

National Assembly for Wales Commission
Official Languages Scheme

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Foreword

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Section 1: Our ambition

Our ambition is to be a truly bilingual organisation where Assembly Members, the public and staff can choose to work or communicate naturally in either or both of our official languages, where the use of both languages is proactively encouraged and facilitated, and where our exemplary bilingual services are continuously improving.

We are exceptionally proud of the progress made during the lifetime of the first Official Languages Scheme. That progress also built on the wide range of services that were already developed over various Welsh language schemes that were in place since the Assembly's inception in 1999.

The Assembly is a bilingual organisation. We value all our staff members, regardless of their degree of bilingualism, for both the commitment they bring to the Assembly and their professional and parliamentary expertise. Our expectation is that all staff members are committed to the delivery of the highest standards of parliamentary support for Members and the public in both our official languages.

We have an enshrined legal duty to provide rights to the public and to Assembly Members to interact with the Assembly in the official language of their choice. Both our official languages are recognised as internal administration languages. We facilitate bilingual working for Commission staff by mainstreaming bilingual services as described in our service standards.

As such we are:

- committed to delivering exemplary bilingual services to Assembly Members, the public and Assembly staff;
- an employer who supports all staff members who wish to develop or improve their skills in both or either of our official languages to a standard appropriate to their role or further should they desire; and
- an organisation which learns from others and shares its experience and knowledge of working bilingually.

Our commitment

The National Assembly for Wales (“the Assembly”) serves a bilingual nation where almost one in five people speaks Welsh. The Assembly is the national focus of democratic life in Wales and proud of its international reputation as a bilingual institution.

The National Assembly for Wales Commission (“the Commission”) is responsible for the provision of the property, staff and services required by the Assembly. The strategic aims of the Commission are to:

- provide outstanding parliamentary support;
- engage with the people of Wales and champion the Assembly; and
- use resources wisely.

The Commission's commitment to bilingualism underpins the achievement of these goals - our services, strategies and aspirations reflect the equal status of our official languages. We

value the diversity of our workforce, and the Commission is committed to diversifying the organisation through its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. This Scheme deals solely with the provision of bilingual services in our official languages and our obligations in relation to the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012.

The legislative framework

This is the Assembly's second Official Languages Scheme. The first was published in July 2013, following the introduction of the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012. Prior to the introduction of the Act, the Assembly implemented Welsh language Schemes in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993. The Assembly is in the unique position of having its own legislation to regulate its statutory basis for bilingual working. It means that both Welsh and English are treated as official languages at the Assembly.

Under the Official Languages Act, the Assembly is required to publish a new Scheme for every Assembly term. This, therefore, is the Scheme for the duration of the Fifth Assembly from 2016 to 2021.

Welsh language standards

In 2015, the Welsh Language Commissioner introduced the first set of regulations around Welsh language standards. It is important to note that neither the National Assembly for Wales nor this Scheme is subject to the regime of Welsh language standards. We believe that our Scheme compares favourably with the standards that apply to Welsh Ministers, county councils and county borough councils in Wales and national park authorities, and we would not wish to fall below the spirit of those standards in any regard.

The Official Languages Scheme 2013-2016

Implementing our Scheme allows us to set our own priorities and enables us to be innovative in the way that we provide bilingual services.

Our first Scheme ran from 2013 to 2016 and it focused on four key areas:

- to provide innovative, tailored support to enable people to use both languages;
- to make the best use of technology;
- to develop the Welsh-language skills and confidence of Assembly staff in providing that support; and
- to share the things that work for us with the rest of Wales and the multilingual world beyond our borders.

We realised great service improvements and the vast majority of the targets set were achieved. Work around the four key areas above led to the following achievements over and above our routine service standards:

- by **working with Members to better understand individual preferences**, diverse provision was put in place to support bilingual working, for example, bilingual briefing documents are now provided for committee members. This allows Assembly Members to prepare for Committee meetings in the language of their choice, facilitating enhanced use of their preferred language in proceedings. Also, in response to feedback from Assembly Members, we developed a series of

glossaries of Welsh technical terms and phrases for Bills and committee inquiries that are also published on our website. The glossaries assist Assembly Members to discuss less familiar topics in their language of choice.

- the launch of the **global Welsh model for Microsoft Translator** took place in the Senedd on 21 February 2014, enabling Microsoft users throughout the world to translate into and from Welsh. The publicity surrounding the launch event had a global reach of up to 5 million people, promoting not only the Welsh language but also the National Assembly and its partnership with Microsoft. Assembly staff use the technology in two ways: non-Welsh speakers are able to get the gist of any Welsh only communication so that they are able to process and reply to it more quickly and effectively; and Assembly translators have integrated the technology as an add-on to the translation memory software that is used, allowing translators to be up to 20% more efficient.
- we radically transformed the way in which we support Commission staff who wish to learn Welsh. In November 2014, we began piloting a more informal approach with the appointment of an internal Welsh Language Tutor. This proved successful, with excellent take-up rates and learners responding to **a flexible and tailored approach to learning Welsh**. By the end of the Fourth Assembly, the success of this approach led to the creation of a four-strong Language Skills Team, providing a range of Welsh learning opportunities to Assembly Members and their support staff as well as Assembly Commission staff, ranging from pure beginners to fluent Welsh speakers who wish to further develop their written Welsh.
- the Assembly is now **one of the foremost bilingual organisations within the public sector in Wales**. We publicised the work around Microsoft Translator and made it available to a world-wide audience. We have given numerous presentations to conferences and individual organisations, both on the way that language technology has transformed the way we work bilingually and our developments around Welsh learning. Consequently, other organisations have followed our lead around technology and our Welsh learning provision.

Our themes for this Scheme

Building on the platform we developed in the Fourth Assembly, we remain committed to leading the way in the delivery and innovation of bilingual service provision.

