

Welsh Language Scheme: Cadwyn Housing Association

Welsh Language Scheme prepared in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993 (the Act) and the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations in Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, March 2012.

1. Opening Statement

Aim of the Scheme:

Cadwyn Housing Association has adopted the principle, that in the conduct of public business in Wales, that it will treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality. This scheme notes how we will operate that principle in providing services to the public in Wales.

Objectives:

- to enable everyone who uses a service or is in discussion with the Association to do so through the medium of Welsh or English according to the personal choice of the individual.
- to ensure high quality services through the medium of Welsh

The Association acknowledges that members of the public can express their opinions and needs better in their chosen language. It also acknowledges that enabling the public to use the Welsh language is a matter of good practice rather than a concession, and that denying them the right to use their chosen language could place them in a disadvantaged position. The Association will therefore offer the public the right to choose which language to use when dealing with it, in accordance with the principle above.

2. Introduction

➤ Background and Corporate Values

- Cadwyn Housing Association was established in 1972 and registered as a housing association in 1974. It is an Industrial and Provident Society, an exempt charity and a Registered Social Landlord.
- Our mission is to provide good quality homes and builds communities through partnership and collaboration.

➤ Structure and Area of Operation

- Cadwyn is a non profit making organisation, governed by a voluntary Board of Management that employs staff to carry out its aims and objectives. It is run by a Chief Executive and team of Directors. The office is based in the Cardiff.
- With the exception of a small number of homes in Caerphilly, it owns over 1200 homes in Cardiff. It also manages homes leased from the private sector to improve access to permanent accommodation for homeless people, and a lettings agency.

➤ Service Users

- Our service users are primarily our tenants. The role of a housing association is to provide accommodation to those who have least ability to secure a home through other means. Many of those we house will be on benefit or in low paid employment.

➤ The Welsh Language

- The proportion of Welsh speakers in Cardiff according to the last Census (2011) comprises of 11% of the population, an increase from 1991, from 6.6%.
- Cadwyn's Tenant Survey, reporting in 2011, stated that Welsh was the main language spoken at home in 1.6% of households, although it didn't record the proportion of Welsh speakers. (Although small, it is worth noting that an apparent lack of demand to a service may be artificially depressed by the lack of provision of a service.)

- We annually survey staff to find out their abilities and attitudes towards the Welsh Language. We are currently in the process of identifying those with any Welsh Language skills.
- Cadwyn will endeavour to act in accordance with the principles of the Assembly Governments action plan for a bilingual Wales.
- For further information about our policy for the Welsh language, the contact is the Chief Executive, who can be contacted at the Cardiff office.

3. Planning and Delivering Services

Policies and Initiatives

Mainstreaming is the term used to describe the work carried out under this policy. The Association supports the principle of mainstreaming the Welsh language, which is defined by the Welsh Government as follows:

“To consider the Welsh language in all aspects of your work and in all that you do, with the aim of ensuring that every opportunity is taken to promote and support the Welsh language; to contribute towards the Government’s vision of a truly bilingual Wales; and to plan, provide and evaluate services in Welsh and in English”.

In formulating new policies and initiatives, or in amending policies, the Association will assess their linguistic impact and make sure they are consistent with this Language Scheme and will ensure that the measures in the Scheme are implemented when new policies and initiatives are implemented.

The Association will consult the Welsh Language Board beforehand regarding any proposal which would directly affect this Language Scheme. This Scheme will not be amended without the prior agreement of the Board.

We will ensure that whoever is involved in the formulation of policies is aware of the Scheme and of the Association’s responsibilities under the Regulatory Code and the Welsh Language Act 1993.

Service Provision

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

The Association will carry out the commitments noted in the Scheme by implementing the following arrangements

- organise the service team so that staff who can speak Welsh can deal with the public who speak Welsh;
- adopt systems or procedures which facilitate the provision of service in the chosen language of the person receiving the service;
- employ professional translators;
- raise awareness among the Association's staff of the Language Scheme;
- consider the need to increase the availability of Welsh language skills by means of training and recruitment.

Services provided for the public by other organisations

Regulatory functions and third party services

The Association will encourage others in the community including voluntary bodies and companies to make use of the Welsh language.

Partnerships

When the Association joins or forms a partnership, it will ask prospective partners about their Welsh language schemes, equality and language policies or the means by which they will operate bilingually. Within any partnership, the Association will offer advice and support to the other partner organisations.

The Association will ensure that officers are aware of the requirements of the Language Scheme when operating in partnership.

Quality Standards

Services provided in Welsh and in English will be equal in quality and they will be provided within the same timetable.

