

# Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

## NAFWC 2007 (Paper 3)

**Date:** 4 July 2007

**Time:** 9.30-12.00

**Venue:** Committee Room 1

**Author name and contact number:** Craig Stephenson ext 8230

## ASSEMBLY COMMISSION POLICIES

### Purpose and summary of issues

1. The Shadow Commission saw draft versions of our Welsh Language Scheme. It has now been refined and approved by the Welsh Language Board. The Code of Practice on Complaints is a revised version of the previous Code which now reflects the new structure of the Assembly Parliamentary Service. Both papers have been considered and agreed by the Executive Board.

### Recommendations (including priority deadline)

2. To agree our Welsh Language Scheme (Annex 1) and the Code of Practice on Complaints (Annex 2)

### Discussion

3. Annex 1 - The Scheme has been developed over a number of months following receipt of an initial draft and public consultation between 19 February and 30 March 2007. Briefly, the Scheme comprises of a statement on our ambition, the planning and provision of services, dealing with the Welsh speaking public, our public image and our administrative arrangements.

4. The Welsh Language Board has been closely involved in its development and subject to the Commission's approval it is proposed to circulate the Scheme to AMs after the meeting on 4 July and table a motion for its formal approval in Plenary on 11 July. A launch will be held in the Cwrt immediately after Plenary approval to which all AMs; the Chair, Chief Executive and relevant staff of the Welsh Language Board; our Welsh language co-ordinators and the Project Implementation Group will be invited. Guidance to staff has been prepared and will be available to accompany the launch of the Scheme.

5. Annex 2 – The Code of Practice has been revised to make it more user-friendly, streamline the process and to reflect the new structure. The user can make a complaint to the Head of the Corporate Unit with an appeal to the Chief Executive or Chief Operating Officer.

### **Governance Matters**

#### **Financial implications**

6. Annex 1 - The costs of meeting the requirements of the Scheme will be met by individual directorate running costs. Printing and publishing are being arranged internally so there are no additional costs. Costs associated with the official launch are to be met from the Corporate Unit hospitality budget.

7. Annex 2 - The costs of meeting the requirements of the Code will be met under the normal running costs of the Corporate Unit.

#### **Risk Assessment**

8. Annex 1 - There are some risk management issues to consider in relation to compliance with the Scheme requirements. However, Welsh language coordinators will be required to work with the Corporate Unit to develop an appropriate compliance tool so that the twice-yearly monitoring is meaningful. Language awareness training for staff is also being considered.

9. Annex 2 – There would be reputational risks associated if no Code was in place.

#### **Compliance**

10. Annex 1 - The Assembly Commission is adopting a Welsh Language Scheme under section 21 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and according to guidelines published by the Welsh Language Board under section 9 of the Act.

11. Annex 2 - Neither the Government of Wales Act 2006 nor Standing Orders require the Assembly/the Commission to establish procedures for the investigation of complaints. Nevertheless paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 2 to the 2006 Act states that the Commission may do anything which appears to it necessary or appropriate for the purpose, or in connection with, the discharge of its functions. The Commission provides a wide range of services, including some involving the public, and any complaints procedure would be connected with such provision.

#### **Publication**

12. There are no issues of confidentiality and this paper and its annexes may be published.

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES**

[Logo]

**Draft Welsh Language Scheme  
July 2007**

This Welsh Language Scheme was prepared under section 21 of the Welsh Language Act  
– and according to guidelines published by the Welsh Language Board under section 9 of the Act. It came into effect on [xxxxx].

<b>Content s number</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>5</b>
	The Assembly's Ambition	5
<b>3.</b>	<b>Planning and Provision of Services</b>	<b>6</b>

	Providing Bilingual Services	6
	Services through third parties	6
	Quality Standards	7
	Mainstreaming the Welsh Language	7
	Providing Services	7
<b>4.</b>	<b>Dealing with the Welsh speaking Public</b>	<b>7</b>
	Correspondence	7
	Electronic mail	8
	Telephone Calls	9
	Public Meetings	10
	Individual meetings	11
	Video conferencing	11
	Public Places	11
	Assembly attendance at Meetings, Exhibitions and Public Events	12
	National Assembly for Wales Proceedings at Plenary and Committee	1
	Other links with the public	12
	The Internet	13
<b>5.</b>	<b>Our Public Image</b>	<b>13</b>
	Publicity, Exhibitions, Advertising campaigns	13
	Official Signs	14
	Brands and Logos	14
	Documents for the proceedings of Plenary and Committees	14
	Other publications (including electronic versions)	15
	Forms	15
	Press Releases	16
	External Recruitment Advertisements	16
	Re-branding the Assembly	16
<b>6.</b>	<b>Administrative Arrangements</b>	<b>17</b>
	Staffing	17
	Recruitment	18
	Welsh Language Training	19
	Vocational Training	19
	Information Communications technology	20
	Working in Partnership	20
	Internal arrangements	20

	Written Guidelines	21
	Translators	22
	Briefing and Training	22
	Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations	
23		
	Monitoring	
23		
	Reviewing and updating the Scheme	24
	Publicity for bilingual services	24
	Dealing with Complaints	24

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Section 21 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 provides for Crown Bodies to prepare and implement a Welsh Language Scheme. A Scheme should set out the measures, in relation to the Welsh language, that a body proposes to take in the provision of services to the public and the exercise of statutory functions. The purpose of the Scheme is to give effect to the principle that, in the conduct of public business in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality. Effect is to be given to that principle so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 formally separates the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government, and defines the functions of the two bodies. The Act also establishes a body known as the Assembly Commission (the Commission).

### **The National Assembly for Wales**

The National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) consists of the 60 Assembly Members elected by the people of Wales. The Assembly is responsible for approving most public expenditure in Wales, for scrutinising the actions of the Welsh Assembly Government and for holding it to account. It also has the power to formulate legislation (known as Assembly Measures) in areas for which responsibility has been transferred to it by the UK Parliament.

### **The Assembly Commission**

The Commission consists of the Assembly's Presiding Officer and four other Assembly Members. The Commission must provide to the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided with, the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes. The Commission has offices throughout Wales. Information on the Commission's estate, staff and services can be found on the Assembly's website at <http://www.assemblywales.org>

Whilst this Scheme relates to the Assembly, it will be the Commission which will mainly be responsible for its implementation. In order to avoid confusion for the remainder of the document, we will refer to the Assembly alone, except where there is a need to differentiate between responsibilities.

Any communication by the Assembly with the public in Wales that has not been specifically described here will be in a way that is consistent with the general principles that are embodied in this Scheme and the Welsh Language Act 1993.

