



Government
Communication
Service

Communicating Bilingually:

Guidance for UK Government departments
when communicating in Wales



UK Government
Llywodraeth y DU

Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>Foreword</u>	4
<u>Consultations</u>	6
<u>Events</u>	7
<u>Campaigns</u>	9
• <u>Typesetting and design</u>	9
• <u>Advertising and signage</u>	11
• <u>GOV.UK website content</u>	12
• <u>Press releases and media handling</u>	12
<u>Social media</u>	14
<u>Case studies</u>	18
<u>Evaluating bilingual communications</u>	19
<u>Useful tools and resources</u>	20

Introduction

This guidance is intended to provide you with general advice when planning and delivering bilingual communications activity aimed at Welsh speakers – the majority of whom are resident in Wales but who also can be found in the other nations of the UK.

Public-facing organisations have a duty to represent the audiences they serve and this guidance is designed with UK Government departments or associated organisations in mind.

This advice is by no means exhaustive and should not be considered in isolation, but it should serve as a useful starting point for any organisation operating in Wales or targeting Welsh speaking audiences.

The Welsh Language Act 1993 (Act) places a duty on public organisations to treat the English and Welsh languages equally when providing services to the public in Wales. Some public-facing organisations, including UK Government departments and other organisations implement Welsh language schemes as a result of the Act, while others implement standards as a result of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011.

This guidance contains recommendations and good practice, but every department or agency should ensure that they comply with the specific commitments of their own Welsh language scheme as a minimum. It is important that communications teams consult the individual responsible for their Welsh language scheme and any related documents in the first instance.

The guidance has been developed jointly by the UK Government in Wales and the Government Communications Service (GCS), with input from the Welsh Language Commissioner's office.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's role is to facilitate and promote the use of the Welsh language and to work towards ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than English. The Commissioner's vision is a Wales where people can use the Welsh language in their everyday lives.

This is a vision which is shared by the UK Government in Wales, and this guidance is designed to support you in making sure that Cymraeg is visible, audible and above all accessible.

Foreword from Alex Aiken, Executive Director of UK Government Communication



Over the last few decades, the United Kingdom has undergone unprecedented change in our constitutional makeup. We have marked 20 years of devolution in Wales and Scotland, and have witnessed the positive impact of all governments working together and holding each other to account.

But while devolution continues to evolve and powers are transferred, never has there been a more important time to generate effective communications. We have a duty to help individuals, businesses and communities to understand how they can make the most of public services.

This means strengthening our democratic systems, raising the quality of our output to meet the diverse needs of our audiences and delivering for communities in every corner of the United Kingdom.

This guidance will help you achieve that. It will ensure that communicators provide a platform for Welsh speaking audiences, allowing everyone in Wales to engage and respond to the work of government departments.

It raises the standard of our work, making sure we respect the rights of all citizens and languages that make up the union of the United Kingdom.

It will also enable us to ensure that the work of the UK Government is understood and that we can tackle misinformation about the role that we play.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this guidance and I hope it will support you in the work that you do to serve our country and meet the demands of the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.A.' followed by a stylized flourish.

Foreword from Ashok Ahir, Director of Communications for the UK Government in Wales



As all of us working in public communications know, if we want to get a message across, change behaviours or to influence stakeholders, trust is everything. The language we use when engaging with individuals, businesses and groups is a key component to making that connection.

The Welsh language – Cymraeg – is for many people in Wales an integral part of their identity, not just for fluent speakers, but for those learning the language and for others who may only understand a few words. Conversing with audiences in Welsh, as well as in English, demonstrates respect for Welsh-speakers and a genuine understanding of the renewed focus on the language in every part of Wales.

The UK Government is committed to supporting the ambition of one million Welsh-speakers by 2050. Everyone working in the Government Communication Service can play a role in helping to achieve that target, by ensuring that Welsh is seen and heard in our content and in our activities.

This guidance has been developed in partnership with the Welsh Language Commissioner and is intended to enable you to embed a Welsh language consideration into your communications and engagement strategy.