The Association will highlight this central principle in key documents such as corporate plans and annual reports. It should be outlined also in other situations where statements are made regarding equal opportunity and standard of service.

4. Dealing with the Welsh speaking Public

Correspondence

The Association welcomes correspondence in Welsh.

All correspondence will be dealt with promptly and correspondence through the medium of Welsh should not in itself lead to delay. Our targets for replying to correspondence in Welsh will be the same as our targets for replying to correspondence in English.

When someone writes to us in Welsh, we will provide a reply in Welsh (if a reply is needed).

Materials enclosed with bilingual correspondence will be bilingual.

We will keep a record of those persons who wish to deal with the Association in Welsh.

We will agree arrangements for correspondence and for arranging translation.

Communication over the telephone

The Association welcomes telephone calls in Welsh and our standard practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or in English when dealing with us over the telephone.

Our switchboard staff will answer telephone calls with a bilingual greeting.

In order to achieve the aim of treating the Welsh and English languages on an equal basis, we will take the following steps to enable Welsh speakers to deal with the Association in Welsh over the telephone:

- provide an internal directory of Welsh speakers to whom calls can be transferred
- provide staff with guidelines on how to deal with telephone calls from Welsh speakers and ensure that they are familiar with the arrangements, including the use of Language Line

Meetings

When we arrange or attend a face to face meeting with the public, we will find out their chosen language at the first opportunity and, wherever possible, we will ensure that a qualified member of staff who speaks Welsh deals with those who note that their chosen language is Welsh.

If no suitable Welsh speaker is available, we will offer them the option of continuing with the meeting in English or dealing with the matter by correspondence in Welsh.

When we arrange public meetings, we will make it clear in the invitation that those who are invited are welcome to contribute in the language of their choice.

All invitees will be asked to let us know in advance whether they wish to use other languages and on the basis of this information we will assess whether translations facilities are required, and provide if appropriate.

Communicating with the public in other ways

We will consider the best ways of meeting the needs of Welsh speakers in whichever way we deal with the public.

The Association is committed to enabling the public to deal with us in Welsh through electronic communication, on line or other media.

We will consider the requirements of this Scheme when providing or planning new information technology systems, or when providing interactive media.

5. The Public Face of the Association

Corporate Identity

Our public image, including our address, logo, corporate slogan, visual identity and any other standard information used on the Association's materials and goods (such as headed paper, fax paper, business cards, publications etc) and in other circumstances such as signs, vehicles and buildings, is bilingual.

Signs

When we renew or re-erect any signs we will ensure that the new versions are totally bilingual. Signs erected for the first time will be totally bilingual

The size, standard of clarity and prominence of the words on the signs will respect the principle of language equality.

Publishing and Printing Materials

The documents that are to be published bilingually will include those which are published or available to the public in general and:

- provide information about the Association's services
- are annual or periodical publications

Press Releases and Marketing Campaigns

Given the nature of our customer base and the tight geographical area within which we provide services, press releases will usually be in English. However, there may be circumstances in which the use of bilingual material would be relevant. We will consider all cases on an individual basis and respond positively as appropriate.

Advertising

Any adverts will usually be in English, unless there is a specific need for a Welsh speaker to be recruited. Where this is the case, adverts and supporting documents will be produced bilingually and translation facilities offered for the interview process.

Web site

All bilingual documents produced by Cadwyn will be posted to the website.

Forms and explanatory material

The Association will try to establish the chosen language of members of the public by including a “language choice” question on the first form in a series. Once the chosen language of an individual is known, we will distribute material in Welsh, English, or bilingually from then on, as appropriate.

6. Implementation and Review of the Scheme

Staffing

The Association will make arrangements to ensure, to the extent that it is reasonably practical, that workplaces which have contact with the public have access to staff with appropriate Welsh language skills to enable those workplaces to provide a service in Welsh. The degree to which this is necessary or possible will vary, depending on the service and on the area.

In order to ensure that we have appropriate Welsh language skills in the correct places, we will follow the following process:

- We will note those workplaces and posts where the ability to speak Welsh is desirable or essential
- We will conduct an audit to establish the number of staff who have Welsh language skills, as well as their level of ability and location.
- The results of these two exercises will be compared in order to identify workplaces where there is a shortage of staff with appropriate skills in the Welsh language.

We will respond to any lack of skills by means of our recruitment and training,

Recruitment

Our recruitment material will confirm our support and encouragement for the Welsh language, and promote the opportunities to use it in work.

The Association will also provide awareness training for staff with regard to the requirements of this Scheme. Our standard practice will be to include such training in the induction of new staff.

