

Welsh Monitoring Report

01 April 2016 – 31 March 2017



Companies House

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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 2016 to 31 March 2017.

Responsibility for the operation of the Welsh Language Scheme in Companies House lies with James Biott, Principal Policy Adviser, which he took on in February 2017. He has the support of a committee that meets regularly to monitor progress and performance and a team of Welsh speakers on day to day matters.

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

“LP” means Limited Partnership

“Welsh 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 Welsh 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 2016 to 31 March 2017, achieved the following:

3.1 The Welsh committee met quarterly 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 5 were Welsh calls. They also received approximately 54,000 emails a month out of which approximately 30 were Welsh emails.

3.3 In this reporting period, 53 Welsh speaking customers contacted us with queries, including:

- 51 general enquiries, such as whether documents had been received, advice on filing forms, how to access Welsh pages on GOV.UK, how to change director details and requests for paper forms to be sent out;
- 2 letters appealing against late filing penalties.

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 Business Wales event and one First Time Director Seminar, at which we provided Welsh speakers. Three people made enquiries in Welsh at this event. In addition, we made requests for Welsh speaking volunteers to help at volunteer days. Two volunteered to help Cancer Research Wales at the National Eisteddfod.

3.7 Customers continued to correspond with CH in Welsh and received a response in Welsh. Additionally, companies can indicate their preferred language for receiving annual correspondence by contacting CH. This facility is advertised in our guidance [Conducting Business in Welsh](#) and on [GOV.UK](#). 176 additional companies received bilingual correspondence in the reporting period. At the end of the reporting period, out of a total register of 3.89 million, approximately 713 companies, 46 LPs and 14 LLPs had indicated that they would like to receive automatic bilingual correspondence.

3.8 We received 108 sets of Welsh language accounts from Welsh companies, which is 32 fewer than last year. Each of these accounts were translated into English for the public record with 92 sets translated in-house using specialised translation software to help with providing consistent translation into Welsh. Additionally, we translated into Welsh approximately 140 other pieces to satisfy the requirements of our Welsh Language Scheme, 39 more than last year. This included letters, guidance and project work, for the website and online services.

3.9 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 2 'Tweets' in Welsh which received Welsh replies.

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

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

3.12 In October 2016 and March 2017 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 At the beginning of the period, CH continued to prepare for the full implementation of the Small Business Enterprise and Employment Act. Final measures were implemented on 30 June 2016. Guidance and key forms produced by CH were made available in Welsh on GOV.UK.

4.3 During the period, CH were also preparing for the implementation of the 4th Money Laundering Directive (which is being implemented on 26 June 2017). The Directive introduces, amongst other things, event driven filing i.e. a requirement for people with significant control (PSC) of companies to provide updates to CH, where their details change, within 14 days. As part of this, we have been producing guidance and key forms in Welsh.

4.4 As we further develop the CH beta service for customers, which is a single service for registering and searching company information, CH will develop more end to end Welsh services. However, the timetable for this is unclear at present.

4.5 We have increased our digital outreach in Welsh. We have continued to increase Welsh language content on GOV.UK, for example, by creating around 70 Welsh pages to host the new insolvency forms on GOV.UK. We have also increased our content and engagement on our Welsh Twitter account. Also in March 2017, we launched the CH Welsh podcasts which are produced by Welsh speaking members of staff. We produced a podcast on our Welsh service, which has been listened to 31 times, and also on Late Filing Penalties, which has been listened to 35 times.

5. Performance indicators

5.1 In the reporting period, there were 17,130 Welsh companies and 28 Welsh LLPs incorporated. 644,750 companies and 9,120 LLPs in total were incorporated during this period.

5.2 By the end of the reporting period, there were 38,278 Welsh companies and 274 Welsh LLPs on the register, compared with a total of 3,89 million companies and 60,772 LLPs.

5.3 By the end of the reporting period, there were 1,400 Welsh companies and 14 Welsh LLPs incorporated with a Welsh name ending on the register. 175 Welsh companies, and 1 Welsh LLP, were incorporated with a Welsh name ending in 2016/17.

6. Frontline Services

Percentage and number of bilingual staff:

CH Contact Centre

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

6.2 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

6.3 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

6.4 We continued to provide one dedicated external telephone number for Welsh speaking customers, which received 21 calls in the reporting period. The team of Welsh speakers was also available to deal with any Welsh enquiries.