It is a practical guide that aims to help you and your teams to expand your provision for Welsh-speakers, not just in Wales but across the United Kingdom.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashok Ahir'.

Consultations

When introducing new policies, initiatives and services you should ensure the process is consistent with the Welsh language scheme of your department or organisation.

The process should support the use of the Welsh language (Cymraeg) and help the public in Wales to use the language in their daily lives.

Consultation documents relevant to the general public in Wales should be issued in both Welsh and English. This includes documents on websites and printed materials. Some language schemes include a specific framework to assist with assessing whether consultation documents should be issued in Cymraeg.

The public should be able to respond to consultations relevant to Wales in the language of their choice. This means processes may need to be implemented to ensure that responses can be received and translated accordingly.

Organisations should also consider the potential impact on the Welsh language aspects of any policy being consulted on.

A few examples include:

- Would the policy decision be likely to make Cymraeg more visible?;
- Would the policy decision encourage/ facilitate the recruitment of Welsh speakers?;
- Would the policy decision provide users with the active offer of a service in Cymraeg?;
- Would the policy decision contribute to Welsh language strategies in Wales and specific policy areas e.g. [the Cymraeg 2050 strategy?](#)

The Welsh Language Commissioner's office can provide advice and guidance on how to do this effectively.

Checklist for consultations

- Consistent with organisation's Welsh language scheme
- Bilingual consultation documents on website and in print
- Ability to respond in Cymraeg or English
- Process to deal with responses in both languages
- Considered impact on policy

Events

When holding public meetings or events in Wales, steps should be taken to establish in advance the level of demand for bilingual facilities.

Provision should be made to ensure those attending can and are welcome to contribute in Cymraeg or English.

This may mean reviewing the agenda to include Welsh speakers.

If you plan to prepare any literature in connection with public events, you should issue these bilingually.

You should also invite individuals to notify you in which language they plan to participate in advance. This might vary depending on the region where your event is held and should help you determine whether simultaneous language translation facilities are required. Simultaneous interpreting is preferred to consecutive interpreting as events will take longer otherwise.¹

In addition to translation facilities, organisations should assess the need for Welsh speaking members of staff to be present to welcome the public and deal with any queries.

If no Welsh speaking staff are available, you might want to consider employing the services of someone specifically for the event.

Alternatively, a translator could assist you with other duties on the day.

When designing presentation slides, including both languages in a single slide is good practice, as it offers the audience a language choice. However, it is important to keep the wording on each slide to a minimum and ensure both languages appear together and are not overwhelming or confusing.

¹ Further information is available in Section 3 of the Welsh Language Commissioner's advice document – [‘Bilingual drafting, translation and using Welsh face to face’](#)

Checklist for events

Seen - *How can you ensure that Cymraeg is visible before and during your event?*

- Invitations
- Materials e.g. leaflets, presentation slides, tickets, display items
- Event programme and agendas
- Posters / publicity banners / adverts
- Signs – directional / at the event

Heard - *How can you ensure that Cymraeg is heard in your event?*

- Encourage staff or volunteers to greet visitors in Cymraeg e.g. try and ensure that Welsh speakers are placed in areas where they will be greeting visitors
- Using Cymraeg on the loudspeaker and when making announcements
- Using Cymraeg from the stage – sourcing Welsh speaking contributors or facilitators where appropriate
- Ensuring that someone is available to do media interviews in Cymraeg

What else?

- Market the event bilingually on social media - use a bilingual hashtag and bilingual messages
- Bilingual media releases – including targeting Welsh language media
- Mention to anyone providing services on your behalf before or after the event to encourage staff to use Cymraeg
- Order a stock of 'Working Welsh' badges and lanyards for Welsh speakers to wear
- Is there Cymraeg on your logo or branding?
- Are you creating merchandise for the event and if so, is it bilingual?
- Do you need to arrange simultaneous translation for some sessions?