Our actions for this Scheme are centred on five key themes:

- the bilingual ethos of the organisation;
- recruitment;
- language skills;
- Assembly proceedings;
- language planning.

Further details about the themes are listed in section three. They seek to take us to the next level, to augment our bilingual capacity as an organisation and to take us even closer to achieving our ambition.

The scope of the Official Languages Scheme

The Scheme is divided into four sections:

- section one, above, outlines our ambition and commitment and gives an overview of what we achieved during the first Scheme;
- section two sets out our current service standards and outline how we deliver our statutory duty to provide bilingual services for three distinct groups: Assembly Members and their staff; the people of Wales; Assembly staff;
- section three sets out our priorities for this Scheme and the bilingual services we aim to deliver over the life of the scheme;
- section four outlines how we will monitor and report on the Scheme and how we will deal with complaints should we fail either to live up to the high standards set for ourselves or to meet the expectations of others.

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Publicising and promoting our bilingual services

We will ensure that Assembly Members and their staff, the public and Assembly staff are aware of this Scheme and the services we provide. We will publicise our bilingual services by:

- promoting the Scheme’s existence when engaging with the public and our stakeholders;
- engaging with external stakeholders such as the Welsh Language Commissioner in order to share and learn from experience of delivering bilingual services;
- raising awareness of the Scheme and its requirements among staff on an on-going basis by providing initial training for all staff as part of their induction, and continuous awareness raising initiatives throughout the parliamentary year;
- ensuring bilingual staff are present and easily identifiable in all the public spaces where the Assembly has a corporate presence; and
- including the promotion of the Scheme in the induction programme for new Assembly Members and their support staff (AMSS).

Should you require clarification on any aspect of the Official Languages Scheme, please contact the Official Languages Scheme Manager as below.

An electronic copy of this Scheme can be found on the National Assembly’s website www.assembly.wales.

Copies of this report can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print, audio or hard copy from:

National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

- Online: www.assembly.wales
- Email: Contact@assembly.wales
- Tel: 0300 200 6565

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Section 2: Service standards

The Commission is proud of its achievements in enabling bilingual proceedings and the Assembly's internationally recognised status as a democratically elected body committed to delivering innovative bilingual services.

The Act places a statutory duty on the Commission to enable anyone engaged in Assembly proceedings to do so in either Welsh or English – our official languages.

To enable Assembly Members and their support staff to do this, the Commission:

- provides simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English in all Assembly Plenary and Committee proceedings, in accordance with Standing Orders 13.2 and 17.45;
- publishes all documents emanating from the Assembly and relating to formal Assembly business in both official languages in line with statutory and Standing Order requirements;
- provides bilingual materials and the means to participate in formal Assembly proceedings bilingually; and
- provides bespoke language tuition, and support to develop and improve language skills in a professional context.

Members' one-to-one interactions with individual constituents are not covered by this Scheme, but any materials funded by the Commission or Remuneration Board must be produced bilingually. The Commission will continue to provide resources to ensure that Assembly Members and their staff can deal with constituents in the official language of their constituents' choice.

In line with the provisions of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (as amended by the Official Languages Act 2012), we publish a fully bilingual record of the proceedings of the Assembly in Plenary (Record of Proceedings).

Service standards for Assembly Members and their support staff

1 Preparing for Plenary meetings

- 1.1 Any documents laid or business tabled are available in English and Welsh in accordance with Standing Order 15.4.
- 1.2 All Bills considered by the National Assembly are available in both official languages, except for the circumstances outlined in Standing Order 26.5.
- 1.3 English and Welsh versions of published documents for Plenary are available simultaneously for Assembly Members and the public:
- 1.4 Internal and private papers will be available in the official language of individual members' choice.
- 1.5 Where it is not possible to secure documents in both languages from external organisations and third parties, we publish in the language submitted, stating that it has been received in that language only.
- 1.6 Other supporting papers provided by third parties, including correspondence from the Welsh Government (for example, answers to written and oral questions), are published in the language in which they are submitted. We expect other organisations to implement their own standards or schemes and to comply with their statutory obligations.
- 1.7 Should we fall short of this standard, a formal record will be logged and action taken to prevent a repeat occurrence.
- 1.8 Correspondence by or on behalf of the Llywydd (Presiding Officer) to all Members, relating to Plenary business, will be bilingual.

2 Preparing for committee meetings

- 2.1 English and Welsh versions of published documents for committee meetings are available simultaneously for Assembly Members and the public.
- 2.2 Internal and private papers will be available in the official language of individual members' choice.
- 2.3 Committees request from the outset that documents or written responses to consultations from external organisations and third parties intended for publication and / or use in National Assembly proceedings should be submitted bilingually.
- 2.4 Where it is not possible to secure documents in both languages from external organisations and third parties, we publish in the language submitted, stating that it has been received in that language only.
- 2.5 Other supporting papers provided by third parties, including correspondence from the Welsh Government (for example, answers to written and oral questions), are published in the language(s) in which they are submitted. We expect other organisations to implement their own standards or schemes and to comply with their statutory obligations.

- 2.6** Correspondence between the Presiding Officer and all Committee Chairs as a group will be bilingual. Published letters are available in both official languages. The language of correspondence between individual committee Chairs is a matter for individual committee Chairs.

3 Taking part in Assembly Business

- 3.1** Those taking part in official Assembly proceedings may use either or both of our official languages.
- 3.2** Simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English is available to Assembly Members, witnesses and Assembly staff who take part in or support Assembly proceedings. Audio feeds are provided to those viewing the proceedings on all of our platforms and in the original and interpreted languages.
- 3.3** Simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English is available to visitors to public galleries and committee rooms in both the Senedd and Tŷ Hywel and across the Assembly's estate during Assembly proceedings and events. This service is also available when official business or events are held off the Assembly's estate.
- 3.4** Assembly Members, their support staff and Assembly staff can either follow the floor language or the interpreted (Welsh to English) Assembly proceedings on the internal television channel.
- 3.5** Our video conferencing provision allows Members and witnesses to use the official language of their choice during proceedings, where technically possible.

