

Equality of Opportunity Committee

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National Assembly for Wales Commission (Assembly Commission) - Draft Accessible Information Policy

Discussion

This draft policy is "a work in progress" and colleagues are in the process of gathering feedback from staff and service users to inform the policy. A revised version will be available in the autumn term. The policy provides a commitment to members of the public as to how the Assembly Commission intends to make information accessible and informs staff as to why and how we make our information accessible.

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the work in progress on this policy and should they have any comments they wish to deed into the process, to write to the Secretariat. Members are also asked to note that Committee will consider the final draft of this policy in the autumn term.

Committee Service June 2008

Work in progress
National Assembly for Wales Commission (Assembly Commission)
Draft Accessible Information Policy

Status

This draft policy is a work in progress and we are in the process of gathering feedback from staff and service users to inform the policy. A revised version will be available next term.

Purpose

This policy provides a commitment to members of the public as to how we make information accessible and informs our staff as to why and how we make our information accessible.

The National Assembly for Wales Commission (Assembly Commission) is fully committed to ensuring that everyone is included in, and can benefit on an equal basis from, all of the opportunities and services offered by the National Assembly for Wales. We produce information for the public in many different ways and must ensure that the information that we provide is available to everyone. All individuals and communities in Wales have the right to access and understand information in a manner appropriate to their needs. By providing appropriate communication support we can help to remove barriers to full participation in and interaction with the business of the National Assembly for Wales.

A separate Welsh Language Scheme has been produced to ensure that we operate as a bilingual organisation.

This policy will be supported by a toolkit for staff giving clear guidance on how to deliver accessible information.

Policy Aims

The key aims of this policy are:

to ensure that everyone in Wales is able to access and understand all information produced by the Assembly Commission

to make sure that all Assembly Commission staff are aware of what is expected of them and who is responsible for making information accessible

to ensure consistency within the Assembly Commission

to meet our legal duties and go beyond what is required to be an exemplar organisation

to pursue value for money and effectiveness in making information accessible

To achieve these objectives the Assembly Commission will:

ensure appropriate access to interpreting, translating and communication support for all people in Wales

make sure people in Wales are aware of their rights and entitlements

allocate appropriate resources

consult with the people of Wales to ensure that our communication support facilities are appropriate to their needs

give staff sufficient guidance and support to enable them to effectively put the accessible information policy into action.

This policy covers:

all printed information available to the general public

the Assembly Commission website

letters and emails

public meetings and events

public contact - reception, visitors' centre, telephone contact, outreach work.

Who may need alternative formats?

People who are deaf or have hearing impairments

People who are blind or have visual impairments

People who have a learning disability / difficulty

People who do not speak and/or read neither English nor Welsh

Budget

If a request for accessible formats is received then costs may be incurred. These costs must not be passed onto the service user. [Responsibility for meeting costs will depend on the nature of the request but we are discussing this with service areas to ascertain the most appropriate, efficient mechanism to ensure the quickest service to the public].

Written Information Plain Language

Where possible, written material produced by the Assembly Commission will be in plain English and plain Welsh and will avoid unnecessary jargon. Staff will be encouraged to produce summaries of key documents to be available in Plain English and Plain Welsh. It may not be possible, however, to produce certain legal documents and Assembly publications (i.e. Committee reports) in plain language/summary version.

Languages other than English and Welsh

The following key Assembly Commission documents will clearly display information about obtaining translations of summary documents in languages other than English and Welsh on request. With reference to other languages we also include British Sign Language.

Key documents:

Corporate Strategy

Annual Report

Annual Equalities Report

Single Equalities Scheme

"Your Guide to the Assembly"

Service areas producing these documents will ensure that a Plain English and Plain Welsh summary of these documents is produced.

Public documents other than the key documents can be translated at the discretion of the appropriate service area in line with available resources. All public documents will display information on translation services.

Publications for Children and Young People

Our Public Information and Education service have a range of documents designed specifically for a younger audience.

Provision of written material in alternative formats

All documents will be available in the following alternative formats on request:

Braille

Audio - tape/CD

Large print

Electronic formats - disk / CD-ROM / e-mail

Easy read English and Easy Welsh

Other alternative formats will be considered upon request.

All publications will clearly display information on how to obtain alternative formats.

Obtaining a publication in an alternative format

The appropriate contact points are being identified at the time of writing.

Contact with the Public, Public meetings and events

The Assembly Commission will provide the best possible access in line with available resources, and will meet minimum access standards. Information will be provided on access provision and contact details for any requests for extra services. The Assembly Commission will meet requests for extra services where it is reasonable to do so within available resources.

Correspondence

The Assembly Commission will accept and respond to correspondence from the public in languages other than English and Welsh and accessible formats.

Telephone inquiries

A textphone service is available for members of the public who are deaf or hearing impaired. The textphone number for the Assembly booking line is 0845 010 5678 and will be publicised along with the phone and fax number. The Equalities Team can also be contacted via textphone at 029 2089 8601.

Staff at the Assembly Commission can both make and receive calls via BT's Type Talk service.

Telephone interpretation is available in up to 60 languages for people whose first language is neither English nor Welsh. To access this service, telephone 0800 028 0073 and indicate the language of your choice. The operator will connect you to an interpreter. If you are calling from a mobile phone the number is 0207 655 4915.

Contact at reception and information points

Basic information about the National Assembly for Wales, the Senedd building, and security and evacuation procedures will be available at reception in a range of languages, BSL and Braille.

Website

The National Assembly for Wales will, as far as is practicable, follow guidance to ensure that our website is viewable in all browsers, is compatible with current access technology and follows best practice in relation to accessibility.

Users requiring a file in an alternative format to that which is currently available on this website should contact us. We will do our best to accommodate all requests.

[We are due to carry out a web access audit on our website using feedback from users. The results of the audit will inform this section of the policy.]

Monitoring the Accessible Information Policy

We will monitor the take-up of requests of Accessible Information and amend the policy accordingly.

Enabling staff to use the policy

The Assembly Commission will make sure that staff have appropriate support to effectively put this policy into practice. This will include the production of a toolkit containing clear operational guidance.

This policy will be publicised on our website and will be available at the Reception area in the Senedd in alternative formats. If you have any comments about this policy please contact the Equalities Team on: