



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-04-483
Ein cyf/Our ref: FM/00705/13

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Naomi.stocks@wales.gov.uk

1 July 2013

Dear William,

I am writing in response to your letter of 24 May to the Welsh Government Permanent Secretary Derek Jones. I am responding as this matter refers to both written communication from the Welsh Government and verbal communication in the Senedd chamber.

I agree whole-heartedly that writing and speaking clearly is essential for any government that seeks to serve properly the people it represents. When I came into office as First Minister, I tasked the Cabinet and civil servants with using plain language, without technical or professional jargon unless strictly necessary.

The importance of clear and concise communication is emphasised in the Welsh Government's civil service competency framework, learning and development programme, and guidance on writing correspondence, speeches, consultation documents and external communications materials. To support people in writing clearly we have a number of resources available that provide guidance on Plain English and Cymraeg Clir. These apply to all Welsh Government civil servants, including its legal and translation services.

When drafting legal documents, Welsh Government lawyers must, where possible, use plain, clear language. Legislative Drafting Guidelines from the Office of the Counsel General contain advice on the use of plain language; the guidelines are attached to this letter. It is crucial that legal documents including legislation are legally accurate. Words are chosen carefully to ensure that changes to the law made by legislation achieve the aims of the Government policy and do not create unintended consequences.

Welsh Government translators are trained to translate into readable text. Translations are assessed for their 'readability' and for use of the appropriate style for the target audience. Translators are also required to reflect accurately the precise content, meaning and style of the original document to ensure consistency across languages.

Lastly, the examples enclosed with your letter include a document on tracking and outcome indicators for the Welsh economy. Measuring and setting out our progress as a Government is essential, and I am committed to doing this. In the second Annual Report on the Programme for Government released in June, I've tried to be as clear as possible about what we have done, what we have achieved, and what we still need to do. The Programme for Government pages on our website explain the terms we are using to measure this. I hope you will agree this is a major step forward in explaining the Welsh Government's work and providing clear information on our progress.

Ensuring that the people of Wales can clearly understand what the Welsh Government is doing for them is a priority for me. Actions are in place and I will continue to emphasise the importance of plain language to the Cabinet and civil service officials.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

CARWYN JONES