

# Companies House

## Annual Monitoring Report

1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016



Companies House

## 1. Introduction

The Companies House Welsh Language Scheme was prepared in accordance with section 21(3) of the Welsh Language Act and received the full endorsement of the Welsh Language Board on 20 April 2010.

This report covers the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

Responsibility for the operation of the Welsh Language Scheme in Companies House lies with Jane Bluff-Higgins, Principal Policy Adviser. She has the support of the team of Welsh speakers on day to day matters and a committee that meets regularly to monitor progress and performance.

## 2. Interpretation

“CH” means Companies House

“2006 Act” means the Companies Act 2006

“the Registrar” means the Registrar of Companies

“LLP” means Limited Liability Partnership

“Wales company/LLP” means a company or LLP, as defined by section 88 of the 2006 Act (as applied to LLPs), which has notified the Registrar that its registered office is to be situated in Wales. On incorporation, a company must indicate if its registered office is

to be situated in Wales, England and Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

The company’s registered office address must be in the country where they have stated that their registered office is to be situated.

A Wales company has the option of having a Welsh company name and Welsh name ending (i.e. cyfyngedig, cwmni cyfyngedig cyhoeddus) and can file statutory documents in Welsh. An England and Wales company can have a registered office address in Wales or England, but cannot have a Welsh company name or Welsh name ending and cannot file statutory documents in Welsh.

## 3. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme

CH remains committed to complying with its Welsh Language Scheme and from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, achieved the following:

**3.1** The Welsh committee met quarterly (June, September and December 2015, and March 2016) to ensure adherence to the CH Welsh Language Scheme and review progress against the Action Plan, which is attached to this report. Welsh service meetings were also held to consider the services offered to Welsh speaking customers.

**3.2** A team of Welsh speakers from various areas within CH continued to respond to customer enquiries. Our Contact Centre received approximately

86,000 calls a month of which approximately 2 or 3 were Welsh calls. They also received approximately 30 Welsh emails a month out of approximately 54,500 emails.

**3.3** In this reporting period, 46 Welsh speaking customers contacted us with queries, including:

- 41 general enquiries, such as whether documents had been received, how to access Welsh pages on GOV.UK, how to change director details, promise to file accounts and requests for paper forms to be sent out;
- 4 letters appealing against late filing penalties. One letter commented that the Late Filing Penalty manual was only available in English but we have since arranged for a Welsh version to go on GOV.UK; and
- One FOI request (see paragraph 3.9)

**3.4** We continued to make the most commonly filed forms, which make up 95% of filings on the register, available bilingually, both in paper form and electronically.

**3.5** All guidance created by CH was available bilingually, except that which is specifically not applicable to Welsh Companies (e.g. guidance on matters that affect only Scottish companies).

**3.6** We attended 2 external events in Wales during the reporting period, one Sterling Integrity event and a Business Wales event, at which we provided Welsh speakers and Welsh material. We also organised one legislative event and three First Time Director events in Wales, at which we provided Welsh speakers and Welsh material. In addition, we made requests for Welsh speaking volunteers to help at volunteer days, such as at the National Eisteddfod and with local charities, like Cancer Research Wales.

**3.7** Customers continued to correspond with CH in Welsh and received a response in Welsh. Additionally, companies could opt into our bilingual service, where all automatic correspondence is sent bilingually. This facility is advertised in our guidance [Conducting Business in Welsh](#) and on [GOV.UK](#). 42 companies opted into our bilingual service in the reporting period. At the end of the reporting period, approximately 1300 companies and 30 LLPs, out of a total register of 3.68 million, had indicated that they would like to receive automatic bilingual correspondence.

**3.8** 140 sets of Welsh language accounts were received from Wales companies, which is 58 fewer than last year. Each of these accounts were translated into English for the public record. CH is under a duty to translate certain filings from Welsh into English. Additionally, we translated into Welsh approximately 100 other pieces to satisfy the requirements of our Welsh Language Scheme, 23 more than last year. This included letters, guidance and project work, for the website and online services. We continued to use a specialised translation software to help with providing consistent translation into Welsh.