### **The Welsh Assembly Government**

This Scheme does not relate to the functions of the Welsh Assembly Government, which has its own Welsh Language Scheme. The Government's Scheme notes how it intends to communicate with the Assembly as follows:

*“When staff who come under the [language] Scheme are responsible for preparing papers for the Assembly's proceedings, they will provide them to the Assembly Parliamentary Service in accordance with agreed deadlines. The papers will usually be bilingual and the appendices bilingual in accordance with the prioritising methodology which is Appendix A to the Language Scheme.”*

### **Definition of the public**

In this Scheme, the term 'public' means individuals, legal persons and unincorporated bodies. It includes the public in general, or a section of the public, as well as individual members of the public. The term includes voluntary bodies and charities. Directors and others representing limited companies also come under the term 'public'. However, it does not include people in public bodies when they fulfil official duties.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Section 35(1) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 requires the Assembly, in the conduct of Assembly proceedings, to give effect, so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, to the principle that the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality. Section 98(5) of the Act requires that Measures made by the Assembly be made in both Welsh and English.

The Assembly's Standing Orders set out further commitments applying to the requirement of Section 35(1).

The Assembly Parliamentary Service (the body of staff supporting the Assembly) produced a Bilingual Services Statement in May 2004, which set out how it provided bilingual services to the public. The statement was monitored and an annual report sent to the House Committee of the Second Assembly.

## **2.2 The Assembly's Ambition**

The Assembly is Wales's principal democratic institution. It therefore has a duty to enable all citizens and Assembly Members to be informed about, and contribute fully to, the democratic process in their chosen language – through Welsh or through English. As a result, in order to provide a fully bilingual service, the Assembly needs to become a truly bilingual institution.

The Assembly considers that operating as a truly bilingual institution involves:

- (i) enabling the Assembly to conduct every aspect of its business through the medium of Welsh and English on an equal basis;
- (ii) guaranteeing that any consultation process between the Assembly and the people of Wales will be bilingual;
- (iii) providing a fully bilingual public information, education and visitors' service.

We aim to become a truly bilingual institution taking into account the following factors:

- the present bilingual service;
- the present pool of bilingual staff, and a realistic timetable for increasing that pool;
- uncertainty concerning the actual load and intensity of legislative work;
- financial restrictions and competing priorities;
- the lessons we learn from other bilingual parliaments and good practice in public engagement.

### **3 Planning and provision of services**

#### **3.1 Providing Bilingual Services**

The following services have been included within the range of this Scheme:

##### Assembly Proceedings

- Plenary Meetings, Committees and Sub-committees;
- All related information and documentation.

##### Public services

All services which are designed to promote the Assembly's engagement with the public and to help the people of Wales to participate in the democratic process in Welsh and English.

##### External events

- Attendance at external events such as the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and the National Eisteddfod.

Services provided by the Commission will be consistent with this Scheme. They will support the use of Welsh and every opportunity will be taken to ensure that they will assist the public to use the Welsh language when they contact or visit the Assembly.



We will ensure that all Assembly Measures are published bilingually.

When the Assembly enables, facilitates and contributes towards developing and presenting policies and services through legislation, this will be done in a way which is consistent with this Scheme. This will be achieved through building on the present provision and resources in order to be able to maintain every aspect of the Assembly's public services through Welsh and English.

*Implementation timetable: July 2007 and progressively.*

### **3.2 Services through third parties**

Any contracts or arrangements between the Assembly and third parties (such as recruitment agencies, catering companies, consultants and contractors and so on) to provide services to the public, will be in accordance with the relevant parts of this Scheme. Information will be provided to suppliers during the tendering process outlining in detail which goods or 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 and the individual contractor. Specific written guidelines (which take into account advice from the Welsh Language Board) will be provided for staff and suppliers in order to ensure consistent implementation and reporting on compliance.

Invitations to tender will normally be sent to suppliers in their language of choice where known, or otherwise bilingually. 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. Staff undertaking the assessment process will allow sufficient time for translation in their timetable. Over a period of time, with increased numbers of bilingual staff, the need for such translations should decrease. A text checking service will ensure that the written Welsh is of the required standard.

*Implementation timetable: July 2007 and progressively*

### **3.3 Quality standards**

Public services of the same high standard will be provided through both Welsh and English, and within the same timetable.

*Implementation timetable: July 2007 and progressively.*

### 3.4 **Mainstreaming the Welsh Language**

The Assembly is aware of the need to mainstream the Welsh language in all aspects of its functions and activities. Officials will advise Members of the effect of our policies and services on the Welsh language. They will also provide advice to Members on the impact of relevant legislative proposals and other Assembly business.

*Implementation timetable: To be monitored every four years.*

### 3.5 **Providing services**

Our standard practice will be to ensure that our services are available to the public in both Welsh and English.

We will let the public know when services are available in Welsh.

## 4. **Dealing with the Welsh speaking public**

### 4.1 **Correspondence**

The Assembly will deal with written correspondence as follows:

- When someone writes to us in Welsh we will reply with a signed letter in Welsh (whether as hard copy or in electronic form).
- The fifteenth working day is the response target for letters whether in Welsh or English. When we write letters to individuals, groups or establishments that we know work through the medium of Welsh, or prefer to have letters in Welsh, we will write in Welsh.
- When we send out a standard letter or circular to individuals/organisations or more, the letter will be bilingual unless we know that all who receive it would prefer it to be either in Welsh only or English only. When practical and cost-effective, correspondence will be sent out to individuals in their language of choice rather than bilingually. This releases translation resources for other priorities.
- When an organisation or group begins corresponding with us in Welsh, we will keep its particulars on file so that any further correspondence with the same contact in that organisation/group will be in Welsh. This is done to ensure linguistic consistency for those with whom we deal, and staff should refer to the records before commencing further correspondence.
- When we receive an initial letter in Welsh from an individual or an establishment, all further correspondence will be sent to them in Welsh.
- In exceptional circumstances, urgent letters may need to be dispatched where delay would create a disadvantage. It is possible that such letters will be in English only. Any decision taken is based on the need to receive information rather than on

administrative deadlines alone. Members of staff will be required to justify such events and keep a record of them in order to measure the extent of the practice.

- A short declaration will be included on official paper and official publications welcoming correspondence in either Welsh or English. This forms part of the publicity strategy for the bilingual service in order to ensure (and increase) use of the Welsh language service amongst the public.
- Following a face to face or telephone conversation in Welsh, correspondence will be in Welsh unless we are aware that the recipient would prefer to receive it in English or bilingually.
- When bilingual letters are published, we will ensure that both versions are of the same standard, form, size and prominence reflecting the principle of equality set out in the Welsh Language Act 1993.

Material enclosed with bilingual letters is bilingual, when available. Materials enclosed with Welsh letters are in Welsh or bilingual, when available.

### **Electronic Mail**

Electronic mail is welcomed in Welsh, English or bilingually, and the commitments for correspondence apply also to electronic mail. When e-mail messages have a number of attachments in both languages, such as Committee Papers, separate Welsh and English attachments are sent that clearly show the language of each attachment.

We have recently transferred to the following domains:  
[assemblywales.org](http://assemblywales.org) and [cynulliadcymru.org](http://cynulliadcymru.org).