4 Recording Plenary

- 4.1** A rolling draft version of the Record of Proceedings is published approximately one hour after the start of the Plenary meeting. It includes contributions in the official languages spoken together with a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation of Welsh contributions into English.
- 4.2** An edited, fully bilingual Record of Proceedings, including the translation of English contributions into Welsh, is published on the Assembly's website as within three working days or sooner if possible.
- 4.3** When video is shown during Plenary a hyperlink to the material used is included in the Record of Proceedings along with a transcript of any oral contributions in the official languages.

5 Recording committee meetings

- 5.1** An edited draft of committee transcripts, including a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation of Welsh contributions, is published within 3 working days, and a final edited transcript is published within 10 working days
- 5.2** When video is shown during committee proceedings, a hyperlink to the material used will be included in the transcript along with a transcript of any oral contributions in the official languages including a translation of the Welsh into English.

6 Support for the Assembly Commission

- 6.1** English and Welsh versions of agendas, minutes and supporting papers are available simultaneously for Assembly Commissioners.
- 6.2** Interpretation from Welsh to English is provided for Assembly Commission meetings
- 6.3** Published reports and meeting papers relating to Assembly Commission business are issued in both official languages.
- 6.4** Assembly Commission communications to Assembly Members, Assembly staff and the public are available in both official languages.
- 6.5** The Assembly Commission responds to all correspondence in the language of the recipient's choice within 15 working days.

7 Cross-party groups

- 7.1** Simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English is available for cross party group meetings upon request.
- 7.2** The Assembly Commission provides for the translation of the minutes and annual reports of cross-party groups.

8 Assembly Members' publicity and constituency correspondence

- 8.1** Assembly Members and their support staff are provided with email addresses in both official languages enw.cyfenw@cynulliad.cymru and name.surname@assembly.wales. They can choose which address to use, but either may be used to contact them.
- 8.2** A translation fund is available to individual Assembly Members to facilitate the use of the official language of their choice to converse, correspond or communicate with their constituents. This fund is available to support Members by the provision of text translation and interpretation.
- 8.3** Any materials (such as letter heads, business cards, surgery notices and reports) funded by the Assembly Commission or Remuneration Board must be produced bilingually.
- 8.4** The Commission provides a bilingual template for the design of Assembly Members' websites that are funded by the Assembly Commission or Remuneration Board.
- 8.5** Assembly Members may use the translation fund referred to above to translate the content of their websites.

9 Supporting and developing language skills

- 9.1** The Assembly Commission, through the Language Skills Team, is committed to providing tailored and flexible support for Assembly Members and their Support Staff to develop or improve their language skills.
- 9.2** The Assembly Commission provides Members and their support staff with a learning environment conducive to learning and developing their Welsh-language skills by teaching, coaching or by using learning resources at their pace.
- 9.3** We provide 'Working Welsh' or 'Dysgwr' (Learner) lanyards for Assembly Members and their support staff.
- 9.4** Our Information and Communication Technology (ICT) interface can be configured to be used in either of our official languages. *Cysgliad*, the grammar and spellchecking software for Welsh, is provided as a default to all Assembly Members and their support staff from the outset.
- 9.5** Advice on the appropriate use of language technology including Microsoft Translator is available on the Members' Intranet and training sessions are provided by the Official Languages Team on the use of Welsh on the computer.

10 Assembly staff communications to Assembly Members

- 10.1** We provide bilingual versions of the Members' intranet.
- 10.2** We communicate with Assembly Members in the language of their choice or bilingually.
- 10.3** Assembly Members and their support staff may correspond with all Assembly service areas in the official language of the Members' choice, and the service area will respond in the same language.
- 10.4** Assembly Members and their support staff have the right to converse with Assembly staff in either official language. When non-Welsh speakers respond to a call from a Welsh-speaking Member or one of their support staff, we expect them to explain that they do not speak Welsh and offer to transfer the call to a Welsh-speaking colleague or, if the caller prefers, to continue in English.
- 10.5** Correspondence sent to all Assembly Members as a group is bilingual.
- 10.6** All permanent and temporary signs, posters and information sheets provided by the Assembly Commission on the Assembly estate are available bilingually and simultaneously. The Welsh text appears first or uppermost. If separate English and Welsh versions are provided, they are equal in quality, format, size and prominence.
- 10.7** We expect posters or information sheets from third parties that are displayed on noticeboards on the Assembly estate to be bilingual.
- 10.8** All Assembly publications available bilingually are equal in quality, format, size and prominence, and will be produced in accordance with Assembly Commission guidelines on house style.
- 10.9** When we develop new services for Assembly Members and their support staff, we treat both official languages on a basis of equality.

Service standards for communicating and engaging with the people of Wales

The Commission is committed to delivering bilingual services of the highest quality to the public.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 (as amended by the Official Languages Act 2012) places a statutory duty on the Commission to enable the public to communicate and engage with the Assembly – whether in person, on the phone, online or by correspondence – in their official language of choice.

Members of the public or external organisations may hold events or exhibitions on the Assembly estate. The Assembly requires that all such events are sponsored by an Assembly Member. We require organisers of Assembly Member-sponsored events to comply with the relevant parts of the Scheme.

Where we work in partnership with others, we will encourage them to meet the standards we set for ourselves.