**3.9** We received one Freedom of Information request in the Welsh language and provided a Welsh response within the statutory deadline.

**3.10** Welsh speaking customers were kept up to date with filing deadlines, events and other notices through our website, bilingual correspondence and our Welsh twitter account @TyrCwmniau. We had 3 'Tweets' in Welsh which received Welsh replies.

**3.11** All contracts issued included a clause ensuring our service partners comply with CH Welsh Language commitments.

**3.12** We publicised Welsh language events in the local area, for those staff who may have had an interest in attending.

**3.13** We held a 'Clwb Cymraeg' weekly during August for staff who wished to practice Welsh whilst classes were suspended during the summer holidays.

**3.14** A local bookshop specialising in Welsh books and cards, came in during the lunch hour on several occasions.

**3.15** We made the consultation on changes to our statistics available in Welsh on GOV.UK.

**3.16** In June 2015, November 2015 and March 2016 we attended a committee of central government departments based in Wales. The purpose of this committee is to support the development of quality Welsh language customer services across central government departments.

#### **4. Mainstreaming the Welsh Language**

CH considered the Welsh language in the following ways:

**4.1** We have continued to consider our Welsh services at the earliest stage of all projects through the inclusion of Welsh in all project managers' checklists and other development plans.

**4.2** Throughout the period, CH, in conjunction with our parent department, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, has been preparing for the implementation of the Small Business Enterprise and Employment Act.

We have been developing our services to account for the changes to our filing services as a result of the new legislation, and the ability to file in Welsh will be available. Measures were implemented on 10 October 2015 and 6 April 2016 and the final measures will be implemented on 30 June 2016. Guidance produced by CH will be made available in Welsh on GOV.UK.

**4.3** We have continued to increase Welsh language content on GOV.UK and have held discussions with the Government Digital Service (GDS) to continue to improve these services.

## **5. Performance indicators**

In the reporting period, there were 12,627 Wales companies and 38 Wales LLPs incorporated. 611,372 companies and 8,453 LLPs in total were incorporated during this period.

By the end of the reporting period, there were 34,647 Wales companies and 278 Wales LLPs on the register, compared to a total of 3,678,860 companies and 60,181 LLPs.

By the end of the reporting period, there were 1,319 Wales companies and 17 Wales LLPs incorporated with a Welsh name ending on the register.

## **5.1 Frontline Services**

Percentage and number of bilingual staff:

### **CH Contact Centre**

There are three full time and one part time bilingual staff in the Contact Centre. There is a contractual requirement that our supplier provides 2 Welsh speakers.

If a customer specifically asks to speak to a Welsh speaker and one is not available, we offer the customer the choice of completing the call in English or request the customer's contact telephone number so that a Welsh speaker can contact them directly.

### **Public reception**

There are no bilingual staff at the CH reception. The staff are able to give greetings in Welsh and there is a prominent sign advising visitors that a Welsh service is available on request. Reception staff have a list of Welsh speaking staff they can contact if a request is made. However, no visitors requested to discuss CH business in Welsh during the reporting period.

### **Telephone helpline**

We continued to provide one dedicated external telephone number for Welsh speaking customers, which received 9 calls in the reporting period. The team of Welsh speakers was also available to deal with any Welsh enquiries.

## **5.2 Language Training and Awareness**

### **Number of staff who received Welsh Language training to a certified level of qualification:**

CH offered six Welsh courses, run by the University of South Wales: Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Foundation Level 2, Advanced Level 1, Advanced Level 4 and Proficiency.

