

Office for National Statistics

Welsh Language Scheme

About the Office for National Statistics

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the executive office of the UK Statistics Authority. The ONS is responsible for compiling, analysing and disseminating many of the United Kingdom's economic, social and demographic statistics, including the retail prices index, trade figures and labour market data, as well as the periodic census of the population and health statistics. The Director of ONS is also the National Statistician.

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Introduction

Under the Welsh Language Act 1993 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.

This is our scheme

It describes how we will give effect, so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, to the principle established by the Welsh Language Act 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.

The scheme covers the services we provide to the public in Wales. The main body of the document covers those services that the ONS provides with the exception of the Census, other than where stated. Details for the Census can be found in Annex A.

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 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 term 'public' when they are fulfilling those official functions.

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

This scheme was prepared under Section 21 of the Act in accordance with guidelines issued by the Welsh Language Board under Section 9 of the Act. Our previous scheme came into effect on 4 November 1998. This amended scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board on 29 March 2008.

Background to the organisation

The Office for National Statistics exists to improve decision making, stimulate research and inform debate within government and the wider community by providing a quality statistical service. The Office for National Statistics conducts surveys of businesses, households and individuals. Its outputs include:

- National Accounts
- Labour market statistics
- Population statistics
- Business statistics
- Health statistics
- Social statistics
- Census – see Annex A.

Its statistical work supports central economic management and the formulation and monitoring of other economic and social policies.

The Office for National Statistics employs around 3,000 staff operating in London, Newport (South Wales) and Titchfield (Hampshire), plus up to 1,200 field staff working on social surveys.

Service planning and delivery

Policies, legislation and initiatives

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.

If 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.

We will ensure, whenever possible, that our contribution to new primary and secondary legislation will support the use of Welsh.

Delivering services

Our normal practice will be to ensure that our services are available to the public in Wales in both Welsh and English.

We will let the public know when services are available in Welsh.

The Office for National Statistics is also responsible for the conduct of the 2011 Census. The principles outlining how the Census will be conducted in Wales are described in Annex A.

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

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.

This will include services which are contracted out, granting licences and granting other permissions.

Standards of quality

Services provided in Welsh and English will be of equal quality and will be provided within the same timescale.

Awarding grants and loans

When we award grants and loans for activities to be undertaken in Wales, we will include conditions with regard to the use of Welsh. In doing this, we will have regard to the Welsh Language Board's guidelines on awarding grants and loans.

Dealing with the Welsh speaking public

Correspondence

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.

When we send standard or circular letters to several recipients in Wales, they will be bilingual unless we know that all recipients would prefer to receive it in Welsh or English only.

If the Welsh and English versions of any correspondence have to be produced 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 hard-copy Welsh correspondence we issue will be signed in the same way as the English version.

All Welsh email correspondence we issue will bear a Welsh (or bilingual) electronic signature in the same way as an English version.

We will develop a system to record the language preference of those who wish to correspond with us in Welsh.

We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the 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).

To help us meet these targets you are asked to address your letter with queries on our statistical activities to our Newport office:

The Office for National Statistics
Government Buildings
Cardiff Road
Newport
Gwent
NP10 8XG

email: info@statistics.gov.uk

Telephone communications

Our normal practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or English when dealing with us by telephone:

- Statistical and other (Newport):
0845 601 3034

We will encourage the rest of our staff in Wales to answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting and use bilingual messages on their personal answerphones.

Callers contacting the main enquiry number for the Office in Wales will receive a bilingual greeting.

Our main switchboard in Wales will use a bilingual message on its answerphone.

If the caller wishes to speak Welsh our switchboard will try to connect the call to a Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry.

If a caller telephones a member of staff directly 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.

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 telephone back as soon as possible, continuing the call in English or submitting their query in Welsh, by letter or email.

When we set up telephone help-lines or similar facilities, to give information, services or support to the public, we will provide a Welsh language service.

