

National Assembly for Wales
Assembly Commission

Official Languages Scheme

July 2013



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the National Assembly's website:
www.assemblywales.org

Copies of this report can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print; audio or hard copy from:

Official Languages Scheme Manager
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Phone: 0845 010 5500
Email **BilingualServices@wales.gov.uk**

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Foreword by Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM



The official languages of Wales – Welsh and English – belong to us all, irrespective of which one we prefer to use in our daily lives. They form part of our heritage, our present and our future.

Within the Assembly, both English and Welsh are working languages and the Assembly Commission, as the body responsible for supporting the operation of the Assembly, is determined to give a strong and ambitious lead in its delivery of bilingual services. As the responsible member of the Commission, I was delighted to take the Official Languages Bill through the Assembly in 2012. As the first Welsh Act for 600 years, the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012 has its place in history and now provides the statutory footing for the bilingual operation of the Assembly and the Commission.

I am proud of the Commission and its staff and the Assembly's commitment to delivering exemplary bilingual services. Over the past 12 years, we have delivered innovative, ground breaking bilingual services that continue to raise the bar for other institutions to follow.

This Scheme builds on that experience and the provision outlined in the Official Languages Act 2012. It defines the standards and services Members and the public can expect from us and sets out our intentions in four key areas for the lifetime of the Scheme –to provide innovative, tailored support to enable people to use both languages; to make the best use of technology; to develop the Welsh-language skills and confidence of Assembly staff in providing that support; and to share the things that work for us with the rest of Wales and the multilingual world beyond our borders.

Ultimately, the Act places a duty on the Commission to enable the public and Assembly Members to engage with their Assembly in Welsh or English as both languages are equal. This Official Languages Scheme, therefore, sets out our ambitious plans to provide a comprehensive and valuable range of bilingual services.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rhodri Glyn Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM

Commissioner with responsibility for the Commission's official language functions and policy.

01. Our ambition and commitment

Statement of ambition

Our ambition is to deliver exemplary bilingual services and to be recognised as a truly bilingual institution where Assembly Members, the public and staff can choose to work or communicate in either or both of our official languages and where the use of both languages is encouraged and facilitated.

The National Assembly for Wales (“the Assembly”) serves a bilingual nation where almost one in five people speaks Welsh. We are mindful of the Assembly’s responsibilities as the national focus of democratic life in Wales and proud of its international reputation as a bilingual institution.

The National Assembly for Wales Commission (“the Commission”) is responsible for the provision of the property, staff and services required by the Assembly. The strategic aims of the Commission are to:

- provide outstanding parliamentary support;
- engage with the people of Wales and promote Wales; and
- use resources wisely.

The Commission’s commitment to bilingualism underpins the achievement of these goals - our services, strategies and aspirations reflect the equal status of our official languages and the provisions of the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012 (“the Act”). Those provisions amended the relevant parts of the Government of Wales 2006, declaring Welsh and English to be the official languages of the National Assembly.

We value all our staff, regardless of their degree of bilingualism, for the commitment they bring to the Assembly and their professional and parliamentary expertise. Our expectation is that they are all committed to the delivery of the highest standards of parliamentary support for Members and the public in both our official languages.

Everyone has the right to interact with the Assembly in the official language of their choice. Where there are barriers to this, we will work to remove them so that the Assembly demonstrates a continuous drive towards becoming a truly bilingual institution where Welsh is used and heard.

As such we will be:

- committed to delivering more and exemplar bilingual services to Assembly Members, the public and staff;
- an employer who supports all Assembly staff who wish to have some skills in both official languages to a standard appropriate to their role; and
- an organisation which shares its experience and knowledge of working bilingually with other organisations.

To achieve our ambition to deliver exemplary bilingual services, we will act in four key areas. We will:

- provide innovative, tailored support to enable people to use both languages in the context of Assembly business;
- invest significantly in technology as a way of transforming bilingual service provision whilst also providing value for money;
- develop the Welsh-language skills and confidence of the people who work for the Commission; and
- share our experience of delivering bilingual services with other organisations in Wales and legislatures elsewhere and seek to learn from them.

All this demonstrates our commitment to being a leader in the delivery and innovation of bilingual services.

The scope of the Official Languages Scheme

This Scheme sets out how we will deliver our statutory duty to provide bilingual services for three distinct groups: Assembly Members and their staff; the people of Wales; and Assembly staff. It also sets out how we will monitor and report on the Scheme and how we will deal with complaints when we fail to live up to the exemplary standards we expect of ourselves.

Annex A sets out:

- the bilingual services we currently deliver; and
- the bilingual services we aim to deliver over the next twelve months with milestones and target completion dates.