Training

We are committed to providing services to Welsh speaking customers on request. This will be through a combination of internal resources and external procurement, depending upon the demand expressed. We will encourage existing welsh speaking staff to improve their language skills in order to provide services, and support staff who wish to learn. The cost of this training will be met through the training budget agreed each year by the Board of Management, based upon business needs as part of the annual Business Plan and Budget cycle.

6.5 Administrative Arrangements

This Scheme has the full authority, support and approval of the Association. The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Language Scheme and all the Association's members of staff have a responsibility to know how to implement the Scheme effectively.

Directors and Managers will have responsibility for implementing those aspects of the Scheme which are relevant to their work.

We will assist the implementation of the Scheme by providing written guidance and directions for staff.

The Association's usual internal business language is English. We will look for opportunities to enable members of staff to use Welsh in the workplace.

When necessary we will ask for advice from the Welsh Language Board regarding use of the Welsh language in the workplace.

6.6 Reviewing the Implementation of the Scheme

The Human Resources Manager has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this Scheme

Monitoring this Scheme will be a continuous and structured activity. This will include monitoring the following fields:

- compliance with the Scheme
- quality of service – to look at complaints and at the front line service
- management and administration
- adequacy of linguistic skills
- mainstreaming

We will seek the opinions of Welsh speakers occasionally regarding the range and standard of services provided by the Association through the medium of Welsh.

We will use the Association's standard complaints procedure to record and deal with complaints about this Scheme and will ensure that it will be possible to monitor specific complaints about the Scheme.

The Association welcomes and records recommendations on how to improve the service.

The Chief Executive will report to the Management Board bi-annually and will send a copy of the report to the Welsh Language Board. The report will follow a format agreed with the Board and will include information about the nature of any complaints and improvement suggestions received from the public in respect of the Scheme.

6.7 Publication of Information

We will include a statement in our annual report noting where members of the public can obtain a copy of our annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Board.

6.8 Publicity

We will ensure that members of the public who deal with the Association know about this Scheme and its contents, and how they can conduct their dealings with the Association in Welsh.

Our methods of publicising the Scheme and its contents will follow our usual corporate publicity arrangements, and will include ensuring that the Scheme is published in a prominent location on our website.

We will ensure that the Association's staff and agencies are familiar with the measures included in the Scheme in order to ensure that attention is paid to the measures whenever appropriate.

Timetable – Action Plan

	Target / Task	Indicator	Officer with responsibility	Completion date	Action
1.	Survey staff to measure competence in and interest in learning welsh	Completed survey	HR	Annually	Completed September 2013.
2.	Arrange appropriate training	Percentage of staff learning to speak welsh	HR	Annually	Information emailed to staff re training courses and
3.	Amend recruitment literature to demonstrate support for the language	Literature amended, monitor % of welsh speaking applicants	HR	For all jobs	We monitor the percentage of Welsh speaking applicants for each job.
4.	Raise awareness of staff about the Welsh Language Scheme	Discussion at staff meetings.	Chief Executive / HR Manager	Annually	Raised at staff meetings
5.	Train managers to implement the scheme	Discussion at Joint Directors and Managers meeting; and at	Chief Executive / HR Manager	Annually	The Corporate Services Manager headlined the importance of the scheme at the Managers meeting. Managers were asked to take on board the scheme and identify relevant areas of how it affects them

		induction			
6.	Survey tenants / applicants to identify language of choice. Amend database	Tenant survey	Director of Housing and Community Services	Ongoing	We ask this question in our tenant survey (on a tri-annual basis) Our next tenant survey is 2014.
7.	Ensure translation of annual reports and key documents relating to equal opportunities and service standards	Literature translated	HR	Ongoing	Annual report is translated on an annual basis.
8.	Promote our language commitment to stakeholders	Include statement in newsletters and annual report	Chief Executive	Annually	This is reinforced within the Annual Report.
9.	Ensure written translation services are available for use (we already access oral translation)	Investigate and cost availability and access.	Chief Executive	Completed	We have a translator in place that we use for written services. Completed.
10.	Train reception staff to answer the phone bilingually and how to respond appropriately	All reception staff can give bilingual greeting and understand	HR	Ongoing	Document on our intranet site that highlights greetings. To be refreshed following internal restructure

		process			
11.	Replace office signage with bilingual signs	Replace signs	Director of Technical Services	Ongoing	Completed
12.	Ensure web site contains bilingual messages and promotes the scheme	Bilingual access to site, WL scheme and action plan posted	Director of Finance and ITC	Ongoing	<p>The web site has recently been updated and linked to Google Translate (following review of how many visits to site)</p> <p>Revised WLS to be uploaded following update of action plan.</p>