Campaigns

When designing campaigns for audiences in Wales, it is important that the Cymraeg is not treated less favourably than the English language. It is also important that there is a consistent approach across all campaign materials.

Further information is provided later in this guidance relating to drafting and including Cymraeg in your social media content, including on videos, GIFs and animations.

[More details about good practice in bilingual design can be found on the Welsh Language Commissioner's website.](#)

Planning

Good planning is essential for quality bilingual campaigns. All those working on the output should be aware from the outset that the finished products will include both languages.

This includes ensuring designers or content creators are aware so that provision can be made to include both languages in any visuals or mock-ups.

The appropriate font, layout, format and so on can then be selected. Ideally, the designer should start with text in both languages, therefore sufficient time needs to be allowed beforehand for translation and proofreading.

Bilingual copywriting

Bilingual copywriting is not the same as translation, and short, advertising copy is often far more difficult to produce in two languages.

You should check if the translators are able to provide this service, or commission a bilingual copy-writer to draft the text in both languages. Bilingual drafting often enhances the expression in both languages.

Typesetting and design

Where it is appropriate to choose a different typeface for each language, you should not use an unusual or decorative typeface for one language if you want to give equal treatment to both. The font size should also be the same for both languages.

Fonts with long ascenders and descenders should be avoided as should those that are too round or angular because of the frequency of wide characters such as 'w' and 'y' and digraphs such as 'dd' in Cymraeg. The font used must cater for the full Cymraeg alphabet (including diacritic characters).

The letter ‘i’ is frequently used by itself in Welsh language text and it should never be capitalised unless it is found at the beginning of a sentence. It is important to check that the letters ‘l’ and ‘ll’ have been used correctly, as the capital letter ‘l’ (‘i’ capitalised) is often mistakenly used instead.

Commonly available fonts should be used (i.e. UTF-8 Serif and Sans Serif) to ensure compatibility when transferring text to other applications including translation.

Language separation

Colours

The best way of using colour to separate languages is to have the text in both languages in black, and placing a colour or tint behind one of the languages. This can be achieved in single, as well as full-colour documents. Colour reversal is also an option, particularly for signage.

Alternatively, a different colour can be adopted for the text in each language. This should be limited to titles, subtitles, bullet points and captions, as reading extended text in colour can be tiring and can be difficult for visually impaired people. Care should be taken to ensure that the Welsh language text is as noticeable as the English text at all times.

Layouts

There are many ways in which Cymraeg and English text may be combined in print or online documents, including leaflets, forms and reports. Good practice is to place Cymraeg where it is likely to be read first.

Whatever format is chosen the most important consideration is that both languages should be equally easy to read. Where feasible, both languages should also be accessible in a single eye line.

It is important that the two languages are not mixed in an inconsistent or haphazard way and ensuring that both languages are separated and easily identified is critical.

Often more than one solution may be appropriate: consultation with a suitably skilled designer will help clarify the options available.

[You can find examples of commonly-used formats including parallel columns, parallel pages, block by block, top and bottom, back to back and tilt and turn on the Welsh Language Commissioner’s website.](#)

Advertising and signage

The general design rules outlined earlier about the use of colour, typefaces and so on will all apply, but if space is restricted then some artistic creativity is required to keep wording at a minimum.

Print advertisements

It may not be necessary to book a larger space than for an advertisement in one language only.

If it is necessary, it will probably still work out cheaper to design and place one bilingual advert than to place two separate ones for each language.

Outdoor advertising

The use of large posters on billboards or other outdoor sites is impactful and eye-catching, offering any organisation a very quick fix for demonstrating a real commitment to bilingualism. It is usually possible to introduce a second language on a poster ad campaign at no extra cost.

Good bilingual copywriting is essential however, as direct translations of short, catchy advertising copy or straplines rarely work well.

Online marketing and banner ads for websites

In preparing online and social media marketing materials, it should be borne in mind that these also need to be bilingual. It should be ensured that any typesets used support unique Welsh characters.