Publicising and promoting our bilingual services

We will ensure that Assembly Members and their staff, the public and Assembly staff are aware of this Scheme and the services we provide. We will publicise our bilingual services by:

- promoting the Scheme’s existence when engaging with the public and our stakeholders;
- engage with external stakeholders such as the Welsh Language Commissioner so that we can learn from and impart our own experience of delivering exemplary bilingual services;
- raising awareness of the Scheme’s requirements among staff on an on-going basis e.g. by providing language awareness training for all staff;
- ensuring Welsh-speaking staff are easily accessible and readily available in all the public spaces where the Assembly has a corporate presence; and
- including the promotion of the Scheme in the induction programme for new Assembly Members and their support staff (AMSS).

Should you require clarification from the Commission on any aspect of the Official Languages Scheme, you can contact:

Official Languages Scheme Manager
National Assembly for Wales
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA
0845 010 5500 (Switchboard)
Email: BilingualServices@wales.gov.uk

This Scheme is available in accessible formats, including Braille, large print, audio or hard copy.

02. Bilingual services for Assembly Members and their staff

The Commission is proud of its achievements in enabling bilingual proceedings and the Assembly's internationally recognised status as a democratically elected body committed to delivering innovative bilingual services.

The Act places a statutory duty on the Commission to enable anyone engaged in Assembly proceedings to do so in either Welsh or English – our official languages.

To do this, the Commission provides:

- simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English in all Assembly Plenary and Committee proceedings, in accordance with Standing Orders 13.2 and 17.45;
- published documents to the public relating to formal Assembly business in both official languages as detailed in Annex A and in line with statutory and Standing Order requirements;
- Assembly Members with bilingual materials and the means to communicate with each other and with the public bilingually for the purpose of formal Assembly proceedings. We will seek practical ways of increasing the range and effectiveness of the bilingual support we provide for Members in this regard; and
- Assembly Members and their staff with facilities and bespoke language tuition, and support their developing skills in a professional context.

Members' interactions with their constituents are not covered by this Scheme, but the Commission will continue to provide resources to ensure Members can deal with constituents in the official language of their constituents' choice.

In line with the provisions of GOWA 2006 (as amended by the Official Languages Act 2012), we will publish a fully bilingual record of the proceedings of the Assembly in Plenary (Record of Proceedings). The Commission has taken the lead in its use of machine translation technology which assists in the cost-efficient and timely translation of written texts, including the publication of the Record of Proceedings. Developing this technology is key to transforming our operation as a bilingual institution. Our aim is to invest further in machine translation and other IT systems which, coupled with expert proof reading and quality assurance, will strengthen our service provision to the Assembly for all its bilingual text requirements.

We have highlighted key areas of Members' services for development. We will:

- make best use of technology to translate written material more quickly and efficiently;
- provide Members with more Welsh-language materials and support in a timely fashion, to empower them to use Welsh during proceedings if they so wish;
- develop our tuition provision for Members to be an exemplar for others to follow; and
- consider how we can enhance the support provided to Assembly Members to carry out their work in either of the official languages in contexts other than formal Assembly proceedings.

03. Bilingual services for communicating and engaging with the people of Wales

The Commission is committed to delivering bilingual services of the highest quality to the public.

The GOWA 2006 (as amended by the Official Languages Act 2012) places a statutory duty on the Commission to enable the public to communicate and engage with the Assembly – whether in person, online or by correspondence – in their official language of choice.

Where we work in partnership with others, we will encourage them to meet the standards we set for ourselves.

Any contracts or arrangements between the Commission and third parties (such as recruitment agencies, catering companies, consultants, contractors etc) to provide services to the public, will require them to comply with the relevant parts of this Scheme.

Where we develop new services, or radically reform existing services to the public, they will be bilingual from the outset.

We have highlighted key areas in services to the people of Wales for development over the next three years. We will:

- enhance our bilingual welcome for visitors to the Assembly estate;
- develop our capacity to engage with Welsh-language media and write Welsh copy for public information outlets; and
- ensure that our contractors understand our commitment to promoting bilingualism and seek opportunities to enhance our bilingual services.

04. Our staff and the Scheme

The Commission employs some 375 staff of whom around one third are bilingual. The proportion of Welsh speakers has increased annually since 2007, particularly in our front-line areas.

A Bilingual Skills Strategy will help us manage our skills resource, taking account of the national framework set by the Welsh Language Commissioner in the document “Recruitment: Welsh Language Considerations”.

We will ensure that staff have opportunities to understand the requirements of the Act, the Official Languages Scheme and the Bilingual Skills Strategy and how they impact on the services we provide.

