

Welsh language scheme

2008

The Pensions
Regulator

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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 that we provide to the public in Wales.

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.

Our primary communications are targeted at pension industry specialists who are responsible for work-based pension scheme administration, and therefore fall outside the wider definition of public in this scheme.

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 - and in accordance with guidelines issued by the Welsh Language Board under Section 9 of the Act. It came into effect on 13 October 2008.

Background to the organisation

The Pensions Regulator is the UK regulator of work-based pension schemes. The Pensions Act 2004 gives the Pensions Regulator a set of specific objectives:

- to protect the benefits of members of work-based pension schemes;
- to promote good administration of work-based pension schemes; and
- to reduce the risk of situations arising that may lead to claims for compensation from the Pension Protection Fund.

In order to meet these objectives, we concentrate our resources on schemes where we identify the greatest risk to the security of members' benefits. We will also promote high standards of scheme administration, and work to ensure that those involved in running pension schemes have the necessary skills and knowledge.

Our main audiences are those involved in the running of work-based pension schemes. These include pension scheme trustees and their professional advisers; scheme administrators; and employers. The primary focus of our work does not include the general public across the UK, including Wales.

For more information about our work visit: www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk.

The Pensions Regulator's offices are located in Brighton, East Sussex. Our full contact details can be located at the end of this scheme.

Service planning and delivery

Policies, legislation, services and initiatives

Our policies, initiatives and services will be consistent with this scheme. They will support the use of Welsh and, whenever possible, will help the public in Wales to use Welsh as part of their day to day lives.

Whenever possible, our consultation documents will discuss the relationship between the Welsh language and the policies, initiatives and services under development.

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.

Delivering services

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

Standards of quality

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

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 10 working days for general correspondence and 15 working days for technical enquiries.

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.

If the Welsh and English versions of any correspondence have to be 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 e-mail correspondence as well as paper correspondence.

All hard-copy Welsh correspondence that we issue will be signed.

Telephone communications

Because of our location it would not be practicable for us to conduct telephone conversations in Welsh. However, if 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. Both services will share the same telephone number.

Our public face

Publications

We will publish material made available to the public in Wales bilingually, subject to a scoring system to be agreed with the Board, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document.

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.

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.

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 website will include pages in both Welsh and English.

We will provide Welsh versions of the interactive pages on our website, subject to a scoring system to be agreed with the Board.

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 Board with regard to developing websites.

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

Forms and associated explanatory material

We will ensure that all forms for use by the public in Wales will be fully bilingual, subject to a scoring system to be agreed with the Board, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. This will include interactive forms published on our websites. Associated explanatory material will be fully bilingual subject to our scoring system for publications.

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 that are sent to the public, we will do so in Welsh.

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.

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

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.

Press releases and contact with the media

Press releases to the Welsh language press and broadcasting media in Wales will be issued in Welsh where deadlines permit.

We will post Welsh language versions of press releases on our website, if available.

Implementing the scheme

Staffing

We have no offices in Wales. Even so, we will seek information about the Welsh language skills of job applicants and existing staff. This is discussed under *Recruitment*, below.

Recruitment

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.

Information and communications technology

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

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.

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

Internal arrangements

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

Operating in accordance with the scheme will be a **compliance** issue.

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

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 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 overall aim of the action plan will be to ensure that we deliver the commitments set out in this scheme as soon as possible.

The scheme will be **publicised** to our staff, and to the public in Wales. It will be published on our website in a prominent place.

We will produce **desk instructions**, or similar guidance, 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.

We will ensure that we use only qualified **translators** or interpreters for translation of electronic and printed material – and for simultaneous translation. We will expect those translators to be members of the Association of Welsh Translators or a similar organisation.

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 and the Environmental Information Regulations

We will operate in accordance with the Board's advice on the *Welsh Language Act the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations*.

When we release information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, we will translate it into the applicant's preferred language where reasonably practical. If the Regulator decides that it is not able to provide the information in that format then it will write to the applicant and give its reasons.

Monitoring

We will monitor our progress in delivering this scheme against the targets set out in its accompanying action plan. We will report to our senior management on that progress.

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

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

Our target is to ensure that we act in accordance with the aims and objectives of this scheme within four years of its coming into effect. We will use a self-assessment procedure, to be agreed with Board, in order to monitor progress against this target.

Reviewing and amending the scheme

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

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 Welsh Language Board's approval.

Complaints and suggestions for improvement

Complaints related to this scheme, or suggestions for improvement, should be directed to the senior member of staff with responsibility for the scheme, at the following address:

The Corporate Secretary
The Pensions Regulator
Napier House
Trafalgar Place
Brighton
BN1 4DW

Or by e-mail to: complaints@thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

We will cooperate with the Board in order to resolve complaints - and during any investigations held under Section 17 of the Welsh Language Act.

Appendix 1:

Welsh language scheme timetable

Target	Completion date
Staff guidance Provide guidance to staff about how to implement and deliver the commitments made in the scheme.	In place by scheme approval
Publications review Review the Pensions Regulator's publications, leaflets, forms etc to discern what needs to be produced in Welsh	In place by scheme approval
Translation arrangements Identify a Welsh translation provider to guarantee uniformity and quality	In place by scheme approval
Website review Ensure that all relevant sections of the website are available in Welsh (including any Welsh versions of publications, leaflets, forms etc)	Within 6 months of scheme approval
Scheme ownership Identify a senior member of staff to take overall responsibility for the scheme's delivery	In place by scheme approval
Publicity for the scheme Publicise the scheme on the website and any relevant publicity material	Within 3 months of scheme approval
Language choice Put measures in place to establish a customer's language choice	Within 6 months of scheme approval
Monitoring the service Put measures in place to measure demand and to ensure that customers can provide feedback about the Welsh language service	Within 6 months of scheme approval