Costs

Some points to consider include:

- A bilingual sign (or billboard) need not be twice the size of one in just one language
- The bulk of the production cost for signs will be for the materials or the cost of the space in the case of a poster
- A bilingual form may have to be made to a standard size, in which case the designer may need to find a solution to the problem of limited space
- Short bilingual documents, such as letters, may be printed on both sides, saving on paper costs
- Longer documents will usually be twice the size when produced bilingually, in which case choice of paper, colour, photographs and illustration will help keep costs down

GOV.UK website content

As with all bilingual content, the principles are straightforward: bilingualism should be planned for from the outset and the user should be offered a language choice.

Information that is relevant to the public in Wales should be made available in Cymraeg as part of standard procedure. This includes static and interactive pages of the GOV.UK website.

With this in mind, Cymraeg versions of pages should be included at the same time as the English ones. This allows readers to easily switch from one language to the other on each page.

Cymraeg and English should not be mixed on the same web pages as it can interfere with software designed to increase accessibility such as screen readers.

Reviews of content should be carried out on a regular basis to ensure appropriate Welsh language content is available. This will enable you to develop plans to increase the volume and quality of Welsh language content.

[The Cabinet Office's Welsh language scheme](#) refers specifically to digital services and the GOV.UK website. The language scheme also confirms the GDS and Government organisations' Welsh language responsibilities with regards to content on GOV.UK.

Media releases and handling

As with the guidance above, media releases which have implications for the public in Wales and are issued to Welsh language press and broadcasting media in Wales should be issued in Cymraeg.

These should be posted to the GOV.UK website in both Cymraeg and English.

Welsh speaking spokespeople should be identified as part of the early planning stages and be available to take part in Welsh language media interviews.

Checklist for campaigns

Planning in advance

- Both languages treated equally
- Content creators aware of bilingual element

Bilingual copywriting

- Consulted bilingual copywriter
- Content is proofread

Typesetting and design

- No unusual or decorative typefaces
- Appropriate fonts and size chosen for Cymraeg
- Appropriate layout and language separation format chosen

Advertising and signage

- Bilingual adverts considered in place of two separate versions
- Minimal wording used and copywriter consulted
- Typesetting and design guidance considered

GOV.UK website content

- Information for the public in Wales available in Cymraeg and English
- Content uploaded to website bilingually at the same time
- Regular content reviews conducted

Media releases and handling

- Releases issued bilingually when applicable to the public in Wales
- Welsh speaking spokespeople identified for interviews

Social media

Using Cymraeg on social media:

- provides opportunities to reach and retain the support of new audiences
- enables you to target a specific audience
- strengthens the rights of Welsh language service users

Planning in advance

Communicating bilingually might mean you will need to design your social media plan in advance, thinking about what messages will be shared from the outset to ensure they are prepared in both languages.

This might mean re-examining your organisation's digital marketing plan and ensuring that you include the Welsh language. It is far more time and cost-effective to ensure that use of Cymraeg is included in any marketing plan from the outset.

It is also worth considering who will be responsible for creating and planning the messages, whether they have the linguistic skills to create bilingual content or whether you need to arrange the services of a translator.

Creating bilingual messages

The easiest and most cost-effective way of creating short bilingual text for social media is to encourage the creation of bilingual messages from the outset.

This might involve making use of colleagues' Welsh language skills or contacting a professional translation service in advance. You might want to arrange to meet or call translators in advance to build relationships and ensure they understand your organisation's tone of voice.

This should help you ensure messages are friendly and personable in both languages, meaning Welsh speakers and learners of the language are all able to understand your content. The translators would also be able to offer a proofreading service.

You should also ensure that you have a process in place so that you are able to respond to any Welsh language requests or questions.

Creating content for others

If you plan to involve stakeholders in Wales in your campaign, you should be aware that many require information and content to be bilingual in order to share with their audiences.

This may mean working with them to edit and translate assets in advance or providing them with blank versions of designed content in order for them to translate copy themselves.

Incorporating Cymraeg in your feed

It is possible to have a bilingual feed with a mixture of Cymraeg and English content, but another option is to have one Welsh language feed and one English language feed.