Because of their location it would not be practical for staff in our offices outside Wales to conduct telephone conversations in Welsh.

Public meetings

Where the Office organises public meetings in Wales, we will ensure Welsh speakers are able to contribute by providing simultaneous translation from Welsh into English unless we have established that all participants are likely to use the same language.

Invitations and advertisements for public meetings in Wales will be bilingual and either note that translation facilities will

be available, or invite the public to let us know in advance in which language they wish to speak.

We will let those attending public meetings know when translation facilities are available and welcome contributions in Welsh.

Our normal practice will be to provide papers and other information for public meetings in Wales in Welsh and English unless we have established that all participants are likely to use the same language. Reports or papers produced following public meetings in Wales will be published in Welsh and English (unless all participants used the same language).

Other meetings with the public in Wales

When we arrange or attend face-to-face meetings with the public, 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.

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.

The above will also apply to meetings held using videoconferencing and similar equipment.

Because of their location it would not be practical for staff in our offices outside Wales to conduct face-to-face meetings with the public through the medium of Welsh.

Household and individual surveys

When we undertake public surveys, our normal practice will be to ensure that all aspects of communication with the public in Wales will be bilingual.

Many of the surveys of households and individuals conducted by the Office for National Statistics are through face to face interviews. Where interviewees specify that they wish the interview to be conducted in Welsh, we will provide Welsh speaking interviewers.

We do already send out bilingual advance letters to prospective interviewees in Wales inviting them to let us know whether they wish the interview to be carried out in English or Welsh. Forms and questionnaires for self-completion surveys are also in a bilingual format. Due to very low demand, surveys involving the keeping of diaries, for example the Expenditure and Food Survey, are available only in English because of the difficulties and cost of translating them back into English before coding and processing. However, if demand were to increase for these surveys, or if they became easier to produce (for example, online interactive surveys), we would reconsider producing them in Welsh and discuss this with the Welsh Language Board.

The provisions for the 2011 Census are set out in Annex A.

Business surveys

The Office for National Statistics is not able at the present time, to provide bilingual business survey forms and questionnaires to all companies based in Wales for technological and financial reasons. The initial page of business survey forms and questionnaires to companies based in Wales will include a bilingual sentence offering a Welsh version of the questionnaire on request. We are progressing towards a system where a company can register a language preference for all surveys sent to that company. When this is in place, all future forms and questionnaires sent to that company will be in Welsh. Many new developments for collecting data from individual businesses are not based upon the receipt and completion of paper forms and questionnaires.

The use of electronic data interchange (EDI) technology, the internet, electronic forms and questionnaires, direct dialled telephone transmission and linkage with businesses' own accountancy software packages present problems to ONS in providing a bilingual service. It would not be reasonably practical for us to provide a fully bilingual service.

Our public face

When we arrange seminars, training courses or similar events for the public in Wales, we will assess the need to provide them in Welsh by inviting attendees to let us know their language choice.

Our normal practice will be to ensure that announcements made to the public over public address systems in Wales are made in Welsh and English.

Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising

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.

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).

In Welsh language publications, advertisements will be in Welsh only.

Television, cinema and radio advertising in Wales will be conducted in Welsh and English. Television campaigns which appear on S4C during Welsh programming hours will be in Welsh. Radio campaigns broadcast on Radio

Cymru or during Welsh language programmes on commercial radio stations will be in Welsh.

Our normal practice will be to avoid using Welsh language subtitles, or dubbing adverts into Welsh (except voice-overs).

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

When staffing exhibition stands and displays in Wales, our normal practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary.

Any audio-visual displays, audio tours or interactive media that we prepare for public use in Wales will be bilingual.

Publications

Our normal practice will be to produce publications of general interest to the public in Wales in a bilingual form.

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 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.

We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, to identify objectively when material should be published in Welsh and English.

If a charge is made for a publication, the price of a Welsh version will be no higher than that of an English version, and the price of a bilingual version will be no higher than that of a single-language version.