We will ensure that:

- tailored Welsh language tuition will be offered to all staff, including gloywi iaith for Welsh-language speakers;
- circular communications such as the staff intranet and all-staff emails, targeting all Assembly staff will be bilingual;
- members of staff will be able to contribute to all-staff meetings in either of the official languages;
- wherever possible, IT software will be available to staff in either of the official languages and the availability of this service will be promoted;
- the text proof reading service is promoted so that Welsh-language speakers feel encouraged and supported to draft in Welsh if they so wish;
- all HR and Finance corporate documents will be available bilingually; and
- the use of machine translation is increased in the appropriate circumstances.

We expect every member of Assembly staff to:

- be fully committed to the implementation of this Scheme and the bilingual services outlined in Annex A , respecting the rights of Members, colleagues and the public to use either or both of our official languages;
- promote the Scheme’s provisions and people’s right to use either of the official languages;
- attend language awareness training to understand the historical, social, cultural and legal context that has informed the development of this Scheme and our bilingual services provision; and
- develop new services in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the Scheme.

We expect the Assembly staff Management Board to:

- consider the requirements of the Act and this Scheme annually by developing language plans for each service area and contribute to the development of the annual report on our implementation of the Scheme;
- lead by example and proactively seek ways to improve the bilingual services we offer and address any instances where the provision is below the standard expected;
- inform the development of our language tuition opportunities based on business need; and
- encourage staff to make use of our language tuition provision in accordance with the business need.

We have highlighted six key areas of bilingual corporate services for development. We will:

- explore how translation software and ICT can enable more staff to work bilingually;
- provide more tailored support for Welsh language learners and to Welsh speakers who wish to develop their Welsh language skills further;
- provide more tailored support for Welsh-language speakers to increase their confidence to speak, correspond or draft in Welsh;
- take measures to continually increase the opportunities for staff to use Welsh at work;
- explore further opportunities to mainstream Welsh into internal procedures, systems and practices; and
- consider how our planning process, training opportunities and recruitment approach take full account of the need for bilingual skills across the organisation alongside other key business priorities.

05. Arrangements for monitoring and reporting

Authority and responsibility for implementing this Scheme

This Scheme carries the full authority, support and approval of the Commission and Assembly.

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the National Assembly has overall responsibility for ensuring that this Scheme is implemented. A senior member of the management team will have responsibility for co-ordinating, monitoring and, when necessary, advising on revisions to its content. The Official Languages Scheme Manager will have day-to-day responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Scheme and liaising with the co-ordinator in each service area to improve the range and timeliness of our services in both official languages.

It is the responsibility of all Assembly staff to ensure that they are aware of the measures that are in this Scheme and for ensuring compliance as they carry out their daily work. Training and support will be provided to staff to enable them to deliver the requirements.

Every manager has a delegated responsibility for:

- operating those aspects of the Scheme that are relevant to their work;
- encouraging staff to use their language skills;
- ensuring that all members of staff are aware of the bilingual ethos of the Assembly, the ambition and services outlined in the Scheme; and
- identifying tools or support that can assist staff in using their language skills.

Each Assembly service area will nominate a Scheme Co-ordinator to be responsible for:

- providing advice on the delivery of the Scheme in their service area;
- reviewing progress against the Scheme’s requirements on a quarterly cycle via the Official Languages Scheme Co-ordinators Forum; and
- considering changes, improvements or innovations that will contribute towards our ambition of being a truly bilingual organisation.

Monitoring and reporting

The Act requires the Commission to “lay before the Assembly a report setting out how the Commission has, during the year in question, given effect to the Scheme.”

The annual compliance report must include whether and to what degree the services outlined in the Scheme and related Annex have been provided, and if applicable the reasons why any have not been provided by the Commission. We will also monitor individual service areas’ compliance with the Scheme.

Annual compliance monitoring will ensure that how we deliver our bilingual services is transparent to Members and the public and enable them to hold the Commission to account on the Scheme’s implementation. It will also provide the Commission with information that will enable us to develop and improve our bilingual services in future.

Reviewing and updating the Scheme

This Scheme will be reviewed in accordance with paragraph 8(9) of Schedule 2 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 (as inserted by section 2 of the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012).

The Commission will consult on any amendment to this Scheme and future draft Schemes in accordance with the relevant legislation. Amendments cannot be adopted unless the drafts have been:

- published and laid before the Assembly;
- made available for public consultation and any representations considered;
- re-laid before the Assembly; and
- approved by resolution of the Assembly.

Dealing with complaints

We want members of the public, Assembly Members, AMSS and Assembly staff to report any concerns including examples of non-compliance to us as soon as possible. This will enable us to rectify the situation and improve the service we deliver.

Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the National Assembly's Code of Practice on Complaints.