7. Language Training and Awareness

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

7.1 CH had previously engaged the University of South Wales to deliver Welsh Language classes for our staff on-site up until June 2016; however, due to a decline in attendance levels (on average, only half those registered attended each class¹), it was not feasible to continue to arrange and pay for external tutors to run these classes on-site. Monitoring showed a decline in new registrations, an increase in people not attending classes regularly and staff dropping out altogether; overall, there was a steady decline in the number of staff attending all Welsh Language classes on a regular basis. A number of actions were taken in an effort to improve the situation – e.g. reducing the number of classes, changing lesson times and opening the classes to other organisations based at CH. These measures were not sufficiently effective and the same issues continued.

7.2 Therefore we decided not to continue the arrangements with the University of South Wales for the 2016/17 Academic Year and moved to bring Welsh Language learning in line with the CH Adult Education Scheme. This offers great opportunities for any member of staff interested in learning Welsh, or continuing with their Welsh language studies. CH has fully supported members of staff who have taken advantage of this opportunity by covering the cost of the course or any exams and providing facilitation time to study for, or sit, exams. Staff were encouraged to sign up for courses via their local Welsh for Adults Centres. By the end of the reporting period, eight people had enrolled in Welsh Language learning programmes ranging from Entry Level to Advanced Level; 5 had enrolled with Cardiff University and 3 with the University of South Wales.

¹ There were 47 members of staff registered up until June 2016 (from Entry to Proficiency level) but attendance was low, with only 50% attending on average.

7.3 CH will monitor take-up and keep the effectiveness of this approach under review.

Number of staff who have received Welsh language awareness training:

7.4 We reminded all staff regularly of our Welsh Language commitments via notices on the CH Intranet site and staff social media site. We continued to use the Welsh language social page on this site.

8. Information Technology

Number of IT systems assessed using the Board's bilingual software accreditation scheme and number of improvement plans prepared following assessments using the Board's bilingual software accreditation scheme:

8.1 No IT systems were assessed using the Board's bilingual software accreditation scheme; the inclusion of Welsh is something we choose to build in.

9. Administering the Scheme

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

9.1 During the period of this report, there were 13 instances where customers contacted CH relating to its Welsh Language Service:

- 1 customer left feedback via a customer online survey that the CH beta service is only available in English. As no email address was given, it was not possible to send a reply to the customer.
- 2 complaints were received on Twitter. One of the complaints stated that no Welsh speakers were available in CH. A Welsh speaking member of staff contacted the customer, but no further reply was received. The second complaint queried why we had moved the 'Cymraeg' button to the bottom of the webpage. CH was required to move this by the Government Digital Services in keeping with their standards on GOV.UK.
- 1 customer had difficulty accessing a bilingual confirmation statement form online as the customer had not noticed the 'Cymraeg' option at bottom of the page on GOV.UK. We directed the customer to the page where the form could be filed in the Welsh language.
- 1 complaint was received that an English only authorisation code letter was received. We explained to the customer that it appeared that this was requested via the English WebFiling screens. Welsh letters are only issued through the Welsh WebFiling screens.
- 1 complaint was received about a Welsh Service letter asking for customers to opt-in to our Welsh service (where automated letters are sent bilingually) and defaulting to English if no reply received. We are reviewing our letters and have changed our Welsh service page on GOV.UK and guidance so that customers can let us know their preferred language of communication.
- 1 complaint was received that there was no bilingual version of the dormant company accounts form. As this is not a prescribed form, it is not available bilingually. We advised the customer to file in Welsh online. The customer preferred to file on paper and so a bilingual form template was drafted for her to use.
- 4 complaints were received that English only letters were received. An apology was provided and a Welsh letter sent.
- 1 customer noticed an incorrect spelling of a Welsh notice in Reception. An apology was provided and this was corrected.
- 1 complaint was received from the Welsh Language Commissioner's (WLC) office regarding our procedure for translating Welsh accounts into English before placing the Welsh accounts and translation onto the public record (this referred to an issue which was resolved during the previous reporting period). After explaining the process, the WLC was satisfied that we complied with our Welsh Language Scheme and duties under the Companies Act 2006.

