy to a much wider audience than those directly involved with the inquiry, or other statutory procedure, we will consider whether it should be treated, under this scheme, as a publication.

## Telephone communications

- 4.14 We welcome telephone communications in Welsh and English.

- 4.15 In Wales, our standard practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or English when dealing with us by telephone.
- 4.16 Our switchboard staff in Wales will answer with a bilingual greeting.
- 4.17 Our main switchboard in Wales will use a bilingual message on its answer machine.
- 4.18 We will encourage all our staff in Wales to answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting and use bilingual messages on their personal answer machine.
- 4.19 If a caller to Ofcom wishes to speak Welsh, we will try to connect the call to a Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry.
- 4.20 If a caller rings one of our direct lines and wishes to speak Welsh, but the person taking the call cannot do so, they will try to transfer the call to a Welsh speaking colleague qualified to deal with the enquiry.
- 4.21 If no Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry is available, the caller will be given the choice, as appropriate, of having a Welsh speaker phone back as soon as possible, continuing the call in English or submitting their query in Welsh, by letter, fax or e-mail.
- 4.22 When we set up telephone help-lines, 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.
- 4.23 It would not be practicable for our offices outside Wales to conduct telephone conversations in Welsh; however we have established a dedicated Welsh language number for our Contact Centre to deal with enquiries from the public in Welsh.

### **Public meetings**

- 4.24 We will provide simultaneous translation facilities from Welsh into English at our public meetings unless we have established that all participants are likely to use the same language.
- 4.25 Invitations and advertisements for public meetings will be bilingual and either note that simultaneous translation facilities will be available or invite the public to let us know in advance in which language they wish to speak.
- 4.26 We will let those attending public meetings know when simultaneous translation facilities are available – and encourage contributions in Welsh.
- 4.27 Our standard practice will be to provide general papers and other associated information such as speakers details and agenda in Welsh and English for public meetings held in Wales
- 4.28 When selecting staff to attend public meetings in Wales, our standard practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary. Welsh speakers will wear the Welsh Language Board’s Working Welsh badges to indicate that they are able to speak Welsh and English.

### **Other meetings with the public in Wales**

- 4.29 When we arrange or attend face to face meetings with the public in Wales, we will establish their language preference at the earliest opportunity and, whenever possible, ensure that a suitably qualified Welsh speaking member of staff deals with those whose preferred language is Welsh.
- 4.30 If no suitably qualified Welsh speaker is available, we will offer the choice of continuing the meeting in English, or dealing with the subject by corresponding in Welsh.
- 4.31 The above will also apply to meetings held using video conferencing and similar equipment.
- 4.32 Because of the location of our other offices it would not be practicable for them to conduct face to face meetings with the public through the medium of Welsh.

### **Other dealings with the public in Wales**

- 4.33 When we undertake public surveys in Wales our standard practice will be to ensure that all aspects of communication with the public will be bilingual.
- 4.34 Whenever practicable, respondents will be asked if they wish to respond to the survey in Welsh or English.
- 4.35 When we arrange seminars or similar events for the public, we will assess the need to provide them in Welsh.
- 4.36 Our standard practice will be to ensure that announcements made over public address systems are made in Welsh and English.
- 4.37 Any audio-visual displays, audio tours or interactive media that we prepare will be bilingual in Wales.

## Section 5

# Ofcom's public face

## Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising

- 5.1 All of the publicity, public information, exhibition and advertising material we use in Wales will be produced bilingually, or as separate Welsh and English versions. If the Welsh and English versions have to be 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 Any 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 with regard to size, prominence and quality).
- 5.3 In Welsh language publications advertisements will be in Welsh only.
- 5.4 Ofcom does not routinely advertise on television or radio, but where any such advertisements are broadcast within Welsh language programming, these will be broadcast in Welsh
- 5.5 Telephone response lines and other ways of responding to campaigns in Wales will be bilingual or will include a separate Welsh response service.
- 5.6 When staffing exhibitions stands and displays in Wales, our standard practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary. Welsh speakers will wear the Welsh Language Board's Working Welsh badges to indicate that they are able to speak Welsh and English.