If you have a concern or complaint you should in the first instance, raise it with the official with whom you have been dealing. If this fails to satisfy your concerns you should make a formal complaint. You can do this by e-mail, fax, letter or by completing our **complaint form**. Your complaint will be investigated by the Chief Executive and Clerk, or by a person nominated by her and we will respond within 15 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, your complaint can be considered by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Annex A

Services we deliver in our official languages and our priorities for the period September 2013-July 2014.

Services for Assembly Members and their support staff

Preparing for Plenary and Committee meetings
Any documents laid or business tabled are available in English and Welsh in accordance with Standing Order 15.4.
Any bills considered by the National Assembly are available in both official languages, except for the circumstances outlined in Standing Order 26.5.
<p>English and Welsh versions of the following supporting documents are available simultaneously for Assembly Members and the public to help Members with their work in committee and Plenary:</p> <p>For committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– agendas and supporting papers provided for formal meetings prepared by Assembly staff;– bills introduced into the Assembly;– bill summaries;– glossaries of technical terms used in Bills;– research notes;– research papers;– Quick Guides; and– EU Policy Updates. <p>For Plenary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– agendas including tabled questions, motions and supporting papers;– legal briefings; and– research papers. <p>When we do not achieve this standard, we will note the exceptions and consider alternative approaches to avoid such instances in the future.</p>
Committees request from the outset that documents or written responses to consultations from external organisations and third parties intended for publication and / or use in National Assembly proceedings are bilingual.

Where it is not possible to secure documents in both languages from external organisations and third parties, we publish in the language submitted, stating that it has been received in that language only. Welsh-language documents are translated to English for Members' use.

Other support papers provided by third parties, including correspondence from the Welsh Government (e.g. answers to written and oral questions), are published in the language they were submitted. We rely on other organisations to implement their own policies and comply with their legal obligations.

Correspondence between the Presiding Officer and all Chairs will be bilingual. Published letters are available in both official languages. The language of correspondence between individual committee Chairs is a matter for committee Chairs.

Conducting Plenary and committee meetings

Those taking part in Assembly proceedings are encouraged to use the official language of their choice.

Simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English is available to Assembly Members, witnesses and Assembly staff who take part in or support Assembly proceedings.

Simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English is available to visitors to public galleries and committee rooms in the Senedd and Tŷ Hywel. This service is available when committee meetings are held in other parts of the Assembly's estate or off the Assembly's estate.

Members of the public can follow floor language or interpreted (Welsh to English) Assembly proceedings on senedd.tv.

Assembly Members, their support staff and Assembly staff can follow floor language or interpreted (Welsh to English) Assembly proceedings on the internal television channel.

Our video conferencing provision allows Members and witnesses to use the official language of their choice during proceedings, where technically possible.

Recording Plenary and committee meetings

A rolling unedited version of the Record of Proceedings is available on the Assembly's intranet from about 16.00 on the same day.

An edited version of the Record of Proceedings is published on the Assembly's website within 24 hours of the conclusion of Plenary. It includes contributions in the official languages spoken together with a translation of the Welsh contributions into English.

When VT is used during Plenary a hyperlink to the material used is included in the Record of Proceedings along with a transcript of any oral contributions.

An edited, fully bilingual Record of Proceedings, including the translation of English contributions into Welsh, is published on the Assembly's website as soon as is practicably possible and within five working days.

An edited draft of committee transcripts, with Welsh contributions translated into English, is published online within 10 working days.

A final edited transcript of committee proceedings, with Welsh contributions translated into English, is published online within 14 working days.

When VT is used during committee proceedings, a hyperlink to the material used will be included in the transcript along with a transcript of any oral contributions including a translation of the Welsh into English.

Support for the Assembly Commission

Published documents relating to Assembly Commission business are available in both official languages. Assembly Commission communications to Assembly Members, Assembly staff and the public are available in both official languages. The Assembly Commission responds to all correspondence from the public in the language of the recipient's choice within 15 working days. Interpretation from Welsh to English is provided for Assembly Commission meetings on request.

Other meetings on the Assembly estate

Simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English is available for cross party group meetings if requested.

Assembly Members' publicity and constituency correspondence

Assembly Members and their support staff are provided with email addresses in both official languages enw.cyfenw@cymru.gov.uk and name.surname@wales.gov.uk.

English and Welsh versions of the following supporting documents are available simultaneously for Assembly Members to help them with their work representing the interests of their constituents:

- constituent factsheets;
- research papers;
- research notes; and
- Quick Guides.

Assembly Members may submit research enquiries in the official language of their choice and the Research Service will respond in the same language.