Any contracts or arrangements between the Commission and third parties (such as recruitment agencies, catering companies, consultants, contractors etc.) to provide services to the public, will require them to comply with the relevant parts of this Scheme.

Where we develop new services, or radically reform existing services to the public, they will be bilingual from the outset.

11 Corresponding with the public (email or hard copy)

- 11.1 We respond to all correspondence from the public in the language of the recipient's choice within 15 working days.
- 11.2 Any correspondence following a meeting or telephone conversation is in the language of the initial conversation unless we are made aware that the recipient would prefer to receive it in the other official language or in both.
- 11.3 Standard or circular correspondence to more than one recipient in Wales is issued bilingually.
- 11.4 When Welsh and English versions of any correspondence are published separately, both versions are available simultaneously and are equal in quality, format, size and prominence.
- 11.5 Assembly staff auto signatures and out-of-office messages are bilingual. Templates are available to ensure that the English and Welsh text are equal in quality, format and size. The Welsh text appears first or uppermost.
- 11.6 All Assembly publications are available bilingually, are equal in quality, format, size and prominence, and are produced in accordance with Assembly Commission guidelines on house style.
- 11.7 Assembly staff can be contacted on email addresses in either of the official languages enw.cyfenw@cynulliad.cymru and name.surname@assembly.wales

12 Telephone communications

- 12.1** Any member of the public contacting our switchboard or reception desks in Ty Hywel, the Senedd, Pierhead or the North Wales Office is answered with a bilingual greeting.
- 12.2** Assembly staff members should answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting. We will continue to ensure that the appropriate resources and training are available for them to do so.
- 12.3** The public has the right to converse with Assembly staff in either of our official languages. When non-Welsh speakers respond to a call from a Welsh speaker, we expect them to explain that they do not speak Welsh and offer to transfer the call to a Welsh-speaking colleague or, if the customer prefers, to continue in English.
- 12.4** Our main switchboard and reception desks have bilingual answer messages on their answer phones.
- 12.5** Individual telephone voicemail messages should be recorded bilingually, and resources and training are available to facilitate this.

13 Our public image

- 13.1** All advertising, publicity, campaigns or other engagement methods that target the public are produced bilingually. From time to time, this may mean having separate Welsh and English-language materials or products, and they will always be available simultaneously. The Welsh text appears first or uppermost. If Welsh and English versions are available separately, they will be equal in format, size, quality and prominence.
- 13.2** Our corporate identity is bilingual. However, some terms are known by a single name in both of the official languages, including the following:
- Llywydd;
 - Senedd, Neuadd, Cwrt, Oriel, Siambr;
 - Tŷ Hywel; Siambr Hywel; and
 - Pierhead.

14 Public information and engagement services

- 14.1** Information to the media *en masse* is issued bilingually. Exclusive items for individual media outlets are provided in their official language of choice.
- 14.2** Information relating to the National Assembly is published on two websites, one in Welsh at www.cynulliad.cymru and the other in English at www.assembly.wales.
- 14.3** Outreach services are available in either of our official languages. Service users are offered the choice of language at the point of booking.
- 14.4** Our social media feeds are available bilingually, either in a bilingual account or in separate Welsh and English accounts.
- 14.5** Our social media policy outlines how we will ensure an appropriate, bilingual presence.
- 14.6** Our presence on all new digital engagement platforms will be bilingual.
- 14.7** Where those platforms are not available bilingually, all content issued by us will be bilingual, and contributions from stakeholders in either or both of our official languages will be encouraged.
- 14.8** We respond to queries on all our social media profiles in the language in which they are posted.
- 14.9** Members of the public can view Assembly proceedings on Senedd.tv, the Assembly's online broadcast channel, either with or without interpretation from Welsh to English.
- 14.10** Information videos produced by the Assembly are available bilingually.
- 14.11** For the purposes of Committee business, video evidence is broadcast in the original language spoken with Welsh contributions accompanied by English subtitles. Transcripts of footage are available in the original language with an interpretation from Welsh to English as required.
- 14.12** Any applications, websites or online tools we create or commission are available bilingually.
- 14.13** For all public meetings, seminars, events or exhibitions organised by the Assembly Commission on or off the Assembly Estate we:
- issue bilingual invitations and produce bilingual publicity material;
 - provide simultaneous interpretation from Welsh to English on request and inform prospective attendees of the availability of the service at the event;
 - provide supporting papers and any subsequent reports bilingually;
 - ensure that bilingual staff members are available at such meetings/events.

15 Freedom of information requests

- 15.1** When we respond to a request made under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations we will correspond with the requestor in their official language of choice. In line with the applicable legislation and good practice, the information requested will be provided in the language in which it is held by the Commission.

16 Visitors to the National Assembly estate

- 16.1** Members of the public can expect to converse with front-facing staff in either Welsh or English in those public places managed by the Assembly Commission (the Senedd, the Pierhead, Tŷ Hywel and the North Wales Office, and in committee meetings and public events held off the Assembly estate).
- 16.2** Educational visits and Senedd tours are available in either of the official languages and in some other languages. Visitors are offered the choice of language at the point of booking.
- 16.3** Impromptu Senedd tours are available in both official languages and in some other languages.
- 16.4** Audio announcements over the public address systems, including the lifts, on the estate are bilingual.
- 16.5** Visitors to the Senedd Café and shop can expect to be served bilingually.
- 16.6** Commission staff members who are Welsh speakers or learners are easily identifiable through the use of 'Working Welsh' or 'Dysgwr' ['Learner'] lanyards.