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

We will prepare a programme, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, setting out how we will increase the availability of bilingual publications over time.

Websites

Our websites will include pages in both Welsh and English.

Our normal practice will be to provide Welsh versions of the interactive pages on our websites.

When designing new websites, or redeveloping our existing websites, we will take into account the Welsh Language Board's guidelines on website design.

Whenever we post English language publications on our websites, the Welsh versions will be posted at the same time, if available.

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 questionnaires and associated explanatory material

The approach to be adopted for the 2011 Census' questionnaire and associated material is described in Annex A.

Other than for the Census, our normal practice will be to ensure that all forms and questionnaires and associated explanatory material for use by the general public in Wales will be fully bilingual, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. This will include interactive forms published on our websites.

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.

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

When we enter information on bilingual forms and questionnaires 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.

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

We will use a scoring system to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board to objectively identify when forms and questionnaires should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents.

Corporate identity

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 for survey staff, passes, tickets, acknowledgement cards, compliment slips and invitations.

We may use Welsh only branding for some initiatives.

Signs in Wales

Our normal practice will be to ensure that all of our permanent and temporary signs within the boundaries of the Office's property in Wales and within our reception area in Wales, 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.

We will adhere to this practice whenever signs are being installed for the first time, or whenever we are replacing signs.

If separate Welsh and English signs are provided, they will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence.

The above will apply to all types of signs, including electronic signs.

Bilingual signs will indicate to visitors to the organisation's offices in Wales that a Welsh speaker will be made available should that be required.

Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices

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.

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.

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.

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, or in Welsh with a brief explanation in English.

Any official notices, public notices or staff recruitment notices placed elsewhere in Wales will be bilingual.

News releases and contact with the media

News releases specific to the press and broadcasting media in Wales will be issued in Welsh and English, where deadlines permit, or according to the language preference of the recipient media organisation or publication.

When we post news releases on our website, our normal practice will be to post them in Welsh and English where available.

All press notices issued to solely Welsh language media will be issued bilingually.

Where possible, we will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.

Implementing the scheme

Staffing

All of our workplaces that have contact with the public in Wales need access to sufficient and appropriately skilled Welsh speakers to enable those workplaces to deliver a full service in Welsh. Where the ability to speak Welsh is considered to be essential or desirable for a post, this will be specified in the job description and advertisement for the post.

We will identify the areas where the ability to speak Welsh is desirable or essential.

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).

Staff will be encouraged to learn Welsh or improve their ability to use Welsh.

The results of these two exercises will be compared to identify workplaces where there is a shortage of Welsh speaking staff.

We will respond to any shortages through our recruitment and training activities.

We will consider the possibility of transferring staff able to speak Welsh to fill those posts where the ability to speak Welsh is desirable or essential.

For our offices outside Wales, we will seek information about the Welsh language skills of job applicants and existing staff. This is discussed under Recruitment, below.

Recruitment

When recruiting staff we will be guided by the information gathered by following the procedures described under Staffing above.

When fluency in Welsh is considered to be desirable or essential this will be stated in job competencies and advertisements.

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.

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).

Information packs and application forms will be provided in Welsh and English for all of our jobs where fluency in Welsh is considered to be desirable or essential.

For our offices outside Wales, 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

Our staff in Wales will be encouraged to learn or improve their ability to speak Welsh and we will support those who wish to do so. Priority will be given to those who have extensive and regular contact with the public, or who regularly deal with Welsh speakers as part of their work.

We will fund this training and allow staff to attend courses during work hours.

For our offices outside Wales, we will support and fund training for staff 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. We will allow staff to attend courses during work hours.

Vocational training

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

For our offices outside Wales, whenever practical, we will provide vocational training in Welsh to develop the ability of staff who, as part of their duties, have extensive and regular contact with the public in Wales.

Information and communications technology

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.

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

When we are the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, we will ensure that any public service aspects comply with this scheme.