Individual Members decide on the official language they choose to converse, correspond or communicate with members of the public. Support for this work is available through the constituency translation fund.

Support for communicating with constituents in other languages spoken in Wales is available through the Access Fund.

Any materials (such as letterheads, business cards and surgery advertisements) of a non-party political nature funded by the Assembly Commission are produced bilingually.

Supporting and developing Welsh-language skills

The Assembly Commission is committed to providing Welsh-language tuition that is tailored to the needs of individual Members and their support staff.

The Assembly Commission provides Members and their support staff with a learning environment - yr Ystafell Gymraeg - in the Senedd, conducive to learning and developing their Welsh-language skills through teaching, coaching or by using learning resources in their own time.

We will review the tuition provision for Assembly Members and their support staff annually.

Our IT operating system (Windows 7) can be configured to be used in either of our official languages. Cysgliad is available to all Assembly Members and their support staff from the outset. The Assembly Caseworker and Medialon system interfaces are available to Members in the official language of their choice.

Assembly staff communications to Assembly Members

We provide Welsh and English versions of the Members' intranet.

We aim to communicate with Assembly Members regarding formal Assembly proceedings in the language of their choice or bilingually.

Correspondence that is sent to all Assembly Members as a group is always bilingual.

The temporary and permanent signs and the posters and information sheets that the Commission provides on the Assembly estate are available bilingually and simultaneously. The Welsh text appears first or uppermost. If English and Welsh versions are available separately, they are equal in quality, format, size and prominence.

Posters or information sheets that are provided by third parties and that are displayed on noticeboards on the Assembly estate are bilingual, or where a Welsh-language version has not been provided, in English only. Organisations that have Welsh language standards and schemes are expected to operate in accordance with their provisions regarding public information and their public image.

To ensure that Assembly-branded documents are available bilingually and that they will be equal in quality, format, size and prominence, updated guidelines and templates, where appropriate, are available for staff.

When we develop new services for Assembly Members and their support staff, we will treat both official languages on a basis of equality and this will be built into the planning processes.

Priorities for 2013-2014

We will make best use of technology to translate documents more quickly and efficiently, using that technology to progress towards a position where more documents, including the Record of Proceedings, are provided in both languages at the same time.

- We will fully explore the benefits of investing in a bespoke machine translation system to enable us to translate more text quicker and more efficiently.

Target: initial project report completed by October 2013.

- We will consider how machine translation can be used not only by the Translation and Reporting Service but other Assembly staff, AMSS and Assembly Members.

Target: to be considered as part of the aforementioned project report case by October 2013.

- We will maintain dialogue with Centres of Excellence in Wales, particularly the higher education sector in Wales and the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner to benefit from the latest developments in language and translation technology.

Target: on-going.

We will ensure that Members have more Welsh-language materials and support to empower them to use Welsh during proceedings.

- We will conduct an annual review of Members' Welsh-language needs in the context of Assembly proceedings, review the support provided to them on these grounds and develop new services accordingly.

Target: initial report to be completed by July 2013 as part of the wider review of Committee support and then on an annual basis linked to the Members' annual survey.

- We will pilot alternative models of supporting Members with their bilingual committee work as part of the Commission's on-going review of Committee support. To inform this, we will use evidence gathered from discussions with Members and their staff and will conduct a business analysis exercise of the processes used by all service areas to prepare for Committee meetings. Innovations may include:
 - expanding the production of glossaries to cover technical terms used in committee policy inquiries;
 - providing suggested questions and, where possible, other parts of committee briefings simultaneously in both languages;
 - exploring ways of providing oral briefings to Members wishing to speak in Welsh prior to the committee meeting itself;
 - agreeing with individual Members in advance of formal meetings the key sections of committee briefings that should be available in Welsh; and

- exploring other ways of providing more research and legal briefing in Welsh in general.

Target: pilot from September 2013.

- We will discuss alternative models of supporting Members with their bilingual Plenary work with Members and their staff, and implement them where possible

Target: from September 2013.

- We will explore ways of enhancing our bilingual video conferencing capability.

Target: initial project report completed by March 2014.

We will enhance the support available to Members to learn or develop their Welsh-language skills.

- We will review Members' Welsh-language learning needs on an annual basis to inform the development of existing or new services that support them in their work.

Target: first audit to be completed by March 2014 and then annually.

- We will review the current provision to inform the next procurement exercise (2014) for expert language tuition support for Members.

Target: to be completed by December 2013.

- We will develop a prospectus of Welsh-language learning opportunities to support the new contract for that language tuition.

Target: by end of 2014.

- We will provide Members and their support staff with "I'm learning Welsh" badges and plan initiatives that encourage Members to practice and use Welsh in the workplace.

Target: by September 2013.