- The Entry Level 1 class, which started in September 2015, consisted of 11 learners, and the Entry Level 2 Class, which started in September 2014 consisted of 5 learners. Both classes met weekly during term time and followed the WJEC course book *Cwrs Mynediad*.
- Foundation Level 2 Class had 8 members of staff. The class met weekly during term time and followed the WJEC course book *Cwrs Sylfaen*.
- The Advanced Level 1 class met weekly during term time and followed the Cardiff University course book *Pontio/Uwch – Llyfr Uwch 1*. The Class had 6 members of staff.

- The Advanced Level 4 class was held weekly and a joint class was held with the Proficiency Group each month. No course book was followed by these groups as the tutors prepared sessions based on the needs of the learners and included work related scenarios, both written and spoken. There were 5 members of staff in the Advanced Level 4 Group and 9 members of staff in the Proficiency Class.

### **Number of staff who have received Welsh language awareness training:**

- We reminded all staff regularly of our Welsh Language commitments via notices on the CH Intranet site. During the reporting period, a new internal communication systems was implemented, called *Yammer*. We will remind staff regularly of our Welsh Language commitments on *Yammer*. Specific pages relating to Welsh in the business have been created on *Yammer* as well as a Welsh social page.

### 5.3 Information Technology

#### **Number of IT systems assessed using the Board's bilingual software accreditation scheme:**

- No IT systems were assessed using the Board's bilingual software accreditation scheme, but our core software systems are by and large proprietary so that inclusion of Welsh is something we choose to build in

#### **Number of improvement plans prepared following assessments using the Board's bilingual software accreditation scheme:**

- Not applicable

### 5.4 Administering the Scheme

Number of complaints received about lack of Welsh language service provision and steps taken to resolve complaints:

During the period of this report, CH received 5 complaints relating to its Welsh Language Service.

i) One complaint concerned automated response emails from CH that were not consistent in the Welsh language used. The customer accepted that correct Welsh was used in both instances, but asked that the emails were amended so that they read the same.

An apology was sent to the customer and a promise that the emails would be amended at the earliest opportunity.

ii) Another complaint concerned the registration of a charge where the deed was in Welsh. This was rejected as it was not accompanied with a certified translation into English which is legally required for the public record. The Registrar is under no obligation to provide an English translation of a Welsh deed. Regulation 6 of the Registrar of Companies and Application for Striking Off Regulations 2009 states what the Registrar must translate into English, from Welsh, for the public record. The document was correctly rejected. The company has since filed the document with an English translation

iii) 3 separate complaints were received from customers who received English only letters when they had requested bilingual correspondence. Letters of apology, along with a Welsh version of the letter, were sent out to the customers. We have put measures in place to rectify this.

## **6. Conclusion**

The Principal Policy Adviser, Welsh Speakers Team and Welsh Committee will continue to ensure that all colleagues remain aware of their responsibilities under the Welsh Language Scheme.

We remain committed to an incremental programme of continued improvements for our Welsh speaking customers.



## Companies House - Action Plan

| Action required | Target date | Action Owner | Progress to date / notes |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------|

### 1. Legislation and Initiatives

|   |              |                             |   |
|---|--------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Review Action Plan on a Quarterly Basis   | Quarterly    | Strategy and Policy         | The content of the Action Plan was reviewed as part of the Welsh Committee which met in June, September and December 2015 and March 2016.           |
| Review Strategic plan quarterly to link to the Welsh Language Action Plan   | Quarterly    | Strategy and Policy         | We are reviewing our five year Strategic Plan. The provision of Welsh services will be taken into account.  |
| Consider how new policies, projects and developments will conform with the commitments set out in the Welsh Language Scheme | Ongoing      | Strategy and Policy         | We have continued, and will continue, to consider our Welsh Language Scheme in new policies, developments and projects, as indicated in the report. |
| Enable "Welsh Experience" incorporation for Welsh companies   | October 2012 | Business Solutions Delivery | This was completed in October 2012.   |
| Enable full online incorporation for Welsh companies at CH  | March 2013   | Business Solutions Delivery | This was completed on 6 April 2013.   |

| Action required   | Target date | Action Owner                  | Progress to date / notes  |
|---|-------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Improve the WebFiling Change of Name service to produce a translation of the certificate (currently under review) | March 2013  | Customer Delivery Directorate | As we develop a single online service for customers, we will develop more Welsh services than are currently available, including the change of name service. The implementation of measures under the Small Business Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 (SBEE) has meant that the majority of our resources are deployed on SBEE and the development of the single online service will be taken forward after full SBEE implementation on 30th June 2016. |