Every member of staff's signature and out-of-office messages will be bilingual.

The fifteenth working day is the response target for e-mail in either language.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *Implemented since May 2004.*

### **Decision letters**

If a *decision letter* is intended to convey policy to a much wider audience than those directly involved with the inquiry, or other statutory procedure, it will be treated as a publication, under this Scheme.

### **Legal documents and agreements**

Legal documents and legal agreements with individuals, organisations or groups will be offered in the recipient's preferred language. Maps

and other inserts in such agreements which are borrowed or used under licence will appear in the language of the original source.

## 4.2 Telephone Calls

Telephone calls are received by the Assembly either through the switchboard or by direct lines.

When telephone calls are received from members of the public, conversations will be held through the medium of Welsh or English, in accordance with the preferred language of the caller. This includes the switchboard, public information lines and individual members of staff. The Assembly's internal electronic staff directory will identify those members of staff who are Welsh speakers.

### Switchboard

Since December 2006 the Assembly has its own telephone system.

Telephone inquiries are welcomed in either English or Welsh. The switchboard staff will reply with a bilingual greeting, with Welsh first.

Our switchboard will use a bilingual message on its answering service.

- Any enquiry that is received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh, if possible.
- If the person calling asks to speak to a specific officer, the call will be transferred to that officer.
- If the caller does not name a specific officer, and wishes to speak in Welsh, the call will be transferred to a Welsh speaker on a list of bilingual staff who can deal with the inquiries in Welsh in the Directorate in question. If a Welsh speaker in the Directorate is not available at the time, the following options will be offered to the caller:
  - (i) that a bilingual member of staff will return the telephone call within one working day,
  - (ii) that the caller can write in Welsh by either letter or e-mail, or
  - (iii) that the caller can continue with the call in English.

### Direct dial calls:

Staff who are able to speak Welsh will answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting and will use bilingual messages on their voicemail. Non-Welsh speaking staff are encouraged to answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting and to use bilingual messages on their voicemail with the assistance of bilingual colleagues. For the duration of this Scheme, practical steps such as linguistic awareness training will be undertaken in order to encourage an increasing number of non-Welsh speaking staff to use a bilingual greeting in the spirit of our

ambition. This will be monitored annually in order to measure the extent of the practice.

By 2009 it is expected that every member of staff using voicemail will use a bilingual greeting and bilingual messages in order to achieve this aim.

- If someone calls us directly and speaks Welsh, the caller will be answered in Welsh, where possible.
- When the call is answered by someone who does not speak Welsh, the situation will be explained courteously and the call transferred immediately to a colleague who does speak Welsh from the list of bilingual staff able to deal with inquiries in Welsh.
- If a Welsh speaker is not available, the same options will be offered to the caller as in the case of switchboard calls.
- If it is necessary to telephone the caller, this will be done as soon as possible, and within one working day at the most. It will be necessary for staff to keep a record of any occasion where this procedure was not adhered to.
- On the basis of the present pool of bilingual staff and for the duration of this Scheme we cannot guarantee that Welsh speakers (on the bilingual staff list) who deal with calls will specialise in the area in question. So callers must decide if they wish to continue to discuss the matter in English with an officer who specialises in the subject or send a written enquiry in Welsh. It is accepted that such an arrangement is inconsistent with total customer care in Welsh, but over a period of time the need for such arrangements will decline.

*Implementation timetable:*

*Implemented since May 2004*

#### **4.3 Public Meetings**

When the Assembly holds public meetings, it will assess the call for a simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English, enabling contributions to be made in Welsh and understood by those who do not speak Welsh.

Public meeting invitations and advertisements will be bilingual. Moreover attendees will be encouraged to contribute in their preferred language.

We will inform those who attend public meetings when simultaneous translation is available – and encourage contributions in Welsh.

Our normal practice will be to ensure that papers and other information for public meetings will be provided in Welsh and English, – and reports or papers produced following public meetings will be published bilingually.

Efforts will be made to ensure that staff of the Assembly Parliamentary Service who are qualified Welsh speakers attend public meetings on every occasion, but it will not be possible to guarantee this in every case.

*Implementation timetable: May 2004 and progressively*

#### **4.4 Individual meetings**

When a member of the public wishes to discuss the Assembly's procedures or services face to face (but within the scope of the statement as set out in 3.1), they are welcome to do so in Welsh or in English. Arrangements will be made beforehand to facilitate each meeting on the basis of the member of public's preferred language – we undertake to ascertain their preferred language at the first opportunity. A Welsh speaking member of staff will be available to attend the meeting. When it is not possible to obtain access to a Welsh speaking member of staff, (because of the present pool of bilingual staff), simultaneous translation facilities will be offered for face to face meetings when reasonably practicable. If this is not possible, those attending will be invited either to deal with the issue by correspondence in Welsh, or to continue with the meeting in English.

It is unlikely that the simultaneous translation option will be used frequently, but as a short-term measure it is compatible with our commitment to provide a service in Welsh in the spirit of our ambition.

When face to face meetings are held at short notice, the above steps will be followed but in the short term we cannot guarantee to provide a Welsh speaker on every occasion.

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004 and progressively*

#### **4.5 Video Conferencing**

When video conferencing meetings are held, the same principles as for face to face meetings with members of the public will apply, subject to the limitations of the available technology.

#### **4.6 Public Places**

In those public places that are managed by the Assembly (that is the Senedd and the Office of the Assembly staff at Cardiff Bay and Colwyn Bay, and in Committee meetings and public events beyond the Assembly buildings) members of the public may speak with a front-line staff member either in Welsh or in English in accordance with their

chosen language. Bilingual staff will wear the Welsh Language Board's 'Working Welsh' badges.

From time to time it will not be possible to ensure the presence of Welsh speakers (particularly security officers), but we are already improving the situation through Welsh language training.

Every week a number of students from the schools of Wales come to Cardiff to visit the Senedd. It is critically important to the Assembly that this experience is consistent with the chosen language of individual schools.

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004 and progressively*

#### **4.7 Assembly presence at Meetings, Exhibitions and Public Events**

Public events, exhibitions and the like organised by the Assembly will be staged in both languages, and the Assembly's contribution to events organised by others will also be bilingual. Welsh speakers will usually be available in all such events to enable the public to participate in Welsh or in English. In considering the present pool of bilingual staff, it will not be possible to guarantee the presence of Welsh speakers on every occasion.

*Implementation timetable: Initiated in May 2004 and continually*

#### **4.8 National Assembly for Wales Proceedings in Plenary and Committees**

Contributions in Plenary or committee meetings may be made in English and Welsh. Simultaneous translation facilities are provided for speeches given in Welsh. Earphones are provided for non-Welsh speaking members of the public to enable them to follow the proceedings.

The Assembly's proceedings in Plenary and Committees are guided by procedures laid down in the Government of Wales Act 2006 and in Standing Orders, which state that scrutiny of legislation and other key procedures and activities will be bilingual.

