

BI-LINGUAL LANGUAGE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Antur Teifi's aim is to follow good practice under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and this policy applies to all our business activities. The Welsh Language Act 1993 set up the Welsh Language Board, with the duty of promoting the Welsh language and ensuring compliance throughout the public sector. It also gave all Welsh speakers the absolute right to speak Welsh in courts under all circumstances.

The Welsh Language Measure 2011 placed a duty on public bodies to provide services in Welsh. It has created a new Welsh Language Commissioner with enforcement powers in order to protect the rights of Welsh speakers to access services in Welsh. This will ensure that the Welsh language has official status in Wales. There are duties on bodies to use the Welsh language, and these rights can be enforced to enable Welsh speakers to use the language in dealings with public sector organisations and the services they provide.

When new organisational policies, practices or initiatives are introduced we will make sure they facilitate and further what we promise to do in this Policy.

Integral to the delivery of our services will be the raising of a meaningful awareness of the Welsh language and its business potential in general, and within predominantly Welsh-speaking areas in particular.

OUR WELSH LANGUAGE POLICY PRINCIPLES

We have adopted the Welsh Language Act principle that the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality. Both languages will enjoy the same status and validity.

This Policy sets out the steps we are taking to implement that principle in our work.

In dealing with our clients and other customers, we are trying to:

- *adopt the same aims and professional standards in providing a service in Welsh and in English, wherever possible,*
- *enable our customers, wherever possible, to use Welsh as freely as English in dealing with us, and ensure that clients are informed up-front that they have a choice of language when seeking information and advice,*
- *make our clients aware of the need to consider the use of Welsh in the businesses they are setting up or developing .*

Issue: 7	Date 01/06/2018	Page 1 of 7	Originator: <i>MH Morris</i>	Authorised: <i>[Signature]</i>
Staff Handbook		Appendix 11		



We are taking this commitment seriously, and adopting a pro-active approach to language choice in our services, wherever possible. In contact with customers, this means being upfront in offering language choice, and trying our best to deliver it.

This will involve us in consolidating the use of Welsh in our day-to-day work.

VISITORS TO OUR PREMISES

Customers visiting our premises are welcome to address their enquiries through the medium of Welsh or English. A bilingual notice is displayed in the reception area to make it clear to visitors that they can deal with the organisation in either language. Some of the staff working in our reception areas are bilingual.

We will ask visitors whether they would like to deal with someone in Welsh.

Welsh-speaking member[s] of staff is/are available to deal in Welsh with any face-to-face enquiries, as required, either on the spot or through arrangement.

Material on doors, walls, notice boards, display racks, shelves and tables in our reception and communal areas and corridors will be visibly bilingual. This includes fixed and temporary signs and notices, posters, literature and so on.

If others want us to display their material, we will ask them to provide it bilingually.

TELEPHONE CONTACT

We welcome telephone calls from customers in Welsh or English.

Switchboard calls will be answered with a bilingual greeting and dealt with in the caller's preferred language, either by the person answering the phone or another member of staff.

In the event that a Welsh-speaking person is not available to take a call, then arrangements will be made for a Welsh speaker to return the call as soon as possible.

Our switchboard voicemail service contains a bilingual message, and customers are welcome to leave messages in Welsh or English.

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

Issue: 7	Date: 01/06/2018	Page 2 of 7
--------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------

COUNSELLING AND CLIENT MANAGEMENT

We will always try, wherever possible, to provide personal counselling in the language preferred by clients. This will be via a member or staff or a contracted business advisor. We will establish up-front whether clients would like to talk to a bilingual counsellor. Information sent to a client in advance of the first meeting will be in both languages, and subsequently provided according to the client's preference. Should others need to become involved [e.g. a marketing specialist], we will try to provide language continuum, but that may not always be possible. The client's preferred language will be relayed during referral as a matter of course.

We will consider providing translation facilities in a group discussion.

We will try and reflect language preference in any training sessions or other support events we arrange where clients are brought together. We have a list of trainers and speakers, and some of them are bilingual.

LETTERS, E-MAILS AND DOCUMENTS

We welcome letters and other written correspondence such as faxes and e-mail in Welsh and in English.

Correspondence will be replied to in the language used by the customer, in accordance with response targets. All hard-copy letters that we issue will be signed, whichever language is used in the letter.

All correspondence originated by our members of staff, whether in English or in Welsh, will include a bilingual footnote indicating that the recipients may respond in either Welsh or English, according to their preference.

Any subsequent replies to responses received will be in the language of those responses. The response times for letters and e-mails that need to be translated might on occasions be greater than those sent in one language only.

Standard letters and grouped letters will usually be sent out bilingually.