17 Assembly Member-sponsored events and exhibitions on the Assembly estate

- 17.1** Organisations holding events on the Assembly estate are required to issue bilingual invitations to the event in the name of the sponsoring Assembly Member, and are required to submit invitations to the Assembly events team for approval prior to use.
- 17.2** Simultaneous interpretation will be provided for any events held by external organisations on the Assembly estate upon the request of the sponsoring Assembly Member.
- 17.3** Organisations subject to Welsh language schemes or standards that hold events on the National Assembly's estate targeting Assembly Members or the public are expected to operate in accordance with their scheme or standards regarding public information and their public image.
- 17.4** Organisations not subject to Welsh language schemes or standards are encouraged to operate in accordance with the principles of this Scheme.

18 Working in partnership

- 18.1** When the Assembly Commission operates as the strategic and financial leader within a formal partnership, the public service elements of that partnership will comply with this Scheme.
- 18.2** When the Assembly Commission joins a formal partnership that is led by others, the Commission's input will comply with this Scheme. Other partners will be encouraged to respect the principles of this Scheme.
- 18.3** When the Assembly Commission becomes a partner in a consortium, we will encourage the consortium to comply with this Scheme. When we operate in the name of this consortium, we will do so in accordance with this Scheme.
- 18.4** Final versions of legal documents and legal agreements with individuals, organisations or groups are available in the partner's official language of choice.

19 Services through third parties

- 19.1** Any services to the public provided under contracts or arrangements between the Assembly Commission and third parties (such as recruitment agencies, catering companies, consultants, contractors etc.) will comply with the relevant parts of this Scheme.
- 19.2** We ensure that all our contractors understand our commitment to promoting bilingualism and not only conform to our standards but also seek opportunities to enhance bilingual services.
- 19.3** All our procurement documents note our Scheme and our commitment to providing bilingual services. They also note the requirements for third parties to comply with the Scheme.
- 19.4** Our contract notices state that we welcome tenders in Welsh or English. Invitations to tender are sent to suppliers in their language of choice. Unless all those involved in the process are able to work bilingually, for the purposes of internal evaluation, any tender bids completed in Welsh will be translated into English.

20 Developing new services for the public

- 20.1** When we develop new services for the public, we treat both official languages on a basis of equality. New services for the public will be bilingual from the outset.

Service standards for our staff to facilitate a bilingual working environment

The internal Skills Audit we held in 2015 found that around three-quarters of the staff members that the Commission employs consider themselves to be Welsh learners, to have some bilingual skills or to be fully bilingual. This demonstrates the organisation's huge commitment to increasing its bilingual capacity.

Our Bilingual Skills Strategy helps us to manage our skills resource, taking account of best practice in language and workforce planning including guidance from the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner, and in accordance with the relevant employment and equalities legislation.

We ensure that staff understand the requirements of the Act, the Official Languages Scheme and the Bilingual Skills Strategy and how they impact on the services we provide. Our staff can expect:

- access to tailored and flexible support for staff members who wish to develop or improve their language skills, and robust advice on bilingual working ;
- bilingual all-staff communications such as the staff intranet and all-staff emails;
- the ability to contribute to all-staff meetings in either of the official languages;
- an ICT interface that can be configured to be used in either of our official languages;
- to have any document that they draft translated into either of the Assembly's official languages by the Assembly's Translation and Reporting Service as well as a text-checking service in either language;
- support to draft text bilingually including advice on the availability and appropriate use of language technology, as well as the use of a dedicated quick-turnaround text-checking service for content drafted with the aid of machine translation; and
- to receive internal HR and Finance corporate documents bilingually or in their language of choice.

What we expect from our staff:

- to be fully committed to the implementation and promotion of this Scheme and the bilingual services outlined within it;
- to respect the rights of Members, colleagues and the public to use either or both of our official languages;
- to maintain an awareness and understanding of the historical, social, cultural and legal context that has informed the development of this Scheme and our bilingual services provision; and
- to develop new services in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the Scheme.

What we expect from the Assembly staff management board:

- to consider the requirements of the Act and this Scheme in the day to day undertaking of their duties as Heads of Services or Team Leaders;
- to develop language plans for each service area and contribute to the development of the annual report on our implementation of this Scheme;
- to lead by example and proactively seek ways to improve the bilingual services we offer and urgently address any instances where provision might fall below the standard expected;
- to encourage and support staff who wish to work bilingually;
- to encourage and support staff who wish to develop or improve their language skills, and
- to consider how our language planning process, training opportunities and recruitment approach take full account of the need for bilingual skills across the organisation alongside other key business priorities (as outlined in this section.

21 Staff communications

- 21.1** Corporate templates are bilingual.
- 21.2** All messages on the staff news page, group email messages to all staff and staff surveys are bilingual. Both language versions are equal in quality, format, size and prominence.
- 21.3** Any new information developed by staff about their services (e.g. Intranet and hard-copy information) is bilingual.
- 21.4** Welsh to English simultaneous interpretation is available at all-staff meetings, and upon request for other meetings and events (e.g. team meetings, project boards, working groups).
- 21.5** Management board meetings are conducted bilingually.
- 21.6** Welsh to English simultaneous interpretation is available for individual staff members upon request for employment related meetings (e.g. performance reviews, grievance or disciplinary processes).
- 21.7** A text translation service is available for individual staff upon request for any employment related issues (such as performance reviews, grievance or disciplinary processes).

22 Working bilingually

- 22.1 The Translation and Reporting Service provides various text-checking services for Assembly staff.
- 22.2 Information about the services provided by the Translation and Reporting Service, and how to commission and use those services is available on the staff Intranet.
- 22.3 The Translation and Reporting Service maintains a dialogue with centres of excellence in Wales and beyond to remain abreast of the latest developments in language and translation technology.
- 22.4 Information and guidance about the availability and appropriate use of language technology, including machine translation, is published on the staff Intranet and training is provided upon request.
- 22.5 Our ICT interface can be configured to be used in either of our official languages, and advice on configuration is available on the staff Intranet. *Cysgliad*, the Welsh grammar and spellchecking software, is provided as a default to all staff from the outset.
- 22.6 Our HR and payroll system can be configured for use in either of our official languages, and advice on configuration is available on the staff intranet.