- We will develop a range of Welsh-language tuition methods will be made available to Assembly Members' support staff.

Target: To be available from September 2013.

- When we do not achieve the standards outlined, we will note the exceptions and consider alternative approaches to avoid such instances in the future.

Target: monitoring system established by September 2013.

Services for the people of Wales

Corresponding with the public (email or hard copy)

We respond to all correspondence from the public in the language of the recipient's choice within 15 working days.

Any correspondence following a meeting or telephone conversation is in the language of the initial conversation unless we are aware that the recipient would prefer to receive it in the other official language or bilingually.

Standard or circular correspondence to more than one recipient in Wales are bilingual.

When Welsh and English versions of any correspondence are published separately, both versions are available simultaneously and that they will be equal in quality, format, size and prominence.

Assembly staff auto signatures and out-of-office messages are bilingual. Templates are available to ensure that the English and Welsh text are equal in quality, format and size. The Welsh text appears first or uppermost.

To ensure that Assembly-branded documents are available bilingually and that they will be equal in quality, format, size and prominence, updated guidelines and templates, where appropriate, are available for staff.

Assembly staff can be contacted on email addresses in either of the official languages **enw.cyfenw@cymru.gov.uk** and **name.surname@wales.gov.uk**.

Telephone communications

Any member of the public contacting our switchboard or reception desks in Ty Hywel, the Senedd, Pierhead and North Wales Office is answered with a bilingual greeting.

Assembly staff are encouraged to answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting. We will continue to ensure that the appropriate support is made available for them to do so.

The public have the right to converse with Assembly staff in either of our official languages. Staff let a Welsh-speaking caller know if they cannot converse in Welsh. When non-Welsh speakers respond to a call from a Welsh speaker, we expect them to explain that they do not speak Welsh and offer to continue in English or transfer the call to a Welsh-speaking colleague.

Our main switchboard and reception desks have bilingual answer messages on their answer phones.

Our public image

We deliver advertising, publicity, campaigns or other engagement methods that target the public bilingually. From time to time, this may mean having separate Welsh and English-language materials or products, and they will always be available simultaneously. The Welsh text appears first or uppermost. If Welsh and English versions are available separately, they will be equal in format, size, quality and prominence.

While our corporate identity is bilingual, the following locations are known by a single name in both of the official languages:

- the Senedd and certain areas located inside it - Neuadd, Cwrt, Oriel and Siambr;
- Tŷ Hywel; Siambr Hywel; and
- the Pierhead.

Public information and engagement services

Media releases and information to the media *en masse* are bilingual. Exclusive items for individual media outlets are provided in their official language of choice.

Information relating to the National Assembly is published on two websites, one in Welsh at www.cynulliadcymru.org and the other in English at www.assemblywales.org.

All public information documents prepared by the Assembly which are downloadable from our websites are bilingual.

Our social media feeds are available bilingually, either through one bilingual account or through separate Welsh and English-language accounts. For search and indexing purposes, the information on some of our social media profiles is published in English first and in Welsh second.

We respond to queries on all our social media profiles in the language in which they are posted, regardless of the linguistic version of the profile they are using (e.g. a query in Welsh on the English Facebook page will be replied to in Welsh, and *vice versa*).

Any new online developments will be available in both official languages.

Information videos produced by the Assembly are available bilingually.

For the purposes of Committee business video evidence is broadcast in the original language spoken with Welsh contributions accompanied by English subtitles. Transcripts of footage will be available in the original language with an interpretation from Welsh to English.

Any applications we create for mobile devices are available bilingually.

For all corporate public meetings, seminars, events or exhibitions arranged by Assembly staff we:

- issue bilingual invitations and advertisements;
- provide a simultaneous interpretation service from Welsh to English and inform prospective attendees of the facility at the event to encourage them to contribute in their preferred official language;
- provide supporting papers, any subsequent reports and all other information bilingually;
- do all we can to ensure that Welsh-speaking staff are available at such meetings/events.

The same principles will apply when we have a presence at events organised by third

parties.

Freedom of information requests

When we release information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations it will be provided to the requestor in the official language/s of choice. Information sources will be published in the original languages only. Commission responses to requests are published on our online disclosure log in our official languages.

Visitors to the National Assembly estate

Members of the public can converse with a front-line staff member in either Welsh or English in those public places managed by the Assembly Commission (the Senedd, the Pierhead, Tŷ Hywel and the North Wales Office and in committee meetings and public events held off-site).

From time to time it is not be possible to ensure the presence of Welsh speakers as part of our front of house security service but we are committed to improving the Welsh-language skills of staff who offer such services and this Scheme's principles will be considered when planning for staff training and future recruitment exercises.