10. Conclusion

10.1 The Welsh Committee will continue to ensure that CH remain aware of their responsibilities under the Welsh Language Scheme. We remain committed to providing an excellent Welsh language service to our 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 quarterly in 2016/17.
Review Strategic plan quarterly to link to the Welsh Language Action Plan	Quarterly	Strategy and Policy	We reviewed our Strategic Plan and published a revised Plan. Our commitment to Welsh language services underpin two of our key strategic goals: <i>Excellence in company registration and search</i> and <i>Building a high performance culture</i> .
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.
Improve the WebFiling Change of Name service to produce a translation of the certificate (currently under review)	March 2013	Customer Delivery Directorate	As we further develop the CH beta service for customers, CH will develop more end to end Welsh services. However, the timetable for this is unclear at present.
Action required	Target date	Action Owner	Progress to date / notes

2. Staffing

Maintain ongoing Welsh Language training, targeted at language speaking skills	Ongoing	Human Resources	Section 7 of the report
Ensure Welsh speaking staff are present in all major operational areas to provide cover for Welsh speaking customers	Ongoing	Directors	CH ensures Welsh speaking staff are available in all areas to examine Welsh filings or respond to Welsh customers.
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.
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.
Action required	Target date	Action Owner	Progress to date / notes

3. Publicity campaigns, exhibitions, advertising and press release

Ensure Welsh speakers attend all events at which there is a CH presence in Wales	Ongoing	Events team	Paragraph 3.6 of the 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

Action required	Target date	Action Owner	Progress to date / notes
Ensure CH Welsh publications are updated in parallel with English versions	Ongoing	Strategy and Policy	CH continues 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	Section 4 of the report.
Monitor usage of letters to ensure Welsh versions are used where appropriate	Ongoing	Business Change Development	CH continues to monitor usage of letters to ensure a response is provided in Welsh where required.
Action required	Target date	Action Owner	Progress to date / notes

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.
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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	CH continues to offer this service although there were no requests made in the reporting period.

7. Telephone Communications

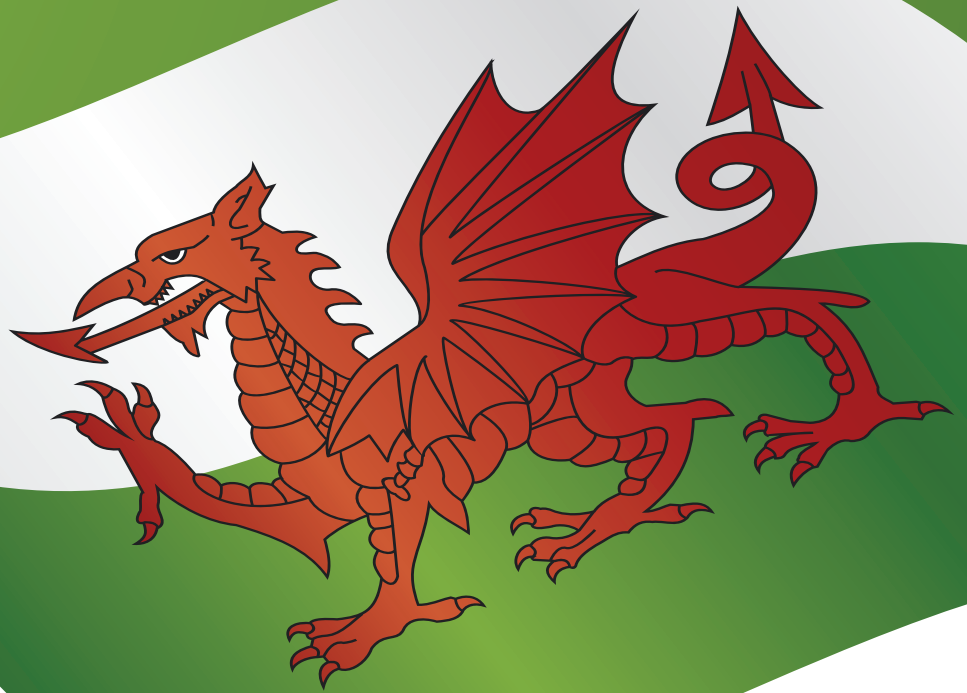
Action required	Target date	Action Owner	Progress to date / notes
Ensure that customers who want to conduct their business in Welsh can ask (in English) to speak to a Welsh speaker	Ongoing	Customer Services	Section 6 of the report.

8. Signs

Action required	Target date	Action Owner	Progress to date / notes
Ensure that all public signage for the Cardiff office is displayed bilingually	Ongoing	Building Services	All public signage is produced bilingually.

9. Complaints

Action required	Target date	Action Owner	Progress to date / notes
To ensure complaints about CH's Welsh Language service are fully investigated and dealt with promptly, in line with the CH normal complaints procedure	Ongoing	Customer Services	Section 9 of the report.
Monitor complaints regarding bilingual service	Ongoing	Customer Services	The Welsh Service Adviser monitors all complaints regarding the bilingual service as per section 9 of the report.



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