Whichever option you choose, you must try to ensure that both languages are treated equally and that you operate a practical solution, which works for your organisation.

Ideally, posts in both languages should appear in the same timeframe and that the experience and messages are of a similar standard. However, this does not necessarily mean that the content needs to be a direct translation. Often the most creative and engaging content varies in terms of its words, but the key messages are of the same standard, and convey the same level of information.

If your organisation manages multiple social media accounts, you should ensure the most appropriate channels for the target audience are included in your content plan.

Automated or machine translation

Although automated translation software has greatly developed over the years, it cannot be fully depended on as many high-profile news stories have highlighted its pitfalls.

We would advise you not to depend on this kind of software for fast, easy translations. It may be used to provide rough translations, but it must be emphasised that you should not post an automated translation without ensuring that it has been thoroughly sub-edited.

Video and animated content

It is good practice to try and find interviewers/ presenters that speak Welsh to create videos, GIFs and animations in Cymraeg and English, instead of using subtitles. Where that is not possible subtitles can be used – for example,

providing English language subtitles for Welsh language contributions and vice versa.

When recording Welsh speaking individuals, you don't need to ask them to re-record their contributions in English, just use English subtitles. It is also possible to use software which allows easy subtitling.

When composing messages, it is worth considering which hashtags could be used which take both languages into account.

Checklist for social media

Planning in advance

- Bilingual social media plan in advance

Creating bilingual messages

- Bilingual messages created from the outset
- Machine translations checked *or* contacted professional translation service in advance
- Meet or call translators to build relationships
- Proofread required?
- Process to respond to Welsh language requests or questions

Incorporating Cymraeg in your feed

- Both languages are treated equally
- Posts in both languages appear simultaneously
- Messages are of the same standard but not direct translations
- Most appropriate channels selected for the target audience
- Videos with Welsh speakers or subtitled video content.
- Hashtags

Case studies

The Commissioner works with organisations to create successful practice case studies, to enable other organisations to transfer these practices to their own workplaces. [The Commissioner has a 'Successful Practices' page on its website](#) which includes a number of case studies on a range of topics including self-regulation, collaborative working, the workforce and promoting Welsh language services.

This page will be updated with new successful practices as the Commissioner comes across such practices when carrying out regulatory duties. It will therefore be beneficial to re-visit this page on a regular basis.

Evaluating bilingual communications

Evidence suggests that providing bilingual communications enables organisations to build trust amongst all audiences in Wales, but also provides users with strengthened rights and access to services.

When evaluating bilingual communications [in line with the GCS Evaluation Framework](#), it is important to remember that the level of engagement with Welsh language content will undoubtedly be lower than English content due to the size of the Welsh speaking population.

However, emphasis should be placed on measuring the impact of communications in terms of accessing and building relationships with new audiences.

It is much more important to measure your ability to reach and influence specific Welsh speaking audiences, as outlined in your campaign plan, paying particular attention to the impact within specified geographic areas.

Useful tools and resources

- [Welsh Language Commissioner](#) - The Commissioner has published a number of advice documents relating to different aspects of his work. Below are links to those documents:
 - [Bilingual drafting, translation and using Welsh face to face](#)
 - [Technology, Websites and Software](#)
 - [Recruitment](#)
 - [Contracting out Public Service Contracts](#)
- [Cymraeg – Welsh Government website](#) - Information on living life through the medium of Welsh, including business, heritage, learning Cymraeg, education and resource
- [The Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters](#) - The national professional association of Welsh/English translators and interpreters
- [The National Centre for Learning Welsh](#) - Providers of Welsh language lessons across Wales. Coordinate the Cymraeg Gwaith / Work Welsh programme which offer funded Welsh language training to the workforce in Wales.
- [Cysill online](#) - Free online Welsh grammar checker
- [Terminology Portal](#) - Online Welsh terminology search engine
- [Byd Term Cymru](#) – Welsh Government’s Translation resources