Educational visits and Senedd tours are available in either of the official languages and some other languages. Visitors will be offered the choice of language at the point of booking.

Impromptu Senedd tours are available in both official languages and some other languages.

Audio announcements over the public address systems, including the lifts, on the estate are bilingual.

Visitors to the Senedd Café and shop can expect to be served bilingually.

Assembly Member-sponsored events and exhibitions on the Assembly estate

Organisations covered by Welsh language schemes or standards that hold events on the National Assembly's estate targeting Assembly Members or the public are expected to operate in accordance with their scheme or standards regarding public information and their public image.

Organisations not covered by Welsh language schemes or standards will be encouraged to operate in accordance with the principles of this Scheme. The Assembly does not take responsibility for any monolingual materials produced or events sponsored by Assembly Members arranged in conjunction with external organisations on the estate.

Working in partnership

When the Assembly Commission operates as the strategic and financial leader within a formal partnership e.g. the Step up Cymru mentoring scheme, the partnership's public service elements will conform to this Scheme.

When the Assembly Commission joins a formal partnership that is led by others, the Commission's input will conform to this Scheme. Other partners will be encouraged to conform to the principles of this Scheme.

When the Assembly Commission becomes a partner in a consortium, we will encourage the consortium to conform to this Scheme. When we operate in the name of this consortium, we will do so in accordance with this Scheme.

Legal documents and legal agreements with individuals, organisations or groups are offered bilingually, unless there is a request to supply in one official language.

Services through third parties

Any contracts or arrangements between the Assembly Commission and third parties (such as recruitment agencies, catering companies, consultants, contractors etc.) to provide services to the public, will conform to the relevant parts of this Scheme.

Information will be provided to suppliers during the tendering process, outlining in detail how their goods and services will need to conform to this Scheme. This will be done in writing at the start of the process in order to ensure that bids and prices are on an equal and consistent basis. Suppliers of goods or services will be required to report on compliance with the relevant parts of the Scheme in accordance with the relevant clause(s) in the service agreement/contract/order between the Assembly Commission and the individual contractor.

Invitations to tender will be sent to suppliers in their language of choice where known. Unless all those involved in the process understand Welsh, for the purposes of internal evaluation, any tender bids completed in Welsh alone will be translated.

Developing new services for the public

When we develop new services for the public, we will treat both official languages on a basis of equality and this will be built into the planning processes. New services for the public will be bilingual from the outset.

Priorities for 2013-2014

We will develop our capacity to meet, greet and correspond through the medium of Welsh.

- All staff will have a bilingual greeting on their answer phones. We will encourage Welsh speakers to record their own bilingual answer phone messages.

Target: January 2014.

- We will develop the appropriate level of support, guidance and training staff need to help them respond to and/or draft Welsh language responses to correspondence, making the most of the expertise of the Translation and Reporting Service.

Target: Plan of action to be implemented by September 2013.

- We will increase the capacity of the security team to greet members of the public to the

Assembly estate bilingually.

Target: all security staff to have basic meet and greet skills by December 2013.

– We will enhance the capacity to provide services in the café and shop bilingually.

Target: all café staff to have basic bilingual meet and greet and serving skills by December 2013.

We will provide staff with "I'm learning Welsh" badges and plan initiatives that encourage staff to practice and use Welsh in the workplace.

Target: by September 2013.

We will increase our capacity to engage with Welsh-language media and write Welsh text for public information purposes .

– We will consider how we can increase our skills to draft text and correspondence to media outlets and for other public information purposes in Welsh.

– We will develop the appropriate level of support, guidance and training staff need to help them in this respect and make the most of the expertise of the Translation and Reporting Service in doing so.

Target: plan of action to set about improving capacity to draft copy in Welsh to be completed by September 2013.

We will ensure that our contractors understand and conform to our commitment to promote bilingualism and seek opportunities to enhance our bilingual services.

Target: To be implemented from September 2013.

When we do not achieve the standards outlined, we will note the exceptions and consider alternative approaches to avoid such instances in the future.

Target: monitoring system established by September 2013.

Services for Assembly staff

Staff communications

Corporate templates are bilingual.

In accordance with the bilingual ethos of the organisation all messages on our staff news page, group email messages to all staff and staff surveys are bilingual and they are equal in quality, format, size and prominence.

Staff develop any new information about their services targeting Assembly staff (e.g. landing pages on the intranet and hard-copy information) bilingually.

Welsh to English simultaneous interpretation is available at all-staff meetings.

Bilingual services for Assembly staff

The Translation and Reporting Service provides a Welsh language text-proofing service for all Assembly staff.

The Translation and Reporting Service provides updated information about how to use text translation, text proof reading and simultaneous interpretation services during the induction process and on the intranet.