When we join a 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.

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.

Internal arrangements

The measures in this scheme carry the full authority, support and approval of our organisation.

Directors will be responsible for implementing those aspects of the scheme relevant to their divisions.

We will appoint a senior member of staff to coordinate the work required to deliver, monitor and review this scheme.

We will prepare, and continuously update, a detailed action plan to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, 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, or as soon as possible

thereafter. The plan will include targets, deadlines and a report on progress against each target.

The scheme will be available to staff on the Office's intranet and published on our website.

We will produce desk instructions, or similar guidance, where appropriate, for our staff to ensure that they know how to implement the measures contained in this scheme.

Existing desk instructions, or similar guidance used by our staff, will be amended to reflect the measures contained in this scheme.

We will arrange briefing and training sessions for our staff to increase awareness of this scheme – and to explain how it will affect their day to day work.

When we use external translators we will ensure they are qualified translators accredited by the Association of Welsh Translators.

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.

Freedom of Information Act

When a Freedom of Information request is received in Welsh, the covering letter to any response will also be in Welsh.

If the documents requested are already available in Welsh they will be provided to the applicant in Welsh.

If, according to this scheme, the documents requested should be available in Welsh they will be provided in Welsh.

If this requires a translation from English, it will be done within the 20 working day statutory time limit, and at no cost to the applicant.

If, according to this scheme, the documents requested do not have to be available in Welsh, then they will be provided in the original language.

Applicants are entitled to ask for a summary instead of a copy of a document. As with all Freedom of Information requests, the Office for National Statistics will consider producing a short summary where this has been requested or is deemed necessary. Summaries are typically no longer than a few hundred words. In instances where the request for a summary has been made in Welsh we will produce the summary in Welsh where it is practical to do so, whether the original information is in Welsh, English, or another language.

Monitoring

We will monitor our progress in delivering this scheme against the targets set out in its accompanying action plan.

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

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

We will review this scheme within four years of its coming into effect. However, due to the timescale required to deliver

the Census processes and procedures, it may not be possible to implement any changes in time for the 2011 Census operation.

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.

No changes will be made to this scheme without the approval of the Welsh Language Board.

Complaints and suggestions for improvement

Any complaints about the ONS's services in Wales or suggestions for improvements, should be addressed to:

Head of External Communication
Communication Division
Office for National Statistics
Government Buildings
Cardiff Road
Newport
Gwent
NP10 8XG

Or by email to:
Welsh.Lang.Unit@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

The Office for National Statistics is responsible for the conduct of the ten year Census. The next Census is due to take place in 2011. In providing services to the public in Wales, the Office for National Statistics is committed to the principle that Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

We are committed to working closely with the Welsh Assembly Government in seeking to deliver a successful Census in Wales. Advice is being sought from users about the content and conduct of the Census through a Census Advisory Group for Wales, and from the Welsh Language Board on matters relating specifically to the use of the Welsh language in the Census.

The following represent the main principles that will be adopted for conducting the 2011 Census in Wales; many of the details regarding how these will be achieved are still being developed.

- A legal right to complete the questionnaire in Welsh, for both internet and paper-based forms and questionnaires.
 - Welsh and English language versions of forms and questionnaires and Welsh and English or bilingual guidance notes on how to complete them delivered to all households in Wales.
 - Welsh and English or bilingual guidance notes on how to obtain a Welsh questionnaire available to all households in Wales.
 - Bilingual authority cards for field staff.
 - Recruitment campaigns in Wales carried out in Welsh and English and bilingually, as appropriate.
 - Publicity campaigns carried out according to ONS' general approach described in the main body of this document.
- As far as possible, bilingual field staff in Wales, particularly in areas with high proportions of Welsh speakers.
 - A bilingual Census Manager for Wales and, as far as possible, bilingual senior managers in Wales.
 - Bilingual public support facilities – for both the contact centre and any web-based help facility.
 - Bilingual reports of results for Wales.