A bilingual verbatim record is published of each Plenary meeting, and a record of all committee meetings with an English translation of all Welsh contributions is published as soon as practicable.

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004 and continually*

#### 4.9 **Other links with the Public**

In dealing with the public in other ways, Welsh and English will be treated on a basis of equality and this will be built into the planning processes. New services will be bilingual from the outset. This includes various items such as audio commentary, interactive media, audio virtual and guided tours. The messages in our lifts are already bilingual.

When holding inquiries or public surveys, we ensure that every aspect of communication with the public is bilingual. The respondents are asked if they wish to respond to the survey in Welsh or in English.

When we arrange seminars, training courses or similar events for the public in Wales, we will assess the need to provide them in Welsh. In assessing the need, we will consider the preferred language of attendees and whether it is possible to source Welsh speaking trainers. We ensure that all announcements over the public address systems are made in Welsh and in English.

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004 and continually*

#### 4.10 **The Internet**

Information relating to the Assembly is published on two websites, one in Welsh on [www.cynulliadcymru.org](http://www.cynulliadcymru.org) and the other in English on [www.assemblywales.org](http://www.assemblywales.org). The new Assembly website was launched in May 2007. It is bilingual and enables direct web navigation from one page in one linguistic version to the corresponding page in the other language. Where material will be available in English only, the link from the Welsh site will take the user immediately to the relevant document on the English site without need of re-navigating a series of links. When we design new websites, or when we develop our website, we will consider the Board's advice as set out in its *Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards*.

*Implementation timetable: July 2007 and continually*

### 5. **Our Public Image**

#### 5.1 **Publicity, Display and Advertising Campaigns**

All advertising and publicity campaigns that target the general public are completely bilingual and treat both languages equally. (see also recruitment advertising)

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004.*



All publicity material, public information, displays and advertising material are produced completely bilingually or have separate Welsh and English versions. If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately, both versions will be of equal size, prominence and quality – and will be equally available and accessible.

Any advertisements placed in English language newspapers (or similar material) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual, or will appear as separate Welsh and English versions (with both versions appearing simultaneously, and being equal with regard to size, prominence and quality).

In Welsh language publications advertisements will be in Welsh only.

When the Assembly publishes television, cinema, broadband or radio adverts they will be in Welsh and English. Television campaigns that appear on S4C during Welsh language programme hours will be in Welsh. Radio campaigns that are broadcast during Welsh language programmes on commercial Welsh stations will also be in Welsh.

The use of Welsh subtitles or dubbing adverts into Welsh (excluding voice overs) will be avoided.

All answer machines and other ways of responding to Assembly promotions in Wales will be bilingual or will include a separate Welsh and English response service.

Any prepared audio-visual displays, virtual reality tours or interactive media will be bilingual.

When staff are responsible for stands or displays, competent Welsh speakers will be present in accordance with sections 4.6 - 4.7.

*Implementation timetable: July 2007 and continually*

## **5.2 Official Signs**

Every official sign, temporary or permanent, and which provides the public with information, will be bilingual, treating both languages equally. The Welsh wording and text will appear first or uppermost on every sign. If Welsh and English signs are displayed separately, they will be equal in format, size, quality and prominence. This will be relevant to all signs, including electronic ones.

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004 and continually.*

## **5.3 Brands and Logos**

Wherever the corporate identity and public image of the Assembly appears it will be bilingual, treating both languages equally except for the following:

- The name of the main Assembly building is 'Senedd',
- The names of parts of the Senedd are 'Neuadd', 'Oriel' and 'Cwrt'.

The Welsh wording and text will appear first or uppermost or on the left of every sign. Our name, contact details, logo (except where the logo appears without its inscription), 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, passes, tickets, acknowledgement cards, compliment slips, invitations and vehicles.

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004 and continually.*

#### **5.4 Documents for the Proceedings in Plenary and Committees**

Documents relevant to Plenary Business and drafted by Assembly Committees, Assembly Members (with the exception of those undertaking ministerial duties) and staff of the Assembly Parliamentary Service will be available in Welsh and in English. Documents relevant to the business of Committee meetings and drafted by the Commission, Assembly Committees, Assembly Members (with the exception of those undertaking ministerial duties) and staff of the Assembly Parliamentary Service will be available for the Committee Members in Welsh and in English at least two working days prior to the relevant meetings. Documents commissioned from the Welsh Assembly Government and external organisations should be provided in Welsh and in English. Where an urgent item is to be included on the Committee's agenda at short notice, it may not be possible to produce those papers bilingually although we aim to do so on every occasion. It is necessary for members of staff to keep a record of each occasion where English only versions are published in order to measure the extent of the practice. This is done to measure and assess the level of further resources that are required to enable full bilingual provision.

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004 and continually*

#### **5.5 Other Publications (including electronic version)**

Our normal practice will be to publish all material made available to the public bilingually, subject to the formula referred to below, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. 'Publications' are defined as any document that includes information for the public in Wales. Publications include booklets and leaflets, cards, certificates, consultation documents, posters, stickers, various marketing material,

protocols, guidelines, codes of practice, public announcements and newsletters, etc. Publications also include CD-ROMs and documents or items placed on the Assembly website whether or not they are available as a hard copy. Documents to be published externally or that have a long shelf life are likely to have precedence over documents that are for internal use only or that are short term. A formula for prioritising documents for translation has been previously agreed but will be reviewed in the summer of 2007, to be agreed with the Board.

For the four year duration of this Scheme there is no intention to including internal documents that are available to the public on request or documents that are not primarily drafted for use by the public. That is because of the need to prioritise and to make the best use of limited resources. Despite this, the situation will be reviewed having regard to the nature and the number of applications that are received during the next four years.

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 usual practice will be to ensure that both versions are made available at the same time and that both are equally accessible. Each version will note that the material is available in the other language.

If not available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be greater than that of a single language publication - and the price of separate, Welsh and English versions will be the same.

The above will also apply to material made available electronically on our website, on CD Rom or otherwise.

*Implementation timetable:                      Implemented since May 2004*

## **5.6 Forms**

Forms for public use, along with any supplementary information, will be available in Welsh and English. This will include interactive forms published on our websites. The intention is to publish the form in a single bilingual version, but occasionally for reasons such as the length of the form, Welsh and English versions will need to be published separately. When this is the case, we will ensure that there is an equal supply of Welsh and English versions available or displayed in public places, or distributed through the post or through any other medium. When forms are distributed to be displayed in public places occupied by other agencies, the need to ensure that both versions are available or are being displayed, is emphasised. Bilingual forms will be made available and speakers and learners of Welsh will be encouraged to respond in Welsh.