23 Bilingual Skills Strategy

- 23.1 In accordance with the Act, a Bilingual Skills Strategy is in place to ensure that the staff of the Assembly have, **collectively**, and across service areas, the language skills necessary to enable the Scheme to be implemented.
- 23.2 Individual service areas' language plans are prepared and reviewed regularly to plan for the delivery of bilingual services, and ensure that staff members have the support and skills required to deliver those services.

24 Staff induction and awareness

- 24.1 As part of the corporate induction process, all new staff members are made aware of the requirements of this Scheme, and of the Assembly's commitment to delivering exemplary bilingual services.
- 24.2 All new staff members are made aware of the support available to develop or improve their language skills as part of the induction process.
- 24.3 We provide 'Working Welsh' or 'Dysgwr' (Learner) lanyards for staff members as appropriate.
- 24.4 All staff will be made aware of the language requirements of their particular post from the outset. Candidates will be appropriately assessed during the recruitment process to ensure that they are comfortable with what is expected of the post holder. The performance management system will be used to review post holders' understanding of the language requirements of their post, and to identify any further support needed by individuals to achieve the necessary standards.

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Section 3

Themes for the duration of this Scheme

The previous section outlined our current service standards. This section outlines how we intend to build on those standards to ensure that we achieve our ambition. We will focus on the five following themes:

Theme 1: Recruitment

In June 2016, the Welsh Government published the report of the Working Group on the Welsh Language and Local Government, entitled 'Language, Work and Bilingual Services'¹. In addition to emphasising the importance of language training in the workplace, it also recommends a relatively new way of recruiting a bilingual workforce. Rather than describing advertised posts as 'Welsh essential', 'Welsh desirable', or neither, it recommends a fluency framework. The framework, which is based on the internationally recognised ALTE model of fluency, includes graded levels of proficiency in Welsh. Under the framework, all advertised posts would require some basic level of understanding of Welsh, even though many of them would be on the lowest level where only 'basic linguistic courtesy' is required.

A number of public sector organisations in Wales are already utilising this new approach, including North Wales Police, and the county councils of Cardiff, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. We are impressed with the approach that these organisations have taken, and we therefore propose to adopt a similarly more sophisticated approach to recruiting bilingual staff throughout the whole organisation. Tied in with the support that is available to all staff members to acquire the relevant skills for each fluency level, we believe we are well placed to introduce such a system for Assembly Commission staff.

Therefore, in order to increase the level of basic level Welsh-language skills across the organisation over time, and to build on our existing bilingual ethos, by the end of 2017, we will:

- adopt an approach where all posts advertised require at least a basic level of Welsh-language skills ('basic linguistic courtesy') with candidates expected to evidence those skills on appointment, or a commitment to gain those skills as part of the induction process;
- provide guidance to all candidates on gaining the appropriate language skills prior to appointment, including online resources;
- provide bespoke training for all new staff members and any existing staff members who are required to gain language skills as part of the induction process;
- develop a mechanism to help determine the fluency levels required for each post and describe them in the job advertisement;
- provide guidance for recruitment managers on the appropriate wording to reflect the requirements of each post;
- ensure that the language requirement status of all posts advertised will be scrutinised by the Assembly Commission's Investment and Resource Board prior to approval;

¹ [Language, Work and Bilingual Services: report of the working group on the Welsh language and local government Welsh Government June 2016](#)

- ensure that recruitment panels are able to accurately assess the relevant language skills of the post advertised;
- ensure that all potential candidates are aware of the bilingual ethos of the organisation before applying for a post;
- investigate alternative methods of recruiting bilingual staff to certain areas where we have not succeeded in attracting them in the past.

Theme 2: Language skills

Our work during the Fourth Assembly laid the groundwork for an innovative way of delivering Welsh language learning skills for Assembly Members and their staff and for Assembly Commission staff members. In addition to the actions around recruitment outlined above, we are also committed to supporting all staff members to develop or improve their language skills.

A Language Skills Team has been appointed to deliver Welsh learning across the organisation. The work of the team will give a much more focused approach to learning Welsh for the workplace. It will continue to offer a flexible and bespoke service, especially to Assembly Members who are Welsh learners or who wish to improve their existing bilingual skills. The flexible and bespoke approach has also worked well for service areas such as the Security and Front of House services. However, the team will also give each learner who enrolls on tutored courses a specific learning target each year. Line managers will support staff members to attain their targets and progress will be linked to the language skills identified as part of the fluency grades (see 'Recruitment' above). Learners' progress will be used to update individual service areas' language plans and will be recognised as part of the performance management system.

Therefore, by then end of 2017, we will:

- develop a programme of bespoke language skills training taking into account the different requirements and learning styles of all our staff members;
- develop specific training for particular areas of the organisation such as the Security service to equip all staff members with the skills they need to provide excellent, bilingual customer service;
- work with service areas to look at ways of working differently and using the expertise of other service areas such as the Translation and Reporting Service to provide bilingual services;
- introduce more robust systems to set targets for learners and to recognise achievements;
- continue to provide bespoke and flexible Welsh learning provision for Assembly Members and their staff;
- investigate new, varied and innovative models of helping learners to develop their language skills, for example secondments and language immersion training, and pilot these models during the life of this scheme.