## Publications

- 5.7 Ofcom issues many major publications every year, of which some 60,000 hard copies are distributed to stakeholders, including members of the public. These documents range from technical documents to material that is specifically targeted at a UK or global audience.
- 5.8 Ofcom recognizes that material aimed at the general public in Wales must be provided in Welsh and English if it relates specifically to Wales or services of a particular importance or relevance to consumers and businesses in Wales.
- 5.9 Ofcom publishes consultation documents and other publications on issues that have consequences for, or directly relate to consumers. Where Ofcom publishes a Plain English version of a publication we will, wherever reasonable and practicable, publish a Welsh version simultaneously.
- 5.10 Wherever reasonable or practicable we will publish material made available to the public bilingually, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document and therefore published simultaneously.

- 5.11 Material aimed at a specific or limited audience is more likely to be available in one language. We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, to identify objectively which material should be prioritised to be translated.
- 5.12 If publications are in the bilingual category or the bilingual but dependent on translating services, Ofcom colleagues will need to allow sufficient time for translation in their production schedules. A publication designed to be bilingual will not be considered complete and will not be published until both versions are ready.
- 5.13 If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately (for instance, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), both versions will be of equal size and quality - and wherever reasonable or practicable we will ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. When published separately English and Welsh versions will state clearly that the material is available in the other language.
- 5.14 We will use a 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.
- 5.15 If not available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be greater than that of a single language publication - and the price of separate, Welsh and English versions will be the same.
- 5.16 The above will also apply to material made available electronically on our website, on CD Rom or otherwise.

## **Websites**

- 5.17 Our websites will include pages in both Welsh and English.
- 5.18 Our standard practice will be to provide Welsh versions of the interactive pages on our websites.
- 5.19 We will prepare a programme, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, setting out how we will increase the Welsh language content of our website, over time.

## **Forms and associated explanatory material**

- 5.20 Our standard practice will be to ensure that all forms and associated explanatory material for use by the public in Wales will be fully bilingual, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document.
- 5.21 If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately (for instance, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), 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.
- 5.22 We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, to identify objectively when forms should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents.
- 5.23 When other organisations distribute forms on our behalf in Wales, we will ensure that they do so in accordance with the above.

- 5.24 We will prepare a programme, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, to increase the number of forms available bilingually, or as separate Welsh and English versions.

### **Corporate identity**

- 5.25 We will adopt a bilingual corporate identity in Wales. Our name, contact details, logo, slogans and other standard information will appear in Welsh and English on all material which displays our corporate identity. This includes our stationery and material such as business cards, identity badges, passes, tickets, invitations, electronic communications and vehicles.
- 5.26 A standard template for electronic communications for disclaimers, signatures and out of office replies will be available on our intranet
- 5.27 We may use Welsh only branding for some initiatives.

### **Signs in Wales**

- 5.28 Our standard practice will be to ensure that all of our permanent and temporary signs, which give information to the public, will be bilingual with the Welsh and English text being treated equally with regard to size, legibility and prominence.
- 5.29 We will adhere to this practice whenever signs are being installed for the first time, or whenever we are replacing signs.
- 5.30 If separate Welsh and English signs are provided, they will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence.
- 5.31 The above will apply to all types of signs, including electronic signs.

### **Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices**

- 5.32 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 only, in Welsh language publications.
- 5.33 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.
- 5.34 In the English language media, posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential may be advertised in Welsh, with a brief description in English.
- 5.35 Recruitment notices placed in English language journals (and other 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.
- 5.36 Any official notices, public notices or staff recruitment notices placed elsewhere in Wales will be bilingual.

### **Press releases and contact with the media**

- 5.37 Press releases to the press and media in Wales will be issued in Welsh and English when content is of specific relevance to Wales or services of particular importance or relevance to consumers and businesses in Wales.
- 5.38 Where possible, we will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.

