



José Carvalho

Head of Wealth & Personal Banking, HSBC UK Bank plc

Delyth Jewell MS

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Via email: SeneddCulture@senedd.wales
cc: *Jeremy Miles MS* Jeremy.Miles@senedd.wales

1 May 2024

Dear Chair,

Following my letter of 21 December 2023, I am writing to provide an update on our Welsh Service Line callback service, following the review we conducted at the end of the first quarter.

Background to the change

Our Welsh Service Line proposition was resourced by four Welsh-speaking agents, receiving approximately 22 calls each day, from 1676 unique customers. Due to the low volume of calls to the Line, Welsh-speaking agents undertook everyday banking calls in English via our main line, meaning they were often unavailable when a Welsh-speaking customer called. As a result, just 6% of calls were answered by a Welsh-speaking agent.

Since 15 January 2024, customers who call the Welsh Service Line are automatically transferred through to our main contact centre where they can request a callback in Welsh, which is made from a branch in Wales within three working days. We wrote to our customers to inform them of the change on 8 November 2023 and a follow up letter was sent on 22 December 2023. Personal calls were made, in Welsh, to the most frequent users of the Line, to discuss ways to bank and promote the callback service. We advertised the change on HSBC radio in all our Welsh branches, and adverts were placed in branches and on our public website.

Performance 1Q24

A total of 17 call back requests have been received throughout the quarter. The average time to contact a customer is 1 hour 19 minutes. The quickest callback was 10 minutes, and the lengthiest attempt took 4 hours and 30 minutes, which was due to a public holiday. On average in 1Q24, we received 14 calls per day into the Welsh Service Line number.

Since 15 January 2024, we have monitored calls into the Welsh Service Line, carrying out quality assurance and call listening to ensure calls are handled correctly and our Welsh customers are supported. Contact centre agents proactively ask customers if they would like to speak in Welsh, if they have been redirected from the Welsh Service Line.

HSBC UK Bank plc

1 Centenary Square, Birmingham, B1 1HQ

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On 30 January 2024, we amended the rerouting customer audio message to proactively encourage customers to request a call back in Welsh. However, no increase in requests has been seen as a result.

Future Service Expectations

Following our Q1 review, we are reducing the maximum length of time for a callback from three working days to next working day. We now have the confidence to reduce this timeframe through our experiences from this first quarter, and the diligence of our Welsh-speaking branch colleagues. We will write to all customers advising them of this change in Welsh and in English. Whilst it will take longer to formally update our procedures and public website, we will endeavour to keep our current average callback time as low as it currently is.

Customer Sentiment

Customer feedback has been positive, and our customers have told us they are “pleased with the service”, “being called back so promptly” and that “HSBC are supporting customers who wish to conduct their business in Welsh.” Two customers indicated they would have preferred to request a call back via the automated system, rather than through an agent, but this is not something we are currently able to implement. We also sought feedback through the members of Merched y Wawr and have listened to their views on the removal of the original line and other operational challenges.

We continue to meet and engage the Welsh Language Commissioner and have committed to working with their team to promote the callback service beyond our branch network.

I trust the improvements to the service outlined here demonstrate our ongoing commitment to our customers in Wales and those who choose to bank in Welsh.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Carvalho". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

José Carvalho