Theme 3: Language planning

For all the actions listed above to be effective, all the Assembly's service areas will need to plan effectively for the delivery of bilingual services. The new recruitment system will be supported by appropriate language skills training, which will, in turn, lead to increased bilingual capacity. The Bilingual Skills Strategy that was undertaken under the first Official Languages Scheme required service areas to publish their own language plans. These identify the bilingual capacity of the team in relation to the services' day-to-day functions, and outline how each team makes the best use of the language skills within the team and beyond. For the Fifth Assembly, the language plans will need to be more robust and will reflect the progress of individual Welsh learners. More formalised and career-related recognition should be given to staff members who take up training opportunities with the Language Skills Team. This should be reflected in the Assembly's performance management system.

Therefore, we will:

- review the Bilingual Skills Strategy during the life of the Scheme. The review, and the subsequent strategy, should recognise the investment made by individual Welsh learners, the Language Skills Team and line managers in learning Welsh;
- work to improve the effectiveness of individual service area language plans to support our work on recruitment;
- work with individual service areas to review their language plans as part of their annual capacity planning and as part of this Scheme's annual compliance reports, and
- look at ways of maintaining up-to-date information on language skills in a reportable format, either through our HR and payroll system or through our performance management system.

Theme 4: Assembly proceedings

Work undertaken during the Fourth Assembly increased the opportunities afforded to Assembly Members to prepare for and participate in Assembly proceedings in their language of choice. By now, Members can receive committee briefings in their language of choice; glossaries of technical terms are prepared to coincide with the passage of Bills and specific committee inquiries; one-to-one assistance is available to Members who are Welsh learners to participate in Welsh. Working with new members and new committees for the Fifth Assembly, we will integrate bilingual working for those who wish to conduct their work through the medium of Welsh. For committees, the integrated team approach has worked well as a means of identifying Assembly Members' individual needs. We will strengthen the teams' roles by providing contact buddies to Assembly Members who wish to work through the medium of Welsh who will feed Members' requirements into the whole integrated team.

We will:

- gain an understanding of Assembly Members' individual preferences in relation to preparing for Assembly proceedings through the medium of Welsh;
- develop an enhanced programme of bespoke language skills training taking into account the different requirements and learning styles of Assembly Members who are either learning Welsh or wish to improve their Welsh language skills;

- develop the roles of integrated teams to better support Assembly Members who wish to work through the medium of Welsh and
- provide advice and guidance on bilingual working for Assembly Members and their support staff.

Theme 5: Developing the bilingual ethos of the organisation

The National Assembly for Wales is a bilingual organisation that serves a bilingual nation. It is our statutory duty to treat both of the Assembly’s official languages on an equal basis and to provide freedom of choice of official language. Our culture and corporate identity must reflect these requirements. The actions around the following sub-themes will ensure that our commitment to bilingualism becomes even more integrated within the day-to-day work of the Assembly.

Identifying bilingual staff

As part of our corporate proactive offer, we will reinforce the right of everyone who comes into contact with us to use both or either official language. During the Fourth Assembly, we made progress in that Welsh was seen and heard more across the organisation. One simple but effective example of the way we achieved this was by introducing lanyards for Welsh learners. They were based on the more generally recognised ‘Working Welsh’ lanyards, but with ‘Dysgwr’ [‘Learner’] clearly marked on them. The lanyards have proved popular with Welsh learners, and have brought about an increase in the use of Welsh in the corridors and offices of the Assembly. They have also proved popular with external organisations, with many looking to the Assembly to provide their organisations with the lanyards.

However, there is yet more work to be done in this area. We will work with individual service areas to look at ways of identifying staff members who are able to deliver bilingual services. We will also ensure that they, in turn, are easily identifiable to service users.

We will:

- develop ways for staff to note that they are bilingual or Welsh learners in their e-mails;
- ensure that bilingual staff wear ‘Working Welsh’ or ‘Dysgwr’ lanyards

Front-facing staff members who are Welsh speakers should be identifiable as such so that Welsh speakers who visit the Assembly are able to engage with them without having to switch to English. During the Fourth Assembly we delivered bespoke Welsh lessons to all Security Service staff members and delivered sessions with Welsh-speaking members of the service to increase their confidence in using Welsh. We also undertook several dedicated recruitment drives. These various approaches resulted in an overall increase in the service’s bilingual capacity, which the service area is strongly committed to improving. This approach will be reinforced in the Fifth Assembly. We will:

- ensure that front-facing staff members such as the Security service receive further bespoke language training;
- develop new and flexible training methods to take account of shift and rotation patterns;

- consider innovative ways of recruiting bilingual security officers, possibly via specialist recruitment agencies and
- ensure that there is a way for visitors to the Assembly estate to identify front-facing Assembly staff members as Welsh speakers or learners;

Awareness

During the Fourth Assembly we delivered compulsory Welsh language awareness seminars for all Assembly Commission staff members. They proved a successful means of increasing awareness about the historical and current use of the Welsh language within public life in Wales. The Official Languages team at the Assembly has produced a video that summarises the main themes of those seminars. It includes interviews with some of the Welsh learners at the Assembly, who explain how learning Welsh has helped their professional development.

We will:

- provide awareness training for all new entrants as part of the corporate induction process to ensure that they have an understanding of the requirements of the Scheme;
- provide awareness training for those who joined the Assembly after the awareness seminars were held;
- provide continuous opportunities to refresh or develop an understanding of the Scheme and the nature of bilingual working and
- continue to use the Official Languages Scheme’s co-ordinators forum to raise awareness of the Scheme among staff.

In 2016, a series of activities were held throughout the year to promote the use of the Welsh language. In October 2015, we held a week-long series of events to coincide with national ‘Shwmae/Sumae day’, where everybody is encouraged to greet each other in Welsh. We held a number of activities each day of the week to increase awareness of the services available to all staff members across the organisation.

We will:

- continue to organise activities to promote the use of the Welsh language within the Assembly and
- proactively publicise the achievements of our Welsh learners through various media and social media platforms.