Our IT operating system (Windows 7) can be configured to be used in either of our official languages. Cysgliad is available to all staff from the outset.

Bilingual Skills

The Assembly Commission's approach to manage its bilingual resource is outlined in our Bilingual Skills Strategy which aims to:

- ensure that the appropriate people, skills and support are in place to enable the Commission to deliver on its statutory duty to enable anyone engaged in Assembly proceedings to do so in our official languages.
- set out in a clear and transparent way the arrangements for planning, developing and managing the organisation's bilingual skills resource;
- to provide Assembly Members, their support staff and Assembly staff with a range of tuition and learning opportunities that enables them to develop their Welsh language skills in a way that is always tailored to the business need, and in so far as is possible, their individual needs.

Staff induction and language awareness

Language awareness courses will be available to all Assembly staff.

We ensure all new staff members are made aware of the Assembly's commitment to providing services in both official languages in the induction process.

Priorities for 2013-2014

Implement the Bilingual Skills Strategy.

Target: consultation with staff from July 2013 for September launch.

We will actively promote the wide range of services offered by the Translation Service to maximise the benefits of these exemplary services.

Target: new intranet site available from September 2013.

We will explore others ways of enabling staff to use Welsh in the workplace.

- Pilot how interpretation could be used at smaller meetings to provide increasing opportunities to speak Welsh in the workplace.

Target: from September 2013.

- All HR and other corporate forms and policies will be translated into Welsh when resources allow

Target: first phase over summer recess 2013. All work to be completed by September 2014.

Any new corporate policies e.g. HR, finance forms and policies will be available in both official languages from the outset.

Target: from September 2013.

Staff will be able to input information and requests into the new HR and payroll system in either or both our official languages.

Target: system goes live Autumn 2013.

Any contributions received that have been written in Welsh for 'The Slate', the internal staff magazine, will appear bilingually.

Target: May 2013

Contributions that are corporate in nature for The Slate that are received in English will appear bilingually.

Target: May 2013

When we do not achieve the standards outlined, we will note the exceptions and consider alternative approaches to avoid such instances in the future.

Target: monitoring system established by September 2013.

Monitoring and reporting

Co-ordinating the Scheme's implementation

A designated Official Languages Scheme Manager will co-ordinate the implementation and development of the Scheme.

Each service area will designate a team member as their Official Languages Scheme co-ordinator.

An Official Languages Scheme Co-ordinators network will meet quarterly to support the Scheme Manager and consider issues within its remit. The network will be responsible for:

- overseeing the operation of the Official Languages Scheme and the relevant actions to their service area;
- feeding back messages concerning the Official Languages Scheme to their service areas, and co-ordinating responses as required;
- considering relevant issues and topics of mutual benefit to Assembly services;
- promoting and sharing good practice where it exists;
- raising awareness of and promoting the provision outlined in the Bilingual Skills Strategy;
- completing an annual compliance report on behalf of the service area.

Dealing with complaints and breaches

We will ensure all managers are clear on their responsibilities under the Scheme at the start of every performance monitoring year.

Complaints and their responses will be processed by each service area in conjunction with their Official Languages Scheme co-ordinator. Complaints or breaches will be dealt with as any other correspondence and will always be reported to the Official Languages Scheme Manager.

The Annual Compliance Report

The process of compiling our annual compliance report will be managed by the Official Languages Scheme Manager, and be prepared for the Assembly's consideration in accordance with paragraph 8(9) of Schedule 2 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 (as inserted by section 2 of the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012).

An annual report will be laid before the Assembly for its consideration every July for the lifetime of this Scheme.

Priorities for 2013-2014

We will ensure that the appropriate governance arrangements are in place to monitor the implementation and delivery of the Scheme.

- Each service area will appoint a designated Official Languages Scheme co-ordinator.

Target: completed March 2013.

- We will establish an Official Languages Scheme Co-ordinators Network, to be convened by the Official Languages Manager, and meet at least quarterly. The network will report to the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

Target: April 2013.

- The network will seek solutions so that we better equip ourselves to respond positively to breaches of the Scheme or other issues as they occur.

Target: quarterly at each network meeting (from September 2013).

- We will appoint a designated Official Languages Scheme Manager.

Target: June 2013.

- Each service area will produce a report on any breaches of the Scheme to the Official Languages Scheme Manager annually.

Target: annually in June (first report in June 2014).

- The Official Languages Scheme Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating the annual report to be laid before the Assembly setting out how the Commission has, during the year in question, given effect to the Scheme.

Target: July each year.

- An action plan outlining priorities and actions for the following year will accompany the annual report.

Target: July each year.