If the chosen language of the recipient is known (e.g. through marketing material, previous meetings or conversations, telephone calls and e-mails) correspondence will be sent out in the recipient's language of choice unless it has been agreed otherwise.

The approach above applies to all types of written correspondence. Translation arrangements are in place to assist staff.

Issue: 7	Date: 01/06/2018	Page 3 of 7
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MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Those attending receptions, public meetings, workshops or conferences held by us will be welcome to contribute through the medium of Welsh or English, and this will be made known in the papers and at the start of proceedings. Invitations and advertisements for these meetings will be bilingual, and will either note that translation facilities will be provided, or ask people to let the event organisers know their preferred language in advance so that translation facilities can be arranged when needed.

Although simultaneous translation facilities may be used in the plenary session, decisions will be made on an individual basis as to whether or not workshops will also contain simultaneous translation services. Decisions will be based on logistics, demand and cost effectiveness.

Welsh speaking members of staff will be present at business events to welcome attendees and deal with any queries.

Our normal practice will be to provide papers and other information in Welsh and English, including our presentations.

Where we can, we will use Welsh ourselves from the platform, podium or floor, and will encourage others to do the same when arrangements are made and via the person chairing the event.

OUR PUBLIC FACE AND PRODUCTS

Our corporate identity

Our corporate identity is fully bilingual. 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, publications, advertisements, website, signs and vehicles.

Signs

Our permanent and temporary signs inside and outside our premises will be bilingual. This is existing practice

Other signs, in common areas and outside our premises, belong to the property owner and are beyond our control.

Issue: 7	Date: 01/06/2018	Page 4 of 7
--------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------

On our bilingual signs, the Welsh and English text will be treated equally with regard to size, legibility and prominence. 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.

Our website

Our website is and will be fully bilingual.

Our opening page will state that customers are welcome to use Welsh or English in dealing with us where possible.

When we place bilingual information on our website, both language versions will be placed at the same time.

Publications and visual material

Our normal practice will be to publish bilingually the material we make available to the public and clients, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. This will include general corporate publications, topic leaflets, guidance, forms, advertising literature, reports, and questionnaires. This is current practice and will continue.

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.

The above will also apply to material made available electronically on our website, including static and interactive forms, and material on CD Rom or other form including the Intranet. When we distribute forms on behalf of other organisations, for instance the Welsh Assembly Government or local authorities, we will ensure that we do so in accordance with their bilingual policy.

Marketing and publicity activities

When we organise or attend an event, and display our material, we will display any Welsh versions of our material too. Any display boards or exhibition text will be bilingual.

Issue: 7	Date: 01/06/2018	Page 5 of 7
--------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------



When we place advertisements in newspapers, magazines or other publications, they will carry our bilingual brand and corporate information. When staffing exhibitions stands and displays, we will involve a bilingual member of staff or counsellor.

When we undertake public surveys, we will ensure that all aspects of communication with the public will be bilingual and that those completing the questionnaire are informed they may complete it in either language.

Public notices and advertising

When we place an official notice in the press, on our premises and on our website, such as notice of a public meeting, it will be bilingual.

Our staff recruitment adverts will be bilingual.

MANAGING AND SUPPORTING OUR POLICY

This is a company policy, approved by the Management Board. We will coordinate and review its implementation as part of our ongoing business administration.

One of our Managers is tasked with leading and overseeing progress.

An action plan is in place to guide delivery across the company.

We will provide our staff with encouragement and guidance on its implementation, so that they know what to do, and are confident in doing it.

Translation arrangements are in place to assist with the delivery. We will monitor and quality-assure our service through the medium of Welsh as part of our customer care arrangements, applying the same evaluation criteria as we would to other aspects of our service. This includes dealing with customer concerns.

Where possible our contractors and agents will need to apply our Policy to the work they do on our behalf. They will be briefed on what we expect, and their delivery monitored.

Any member of staff wishing to learn or improve their Welsh skills for use in the business will be supported.

Issue: 7	Date: 01/06/2018	Page 6 of 7
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Staff in posts for which Welsh skills would be useful in delivering or furthering this Policy will be encouraged to acquire Welsh language skills as part of their progression.

We benchmarked what we could deliver when we adopted this Policy, and will annually review our compliance and progress with implementation, and assess whether we can develop our Welsh language activity further. Where more can be done, we will review the Policy wording and move forward.

If you would like to contact us to discuss the contents of the policy or the procedure, please contact the person below in the first instance:

Marion Morris
Business Park
Aberarad
Newcastle Emlyn
Carmarthenshire SA38 9DB
Or by email at mmorris@anturteifi.org.uk

Issue: 7	Date: 01/06/2018	Page 7 of 7
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