When other organisations distribute forms on our behalf, we will ensure that they do so in accordance with the above.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *Implemented since May 2004*

## **5.7 Press Releases**

We aim on every occasion to provide a full information service about news from the Assembly in both languages. In exceptional occasions (such as the need to prepare an urgent press release) English only press releases will be published; but within one working day a Welsh version will be published. Members of staff will be required to keep a record of them to quantify practice.

Although the Assembly does not currently have adequate facilities to be able to provide a full information service in Welsh at times of urgency or emergency, we aim to fulfil our ambition over time.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *Implemented since May 2004*

## **5.8 External Recruitment Advertisements**

Advertisements in English publications circulated throughout the United Kingdom will be in English only, unless it is noted that Welsh linguistic skills are essential. If this is the case, the advertisements will be in Welsh only, with explanatory footnotes in English, in accordance with current good practice.

Advertisements published chiefly or exclusively in Wales will be:

- bilingual in English language publications unless it is noted that Welsh language skills are essential. On such occasions, the advertisements will be in Welsh only, with explanatory footnotes in English.
- in Welsh only in Welsh language publications.

In addition, the above measures will be implemented for recruitment advertisements which appear in places such as Job Centres, careers fairs and job websites.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *Implemented since May 2004*

## **5.9 Re-branding the Assembly**

As part of the Assembly's future communication strategy, it is intended to explain the new role, status and powers of the Assembly to the people of Wales in the coming years. A number of methods will be used, all of which will be bilingual.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *July 2007 and progressively*

## 6. Administrative Arrangements

### 6.1 Staffing

In December 2006 the Assembly employed 286 full-time staff. On the basis of an exercise in 2003, when the Assembly employed 225 permanent staff, the following figures were obtained for the Welsh skills of Assembly staff (the bilingual staff pool).

Method of communication	No or little ability	Some ability	General ability	Proficient
Speech	69 (41%)	25 (15%)	12 (7%)	64 (38%)
Comprehension	73 (43%)	17 (10%)	11 (7%)	69 (41%)
Writing	80 (47%)	21 (12%)	20 (12%)	48 (28%)
Reading	72 (43%)	24 (14%)	8 (5%)	65 (38%)

The employment of translators and bilingual transcribers distorts the figures. There are some areas of business where it is currently difficult for the Assembly to provide bilingual services. In other words, the current level of bilingual skills does not enable the Assembly to be a truly bilingual institution.

The Assembly's workplaces which have contact with the public in Wales need access to enough Welsh speaking staff with the necessary skills to enable them to provide a full service in Welsh. The Scheme and the ambition of becoming a truly bilingual institution cannot be achieved without them. In accordance with that, the following procedures will be followed:

- (i) we will undertake audits from time to time to establish the number of staff who can speak, read and write in Welsh, as well as their ability and location (including Welsh learners). Staff who wish to learn or improve their Welsh language skills for undertaking business in the Assembly will be identified.
- (ii) we will identify the service areas and posts for which the ability to work through the medium of Welsh will be designated as essential or desirable in future recruitment exercises or for internal transfers. The requirement can be defined as an element of a specific post, workplace, team, service, directorate, or specific offices.

(iii) by December 2007 the results of these two exercises will be compared to formulate a draft language skills strategy that will be a framework for implementing individual policies in:

- Setting the level of bilingual skills required for each directorate, and the steps to follow to achieve that.
- Training in learning, and improving Welsh, vocational training in Welsh and Performance Development Plans, (staff personal training and development plans).
- Recruiting staff (advertising and applying for posts and interviewing and assessing language competence),
- Responsibility for implementing and monitoring progress/compliance.

The language skills strategy will be implemented following a process of internal consultation and relevant training for Line Managers.

As a first priority, all reception points and main switchboards will offer and provide a Welsh service at all times.

An essential element of the ambition is to increase the currently rare practice of writing original materials (such as letters, documents, forms, statements etc.) in Welsh rather than English. Staff able to draft written materials in Welsh will be encouraged to do so. This would make the best and most cost effective use of the bilingual staff's skills, and use the translation resource to translate text from both languages, and not only from English. When this Scheme is updated in 2011, a recording exercise will be held to determine in what language work was presented to the Translation Service by Directorates, and the results will be fed to the Linguistic Skills Strategy (6.1.(iii)) and the Welsh Training Scheme (6.3). Annually thereafter, the same exercise shall be held to measure practice and what further steps or further progress will be required to create a more inclusive culture.

*Implementation timetable: December 2007 and progressively*

## 6.2 Recruitment

Every appointment will be based on merit, following fair and open competition. The Assembly is an equal opportunities employer. This means that everyone has the same opportunity for employment and promotion, based on ability, qualifications and suitability for the post. Consequently no one should be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be justified.

If the Assembly is to realise its ambition, there is a need for an adequate intake of individuals to deal with business through the medium of Welsh in all parts of the Assembly's services. As outlined in

6.1 (ii) Welsh language skills will be designated as essential or desirable in some service areas. To increase the amount of adequate Welsh skills, a comprehensive language skills strategy, with which all line managers must familiarise themselves, will be adopted and implemented (6.1. (iii)).

Where no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for a post where Welsh is desirable, the person appointed will be encouraged to learn Welsh.

A candidate unable to speak Welsh may be appointed to a post for which Welsh is considered *essential*, but where time can be allowed to learn the language. In these cases, learning the language to the required level of competence, within a reasonable agreed period, will be a specific performance criterion.

When no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for a post where Welsh is *essential* (or whilst a candidate unable to speak Welsh has been appointed and is learning the language) we will make temporary arrangements under which the Welsh language service can be provided (by using, for example, Welsh speaking staff from elsewhere in our organisation to deliver parts of the service).

*Implementation timetable:*                      *Language Skills Strategy by March 2008*

Information packs and application forms continue to be provided in Welsh and English. Such materials are presented bilingually either in one bilingual version or separately in Welsh and English versions. Applicants can complete the application forms in their preferred language, and they are not compelled to complete the application forms bilingually.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *Implemented since May 2004*

Interviews are held bilingually for posts where Welsh and English linguistic skills are essential. In addition, the proficiency of the candidate in English and Welsh is assessed as part of the selection process.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *July 2007 and progressively*

### **6.3 Welsh Language Training**

Since adopting the Bilingual Services Statement in May 2004 a series of classes in learning and improving Welsh has been provided for members of staff whose need was identified in their Performance Development Plans. We will evaluate the provision of Welsh training to Assembly staff (and Members) and on the basis of that evaluation decide on future provision.

If this Scheme's ambition is to be realised, the numbers learning Welsh need to increase substantially. In order to answer the various needs of individuals and teams, a Welsh language training scheme will be prepared that outlines a range of training courses that will vary from short courses that focus on simple tasks (for example, telephone answering skills) elements of E-learning, to courses that are more traditional and comprehensive in their nature, aimed at achieving greater fluency in Welsh. Wherever it is possible, staff will be released to attend intense residential courses to learn Welsh during the summer recess. The emphasis in every Welsh course will be on the provision that reflects the Assembly's business requirements. The Welsh language training scheme will outline the process for measuring the effectiveness of courses on the basis of attendance, completion, gaining qualifications, fulfilling work-based tasks in Welsh, and practical use of Welsh orally and written when providing services by members of staff following course attendance.