## 2. Staffing

|  |         |                     |  |
|--|---------|---------------------|--|
| Maintain ongoing Welsh Language training, targeted at language speaking skills   | Ongoing | Human Resources     | As per report  |
| Ensure Welsh speaking staff are present in all major operational areas to provide cover for Welsh speaking customers                                 | Ongoing | Directors           | As per report  |
| Internally promote CH's requirements under the Welsh Language Scheme, ensuring staff understand their responsibilities and where to seek assistance. | Ongoing | Strategy and Policy | We regularly made staff aware of our commitment to our Welsh Language Scheme on our internal intranet site, and will continue to do so on the new internal communications service. |
| Maintain Welsh team in CH to provide cover for Welsh speaking customers and hold regular meetings to discuss issues and progress.                    | Ongoing | Customer Delivery   | The Welsh team continued to provide cover and met regularly.   |

### 3. Publicity campaigns, exhibitions, advertising and press releases

| Action required   | Target date | Action Owner        | Progress to date / notes   |
|---|-------------|---------------------|--|
| Ensure Welsh speakers attend all events at which there is a CH presence in Wales  | Ongoing     | Events team         | As per report  |
| Ensure Welsh literature is available at events held in Wales                      | Ongoing     | Events Team         | Completed  |
| Ensure adverts and press releases are available in Welsh, when published in Wales | Ongoing     | Human Resources/ICT | Where job adverts are published in Welsh press they are bilingual, however there is no facility for a bilingual job advert on the Civil Service Job website. |

### 4. Publications and forms

|   |         |                             |   |
|---|---------|-----------------------------|---|
| Ensure CH Welsh publications are updated in parallel with English versions    | Ongoing | Strategy and Policy         | CH continues to endeavour to ensure that Welsh publications are updated at the same time as English publications. |
| Ensure Welsh statutory forms are updated in parallel with English versions    | Ongoing | Strategy and Policy         | As per report   |
| Monitor usage of letters to ensure Welsh versions are used where appropriate. | Ongoing | Business Change Development | CH continues to ensure that Welsh versions of correspondence are produced   |

### 5. Websites

|   |         |                  |  |
|---|---------|------------------|--|
| Ensure the Welsh website is updated in parallel with the English version, when relevant, and that the information on the Welsh website is up to date. | Ongoing | Customer Insight | We continued to increase Welsh content on GOV.UK |
|---|---------|------------------|--|

## 6. Face-to-face meetings

| Action required   | Target date | Action Owner      | Progress to date / notes |
|---|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Ensure that customers can request a Welsh speaker should they wish to conduct their business in Welsh | Ongoing     | Customer Services | As per report            |

## 7. Telephone Communications

|  |         |                   |               |
|--|---------|-------------------|---------------|
| Ensure that customers who want to conduct their business in Welsh can ask (in English) to speak to a Welsh speaker | Ongoing | Customer Services | As per report |
|--|---------|-------------------|---------------|

## 8. Signs

|  |         |                   |                                   |
|--|---------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ensure that all public signage for the Cardiff office is displayed bilingually | Ongoing | Building Services | We will continue to monitor this. |
|--|---------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|

## 9. Complaints

|   |          |                   |               |
|---|----------|-------------------|---------------|
| To ensure complaints about CH's Welsh Language service are fully investigated and dealt with promptly, in line with the CH normal complaints procedure. | On going | Customer Services | As per report |
| Monitor complaints regarding bilingual service  | On going | Customer Services | As per report |