Technology

One of our main achievements during the lifetime of the first Scheme was the machine translation project undertaken with Microsoft to introduce Welsh as a language option on a variety of Microsoft applications, including Microsoft Office (see page x). Maintaining the relationship we have fostered with Microsoft will be necessary, both in order to keep improving the quality of the translation output, and to be well placed to take advantage of any further developments in the field.

We keep abreast of the latest developments in the theory and application of language technology. Ensuring that lesser-used languages such as Welsh have a visible and accessible presence on as many platforms as possible is one way of avoiding the possibility of their digital extinction.

To complement the Assembly’s digital engagement agenda, we keep abreast of the latest developments in the field, and proactively seek to work with partners to provide bilingual interfaces.

We will:

- continue to develop our relationship with Microsoft following the successful global introduction of Welsh on applications that use Microsoft Translator;
- seek opportunities to collaborate on the development of emerging language technology and tools, including developments in the field of speech-to-text technology;
- explore ways of proactively providing Welsh medium interfaces on the ICT profiles of Assembly Members, support staff or new Assembly Commission staff who identify themselves as Welsh speakers, and ensure that they are supported in the use of those interfaces.
- seek opportunities to make creative use of emerging technologies to broaden our engagement, and to enable our stakeholders to engage with us in the format and official language of their choice and
- collaborate as appropriate with partners to expand the provision of bilingual interfaces available for stakeholders.

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Section 4: Arrangements for monitoring and reporting

Authority and responsibility for implementing this Scheme

This Scheme carries the full authority, support and approval of the Assembly Commission and the National Assembly for Wales and the Assembly Staff Management Board.

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the National Assembly has overall responsibility for ensuring that this Scheme is implemented. The Director of Commission Services has responsibility for co-ordinating, monitoring and, when necessary, advising on revisions to its content. The Official Languages Scheme Manager has day-to-day responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Scheme and liaising with the co-ordinator in each service area to improve the range and timeliness of our services in both official languages.

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. Training and support is provided to staff to enable them to deliver the requirements.

Every manager has a delegated responsibility for:

- operating those aspects of the Scheme that are relevant to their work;
- encouraging staff to develop, improve and use their language skills;
- identifying tools or support that can assist staff in using their language skills; and
- ensuring that all members of staff are aware of the bilingual ethos of the Assembly, the ambition and services outlined in this Scheme;

Under the first Scheme, the Assembly Commission created a forum of scheme co-ordinators from all service areas. The forum meets regularly, and the co-ordinators are responsible for:

- being the service area's first point of contact for its staff members for any aspect relating to the Official Languages Scheme;
- providing advice on the delivery of the Scheme in their service area;
- providing information and awareness training for new starters in their service area;
- reviewing progress against the Scheme's requirements via the Official Languages Scheme Co-ordinators Forum, including compliance with issues such as bilingual auto signatures and voicemail messages;
- informing the Official Languages Scheme Manager of any breaches of the Scheme;
- identifying and sharing examples of good and bad practice.

Monitoring and reporting

The Act requires the Commission to “lay before the Assembly a report setting out how the Commission has, during the year in question, given effect to the Scheme.”

The annual report must include whether and to what degree the services outlined in the Scheme have been provided, and if applicable the reasons why any have not been provided by the Commission. We will also monitor individual service areas’ compliance with the Scheme.

Annual compliance monitoring will ensure that how we deliver our bilingual services is transparent to Members and the public and enable them to hold the Commission to account on the Scheme’s implementation. It also provides the Commission with information that enables it to develop and improve bilingual services in future.

There are numerous opportunities for Assembly Members to scrutinise the Scheme and its implementation:

- they are consulted prior to its adoption every Assembly term;
- Assembly officials engage with Members on a regular basis on the day-to-day operation of the Scheme;
- the annual report on the Scheme is debated in Plenary.

Reviewing and updating the Scheme

This Scheme is reviewed in accordance with paragraph 8(g) of Schedule 2 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 (as inserted by section 2 of the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012).

The Commission will consult on any amendment to this Scheme and future draft Schemes in accordance with the relevant legislation. Amendments cannot be adopted unless the drafts have been:

- published and laid before the Assembly;
- made available for public consultation and any representations considered;
- re-laid before the Assembly; and
- approved by resolution of the Assembly.

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Dealing with complaints

We want members of the public, Assembly Members, their support staff and Assembly staff to report any concerns including examples of non-compliance to us as soon as possible. This will enable us to rectify the situation and improve the services we deliver.

Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the National Assembly's Code of Practice on Complaints.

If you have a concern or complaint you should in the first instance, raise it with the official with whom you have been dealing. If this fails to satisfy your concerns you should make a formal complaint. You can do this by e-mail, letter, and telephone or by completing our contact form. Your complaint will be investigated by the Chief Executive and Clerk, or by a person nominated by her in accordance with our complaints procedure. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, your complaint can be considered by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, or the Information Commissioner.

Service standards for monitoring and reporting

25 Co-ordinating the Scheme's implementation

- 25.1 The Official Languages Scheme Manager has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation and development of the Scheme and for monitoring compliance with the Scheme
- 25.2 Each service area's Official Languages Scheme co-ordinator assists with relevant aspects of delivering the Scheme and ensuring compliance with it.

26 Dealing with complaints and breaches

- 26.1 Complaints and their responses are processed by each service area in conjunction with their Official Languages Scheme co-ordinator. Complaints or breaches are dealt with as any other correspondence and are always reported to the Official Languages Scheme Manager.

27 The annual report

- 27.1 The process of compiling our annual report is managed by the Official Languages Scheme Manager, and be prepared for the Assembly's consideration in accordance with paragraph 8(9) of Schedule 2 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 (as inserted by section 2 of the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012).
- 27.2 An annual report is laid before the Assembly for its consideration for the lifetime of this Scheme.