## Section 6

# Implementing the scheme

### Staffing

- 6.1 In order to deliver a Welsh language service to the public in Wales the following procedures will be implemented in our office in Wales:
- 6.2 We will identify and review regularly those workplaces and jobs where the ability to speak Welsh is desirable or essential. This requirement may be defined as a component of a workplace or team, or it may be attached to a particular job.
- 6.3 From time to time, we will undertake audits to establish the number, ability level and location of staff that can speak, read and write Welsh (including staff that are learning Welsh). We will also identify staff who wish to learn Welsh.
- 6.4 We will respond to any shortages through our recruitment and development activities.
- 6.5 In our other offices we will seek information about the Welsh language skills of job applicants and existing staff. This is discussed under Recruitment, below.

### Recruitment

- 6.6 We welcome recruitment correspondence in Welsh and English and will make this known in recruitment advertisements specific to our office in Wales.
- 6.7 Our standard recruitment method is to request that candidates apply through CV and covering letter and hence do not provide information packs and application forms.
- 6.8 When recruiting staff for our office in Wales, we will be guided by the information gathered by following the procedures described under Staffing above.
- 6.9 When fluency in Welsh is considered to be desirable or essential this will be stated in job competencies and advertisements.
- 6.10 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.
- 6.11 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 condition of employment.
- 6.12 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).
- 6.13 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**

- 6.14 Our staff will be encouraged to learn or improve their Welsh – and we will support those who wish to do so.
- 6.15 We will fund this training and allow staff to attend courses during working hours.
- 6.16 We will support and fund training for staff based in Wales who, as part of their duties, have extensive and regular contact with the public in Wales – and who wish to learn Welsh, or improve their Welsh.

### **Vocational training**

- 6.17 We will develop the ability of our Welsh speaking staff to operate in Welsh by providing vocational training in Welsh, whenever practicable.

### **Information and Communications Technology**

- 6.18 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.
- 6.19 Whenever possible, we will modify our existing information and communications technology systems to ensure that they enable us to provide information and services in Welsh - and operate in accordance with this scheme.

### **Partnership working**

- 6.20 Ofcom works with a variety of stakeholders on a range of issues. As a regulatory body it is not our standard practice to operate as a strategic or financial leader within a partnership or consortium.

### **Internal arrangements**

- 6.21 The measures in this scheme carry the full authority, support and approval of our organisation.
- 6.22 Managers will have the responsibility of implementing those aspects of the scheme relevant to their work.
- 6.23 We will appoint a senior member of staff to coordinate the work required to deliver, monitor and review this scheme.
- 6.24 We will prepare, and continuously update, a detailed action plan setting out how we will ensure that we will operate in accordance with this scheme. The action plan will come into effect on the date on which the scheme comes into effect. The plan will include targets, deadlines and a report on progress against each target.
- 6.25 The scheme will be publicised to all members of staff, in all our offices and to the public in Wales. It will be published on our website in a prominent place. The scheme will also be made available to all staff via the intranet ('The Loop') to inform all members of Ofcom staff.

- 6.26 We will produce desk instructions, or similar guidance, for our staff at all our offices to ensure that they know how to implement the measures contained in this scheme relevant to their responsibilities.
- 6.27 Existing desk instructions, or similar guidance used by our staff, will be amended to reflect the measures contained in this scheme.
- 6.28 We will arrange briefing and training, sessions for all relevant members of staff, in all our offices, to increase awareness of this scheme - and to explain how it will affect their day to day work.
- 6.29 We will ensure that we use only qualified translators and interpreters to help with the delivery of this scheme.
- 6.30 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 enshrined in this scheme.

### **Monitoring**

- 6.31 We will monitor our progress in delivering this scheme against the targets set out in its accompanying action plan.
- 6.32 Our existing monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this scheme, as appropriate.
- 6.33 We will send monitoring reports to the Welsh Language Board, when requested by them, outlining progress in delivering this scheme.

### **Reviewing and amending the scheme**

- 6.34 We will review this scheme within three years of its coming into effect.
- 6.35 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.
- 6.36 No changes will be made to this scheme without the Welsh Language Board's approval.