It is acknowledged that learning a language is a long-term process and investment, and identifying members of staff who are given access to Welsh language courses will need to be founded on the basis of the bilingual skills required by individual posts, the reasonable business requirements of the post and within the confines of the annual training budgets.

We will fund training and allow staff to attend courses during working hours.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *Implemented since May 2004 and continually*

#### **6.4 Vocational training**

The ability of the staff who speak Welsh to work through the medium of the Welsh language will also be facilitated by providing vocational courses through the medium of Welsh.

It is acknowledged that this is an evolutionary process over a period of time

*Implementation timetable:*                      *July 2007 and continually*

#### **6.5 Information Communications Technology**

The need to provide information and services in Welsh, and to act according to this Scheme, is reflected in the Assembly's approach to information communications technology.

The Assembly is also considering ordering/ adapting software that is used to draft and process legislation. It will be essential for this to be capable of handling bilingual legislation.



In developing and purchasing information communications technology the Welsh Language Board's *Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards* will be fully considered.

*Implementation timetable:* July 2007 and continually

## 6.6 Working in partnership

If the Assembly operates as the strategic and financial leader within a formal partnership, it will ensure that the partnership's public service elements will conform to this Scheme.

If the Assembly joins a formal partnership that is led by others, the Assembly's input will conform to this Scheme and other partners will be encouraged to conform to this Scheme or at a minimum with the spirit of the Welsh Language Act 1993.

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

*Implementation timetable:* July 2007 and continually

## 6.7 Internal Arrangements

### **Authority and Responsibility for Co-ordination**

The measures in this Scheme carry the full authority, support and approval of the National Assembly for Wales.

Operating in accordance with this Scheme will be a compliance issue.

The Chief Executive and Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales has the overall responsibility for ensuring that this Scheme is operated and monitored annually, and the Head of the Corporate Unit, Assembly Parliamentary Service, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1NA is the Senior Manager with responsibility for coordinating the work that is required to provide, monitor and revise this Scheme.

Every manager has a devolved responsibility for operating those aspects of the Scheme that is relevant to their work.

*Implementation timetable:* July 2007 and continually

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.

*Implementation timetable:* July 2007 and continually

To coordinate the operation of the Scheme a Working Group will be established with specific responsibilities for:

- overseeing the operation of the Scheme and the relevant strategies;
- receiving progress and compliance reports from Directorates every quarter and reporting to the Chief Executive and Directors and the Commission;
- harmonising the monitoring process and the Annual Monitoring Report;
- overseeing complaints about lack of a Welsh language service or an inadequate/ unacceptable Welsh language service.

The Working Group will include a representative from every Directorate and area of business. It will meet every two months during the first year of the Scheme's implementation, and this will be reviewed at the end of this period, but it will meet at least twice yearly as a minimum.

We will have a continually updated detailed action plan, to be agreed with the Language Board, noting how we will ensure that we will operate in accordance with this Scheme. The action plan will become operational on the day the Scheme comes into force or as early as possible after that. The action plan will include targets, time limits and a report on progress set against every target in each Directorate within the Assembly. The general aim of the operational plan will be to ensure that the Assembly has implemented this Scheme as early as possible.

This Scheme will be published for the staff and the public in Wales. It will be published in prominent places on the Assembly's web site and on the Intranet.

### **Written Guidelines**

When the Bilingual Services Statement was published, general guidelines were prepared in May 2004. When this Scheme is implemented, general guidelines will again be prepared for staff. They will be found on the Assembly's Intranet, and all members of staff will be expected to familiarise themselves with the guidelines in order to ensure that implementation is thorough and consistent.

To fulfil the Assembly's ambition it is acknowledged that there is a need to prepare a series of further guidelines namely:

- (i) Linguistic Skills Strategy and a Welsh Language Training Scheme,
- (ii) Marketing/ Publicity Strategy for the bilingual service,
- (iii) Procurement guidance
- (iv) Monitoring Scheme.

Because of the importance and the long-term influence of the further guidance in order to fulfil the vision, they will be presented to the Welsh Language Board to be approved.

*Implementation timetable; General Guidelines June 2007  
Strategies, [except Linguistic Skills]  
Guideline and Scheme by December 2007.  
Present to WLB by April 2007  
Linguistic Skills Strategy by March 2008*

### **Translators and Editors**

The Assembly's team of translators and editors are qualified and have high-level language skills: five of the translators are full members, one a basic member and two others are sitting examinations to become full members of the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters.. The team currently (in March 2007) consists of:

- Simultaneous translators - 3.2
- Text translators - 3.5
- Bilingual editors - 18
- Non-Welsh speaking editors - 2

Also,

- Contractors are used to translate text on a call-off basis
- Contractors are used to translate the Record of Proceedings overnight
- One new staff member is currently undergoing training in simultaneous and text translation

We will ensure that we only use qualified translators and interpreters to undertake text translation and simultaneous translation. We would like those translators to be members of the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters, or a similar organisation.

To fulfil the ambition, in the shorter term it may be necessary to increase the number of staff who provide a parliamentary translation service, although our ambition is to lessen the requirement for translation over time. To fulfil this, the Assembly will act strategically, such as offering a period of work experience to students on postgraduate translation training course that the University of Wales could introduce in cooperation with the Assembly. The Parliamentary Translation and Reporting Service will continue to be crucial to enable the Assembly to provide some of its functions bilingually.

*Implementation timetable: Implemented since May 2004 and continually*

### **Briefing and training**

A series of sessions will be arranged for our staff to raise awareness of this Scheme – and to explain how it will affect their work from day to day.

As a starting point to lay firm foundations for the Scheme every member of staff and agency staff will receive training in linguistic awareness. This will be arranged through a familiarisation programme during the first 12 months of the Scheme and through a process of continuous familiarisation. Every line manager needs to ensure that every new member of staff is made aware of the obligations of the Scheme for their particular sphere in the familiarisation programme.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *Implemented within 12 months to approve the Scheme and through the familiarisation process.*

*Implementation timetable:*                      *July 2007 and progressively.*

## **6.8 Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations**

We will act in accordance with advice from the Board with regard to the Welsh Language Act, the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations.

When we release information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, we will translate it to the preferred language of the applicant, on condition that it will not be necessary to translate more than 100 words.

*Implementation timetable:*                      *July 2007 and continually*

## **6.9 Monitoring**

The Assembly will monitor performance in terms of:

- (i) conforming with the commitments in this Scheme, and as a result
- (ii) the growth in Welsh Language provision.

This information will be recorded in the form of an Annual Monitoring Report which will be available on the Internet and the Intranet.

A Monitoring Plan will be prepared for staff outlining the monitoring arrangements so that they may familiarise themselves with them as they fulfil their duties. Any monitoring and recording procedures will include reference to progress in implementing this Scheme, as is deemed appropriate. They will be suitable methods that will provide information which will aid the Assembly as a management tool, and not a bureaucratic irrelevance. The monitoring could include the opinions of

individuals and institutions who have received services from the Assembly through the Welsh language including focus groups, citizens' panel and mystery shoppers.

Progress in terms of fulfilling this Scheme will be monitored against the targets noted in the action plan. The timetable for operating specific measures in the Scheme will be reviewed annually in the wake of the monitoring exercise and any changes and priorities will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. After presenting the report to the attention of the Welsh Language Board the implementation priorities will be agreed for the following year.

At the request of the Welsh Language Board, we will submit monitoring reports outlining progress in delivering this Scheme.

Our aim is to ensure that we operate in accordance with this Scheme's objectives within four years of it coming into effect. We will take an approach of self-assessment, to be agreed with the Board, to monitor progress against this target.

*Implementation timetable: July 2007 and continually annually*

#### **6.10 Reviewing and updating the Scheme**

This Scheme will be amended within four years of coming into effect. To measure progress in terms of fulfilling the ambition, the pool of bilingual staff and the progress in implementing bilingual services will be analysed when the Scheme is reviewed.

Also, occasionally, this Scheme may need to be amended because of changes in roles, or in the circumstances in which those roles are undertaken, or for any other reason. No changes will be made to this Scheme without the approval of the Welsh Language Board.

#### **6.11 Publicity for Bilingual Services**

Every effort will be made to ensure that members of the public, Assembly Members and all the Assembly staff are aware of this Scheme and services subject to it by operating the following measures:

- Preparing a marketing/ publicity strategy for the bilingual service that includes:
  - placing a copy of the Scheme on the Internet and the Intranet,
  - containing references to the Scheme in staff bulletins,
  - providing the Welsh Language Board's 'Working Welsh' materials to Welsh speaking staff in all public places in the Assembly's estate,

- by ensuring that all our public services, to the best of our ability, can offer the services in the chosen language of individuals at the beginning of their contact with us whether it be orally face to face, written or through other services providers on our behalf, and
- promote the importance of the provision and linguistic progression in the Assembly's services by offering, establishing, transcribing, providing and referring to the preferred language of individuals, companies and bodies with which the Assembly deals.

*Implementation timetable:*

*July 2007*

## 6.12 Dealing with Complaints

The hope is that there will be no basis for any complaint, but as provision is developed and extended it is inevitable that cases or incidents will occur that are contrary to the Scheme and to best practice. We will be closely monitoring how well we succeed in fulfilling the commitments in this Scheme. If there is non-compliance, we hope that members of the public, Assembly Members and staff will report them to us as soon as possible – to close the gaps, learn lessons and improve the provision.

Complaints about shortcomings or an unacceptable or incomplete Welsh language service will be dealt with in accordance with the Assembly Parliamentary Service Code of Practice on Complaints. This Code notes that we will respond within 15 working days from the date the complaint was received. The Code may be found by going to <http://www.assemblywales.org/conhome/con-complaint/con-complaint-procedure.htm>

Complaints can be made in writing or by telephone call to:

**The Head of the Corporate Unit  
Assembly Parliamentary Service  
National Assembly for Wales  
CARDIFF  
CF99 1NA**

**Tel: 029 2089 8230  
APScorporateunit@wales.gsi.gov.uk**

The Assembly will co-operate with the Welsh Language Board to resolve complaints – and on any inquiry that is held under section 17 of the Welsh Language Act 1993.

*Implementation timetable:*

*Implemented since May 2004*

**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES COMMISSION**

**ASSEMBLY PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE**

**CODE OF PRACTICE ON COMPLAINTS**

**June 2007**

**This is the Assembly Parliamentary Service's Code of Practice on Complaints. If you believe you have suffered as a result of maladministration or service failure by us, you may want to make a complaint. This Code sets out the principles and procedures which we will apply when considering complaints.**

## Contents

	Page number
Section 1: Introduction – what the Code does and does not cover	3
Section 2: The principles of the complaints process	5
Section 3: The procedure for making a complaint	6
Annex A: Contact Details	8
Annex B: Complaint Form	9

### **The Procedure – In Summary**

1. You can complain by e-mail, fax, letter or by completing our Complaint Form at Annex B.
2. Your complaint will be investigated initially by the Head of Corporate Unit, or by a member of staff nominated by the Head of Corporate Unit.
3. We will respond within 15 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
4. If you are not satisfied with our response, you have a right to appeal to the Chief Operating Officer and/or the Chief Executive and Clerk to the Assembly.
5. If you are not satisfied with the appeal response, your complaint can be considered by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, or the Information Commissioner.

The Code is explained in more detail in the following pages.



## **Section 1: INTRODUCTION**

1. We are committed to providing an excellent standard of service to those with whom we deal. We value your views and aim to make continuous improvements to our services based on the information and feedback we receive. We welcome both positive and negative feedback, and recognise that justified complaints give us the opportunity to learn from what happened, to put things right and to improve our services where we can.

2. This Code of Practice on Complaints ("the Code") explains how and when we will deal with complaints about the Assembly Parliamentary Service.

3. If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, you may be able to refer the matter to either the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales ("the Ombudsman") or the Information Commissioner ("the Commissioner"). Our complaints procedure is described in this Code. This information is available on our website: [www.assemblywales.org](http://www.assemblywales.org).

### **What the Code does and does not cover**

4. The Code **allows** us to consider complaints about our administrative actions in relation to the following:

(i) Maladministration in administrative actions. Generally, maladministration means poor administration or applying rules incorrectly. The following list provides some examples of maladministration:

- Avoidable delay;
- Faulty procedures applied or failing to follow correct procedures;
- Failing to tell a member of the public about any rights of appeal they might have;
- Unfairness, bias or prejudice;
- Giving advice which is misleading or inadequate;
- Refusing to answer reasonable questions;
- Rudeness and failing to apologise properly;
- Mistakes in handling a claim;
- Not offering a suitable solution when one is due.

(ii) Failing to provide information which you have asked for under the Code of Practice on Public Access to Information. The decision to withhold information does not need to have involved maladministration, and this principle is not affected by what is said in paragraph 5(i) below.

(iii) Failing to provide a service we planned to provide or must provide by law, or failing to provide a service to our standards.

(iv) Failing to meet our Welsh Language Scheme.

5. Under this Code's procedures, we **will not** consider:

(i) complaints about a decision which has not involved any maladministration - in other words, the Code cannot be used to complain about a decision just because you do not agree with it;

(ii) complaints about the conduct or interests of Assembly Members acting in their personal capacity or in relation to constituency matters; such matters are dealt with by a separate complaints process;

(iii) complaints about personnel matters.

6. If you think that you may be able to take legal action against us, please remember that you must usually do this within strict time limits. You should get independent legal advice on this. But it does not stop you making a complaint under this Code, as long as the Code allows it.

## Section 2: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

To make sure that the complaints process is as effective as possible, we have a system which covers the following principles. These principles are applied throughout the complaints process and provide a framework for dealings between members of the public and our staff.

<b><u>Fairness</u></b>	A fair complaints procedure which is open and makes sure everyone is treated equally.
<b>Courtesy</b>	Communication must be based on mutual respect, trust and courtesy <sup>1</sup>
<b>Accessibility</b>	A complaints procedure which is easy to understand, easy to access and well publicised.
<b>Timeliness</b>	Complaints are dealt with promptly within clear time limits.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	The Code is monitored and reviewed to make sure it continues to be effective.

---

<sup>1</sup> We understand that you may have suffered stress or anxiety in relation to a particular matter. We aim to provide a professional service and our communication with you, either written or spoken, will be based on mutual politeness and respect. We will not be able to deal with complaints made in offensive or defamatory language, or if we feel your actions are unacceptable or unreasonable.

### Section 3: THE PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

This section explains the process to be followed where a member of the public wants to make a complaint about our administrative actions.

#### The Process

##### *Making a Complaint*

(i) You ought to make complaints in writing (which includes by e-mail or fax, although complaints we receive in this way do not receive higher priority). Receiving a complaint in writing is particularly important if the complaint is complicated. However, we may accept a verbal complaint if we consider it reasonable to do so.

(ii) You should make sure that you clearly set out the details relevant to the complaint. You may find it useful to fill in the Complaint Form (see Annex B) which may help us to find out what the complaint is about and what you expect us to do to put things right.

(iii) For the purposes of dealing with a complaint, we will deal with your personal details in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, and will only pass them to people who need to see them. For more information, please contact our Access to Information Officer (see contact details at Annex A).

(iv) If you cannot act for yourself, a representative may make a complaint on your behalf. We may ask the person claiming to be acting on your behalf to provide proof that he or she is authorised to act in this way.

(v) If a complaint is made by someone else (who is not acting on your behalf and you have not actually complained), we will consider what action, if any, is necessary to look into the issues raised in the complaint. In these circumstances, we will consider the rights and wishes (for example, your right to privacy).

(vi) You must provide copies of any supporting evidence you refer to in the complaint.

(vii) You should make a complaint as soon as possible after you first become aware of the matters you are complaining about and, in any event, within six months of that time. We may, however, be prepared to consider a complaint made outside that time limit if we consider that, in the particular circumstances of the complaint, there is good reason why the normal time limit should not apply.

(viii) Your complaint should be sent to the **Head of Corporate Unit** (contact details are at Annex A).

### ***What will we do?***

(i) The complaint will be dealt with by the Head of Corporate Unit or by a member of our staff nominated by the Head of Corporate Unit. He or she will consider whether the complaint is covered by our Code.

(ii) If the complaint **is not** covered by our Code, you will be told this and we will, if possible, direct you to another appropriate organisation which may be able to help you.

(iii) If the complaint **is** covered by our Code, we will take the following action:

- ❖ We will deal with all complaints as soon as possible, and the Head of Corporate Unit will respond within 15 working days of the date we receive the complaint.
- ❖ If we cannot give you a full response because your complaint is complicated or raises serious issues which may need detailed and careful consideration, we will let you know when you will receive a full reply.
- ❖ If the complaint is about a named member of staff, we will tell that person about the complaint and give them the opportunity to give his or her views on the issues raised.
- ❖ A complaint made by someone who refuses to give his or her name (an “anonymous complainant”) will be referred to the Chief Executive and Clerk to the Assembly, who will decide whether there is any action to be taken (for example, referral to other organisations if the allegation refers to fraud or crime). Generally, anonymous complaints will only be noted and not investigated further.
- ❖ Where possible, we will deal with any mistake or failure immediately. We will send you an explanation for the mistake or failure, and an apology. The Head of Corporate Unit’s letter will tell you about the next stage of our complaints process (see below) and the role of the Ombudsman and the Commissioner as appropriate.

### ***The next stage***

If you are not satisfied with our response, you have a right to appeal to the Chief Operating Officer and/or the Chief Executive and Clerk to the Assembly. They will consider what, if any, further action can be taken to sort the matter out, which is appropriate and in proportion to the complaint. You will be advised of the steps to be taken should this situation be reached. You will also be given contact details for the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and the Information Commissioner.

**Issued by the Assembly Parliamentary Service  
June 2007**

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Head of Corporate Unit

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

CF99 1NA

Telephone: 029 2089 8230

Fax: 029 2089 8686

[APS-Complaints@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:APS-Complaints@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Chief Executive and Clerk to the Assembly

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

CF99 1NA

Telephone: 029 2089 8233

Fax: 029 2089 8686

[APS-Complaints@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:APS-Complaints@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Access to Information Adviser

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

CF99 1NA

Telephone: 029 2089 8889

[Assembly-AccessstoInformation@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Assembly-AccessstoInformation@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae

Pencoed

Bridgend

CF35 5LJ

Telephone: 01656 641150

Fax: 01656 641199

<mailto:ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk>

[www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk)

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545700

Fax: 01625 524510

<mailto:mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk>

[www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)



**National Assembly for Wales Complaint Form**

**Section 1: To be filled in by the person making the complaint**

Name:	
Address:	
Contact No:	

I want you to consider the complaint I have described below, and I attach evidence to support my complaint.

Signature of the person (or people) making the complaint:	
Date:	

**Section 2: To be filled in if you are the person acting on behalf of the person (or people) who wants to make a complaint (if the person (or people) complaining cannot act for themselves)**

Name:	
Address:	
Contact No:	

Reason why you are acting on behalf of the person making the complaint:

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
give \_\_\_\_\_  
permission to represent me.



Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 3: Who/what are you complaining about?**


Please tick the box that you feel is relevant to your complaint.

- Avoidable delay
- Faulty procedures applied or failing to follow correct procedures
- Failing to tell a member of the public about any rights of appeal they might have
- Unfairness, bias or prejudice
- Giving advice which is misleading or inadequate
- Refusing to answer reasonable questions
- Rudeness and failing to apologise properly
- Mistakes in handling a claim
- Not offering a suitable solution where one is due
- Failing to provide information
- Failing to provide a service we must provide by law
- Failing to provide a service to our standards
- Not meeting the conditions of our Welsh Language Scheme

Please provide a full description of the complaint, telling us how you have been affected and what you think we should do to put things right. (You can provide this on a separate piece of paper if you prefer, and attach it to this form.)







**Section 4: Communication about the complaint**

Have you already complained?

Yes  No

If you answered 'Yes', please attach a copy of the complaint and any response you have received.

**Section 5: Supporting evidence**

If you answered 'Yes' to Section 4 above, please attach copies of any correspondence (or relevant documents) you have had about the complaint. You may list them below.

<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>


