



Companies House
Tŷ'r Cwmnïau

Annual Monitoring Report

Welsh Language Scheme

1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

COMPANIES HOUSE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

1 APRIL 2017 – 31 MARCH 2018

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 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Responsibility for the operation of the Welsh Language Scheme in Companies House lies with James Biott, Principal Policy Adviser. 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 given notice to 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, under the Companies Act 2006, 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 2017 to 31 March 2018, 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 66,000 calls a month of which approximately 5 were Welsh calls. They also received approximately 54,000 emails a month out of which approximately 20 were Welsh emails.
- 3.3 In this reporting period, 34 Welsh speaking customers contacted CH directly with queries, including:
 - 28 general enquiries, such as whether documents had been received, advice on filling forms, how to access Welsh pages on gov.uk, how to change director details and requests for paper forms to be sent out;
 - 3 letters appealing against late filing penalties.
 - 1 Freedom of Information request
 - 2 pieces of correspondence relating to filing annual accounts
- 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 one external event in Wales during the reporting period, a First Time Director Seminar, at which we provided Welsh speakers. CH no longer hosts or attends external events in the UK as we are looking to engage directly with stakeholders and their networks, as well as using digital means, such as Webinars with other Government departments.
- 3.7 Customers who correspond with CH in Welsh receive a response in Welsh. Additionally, companies can indicate their preferred language for receiving annual correspondence by contacting CH. This facility is advertised on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). 127 additional companies requested that they receive bilingual correspondence in the reporting period. At the end of the reporting period, out of a total register of over 4 million companies, approximately 567 companies and 11 LLPs had indicated that they would like to receive annual correspondence bilingually.

- 3.8 128 sets of Welsh language accounts were received from Welsh companies, which is 20 more than last year. Each of these accounts were translated into English for the public record with 88 sets translated in-house using specialised translation software to help with providing consistent translation from Welsh. Additionally, we translated into Welsh 58 pieces of correspondence to satisfy the requirements of our Welsh Language Scheme. This included letters, guidance and project work, for the website and online services.
- 3.9 We had 2 'Tweets' in Welsh which received a reply in Welsh.
- 3.10 All contracts issued included a clause ensuring our service partners comply with CH Welsh Language commitments.
- 3.11 We attended an engagement event held by the Welsh Government, *Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill*, in Swansea in October 2017.

4. Mainstreaming the Welsh Language

CH considered the Welsh language in the following ways:

- 4.1 We 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 implemented the 4th Money Laundering Directive on 26 June 2017. The Directive introduced event driven filing, 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 updated guidance and key forms in Welsh.
- 4.3 We have continued to increase Welsh language content on gov.uk, including mainstream pages maintained by the Government Digital Service (GDS), for example, the updated guidance for the Confirmation Statement.
- 4.4 In 2017/18, we commissioned 10 new video clips which will show our various services. These will be hosted on YouTube and used across our website and social media channels and will be available through the medium of Welsh. These will be produced throughout 2018/19.
- 4.5 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. The timetable for this is unclear as we are commencing an organisational transformation programme. Welsh language provision will be considered as part of this.

5. Performance indicators

- 5.1 In the reporting period, there were 5,018 Welsh companies and 24 Welsh LLPs incorporated. 620,287 companies and 5,483 LLPs in total were incorporated during this period.
- 5.2 By the end of the reporting period, there were 21,305 Welsh companies and 140 Welsh LLPs on the register, compared with a total of over 4 million companies and over 53,000 LLPs.
- 5.3 By the end of the reporting period, there were 1,164 Welsh companies and 9 Welsh LLPs incorporated with a Welsh name ending on the register. 181 Welsh companies were incorporated with a Welsh name ending in 2017/18.

6 Frontline Services

Percentage and number of bilingual staff:

CH Contact Centre

- 6.1 There is one full time and one-part time bilingual staff in the Contact Centre. There is a contractual requirement to provide a service through the medium of Welsh. Any recruitment specifies Welsh language as desirable. There is an ongoing recruitment exercise.
- 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, as per our Welsh Language Scheme.

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 14 calls in the reporting period. An internal

group of Welsh speakers, who work in different parts of the organisation, were 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 offers Welsh Language learning opportunities in line with its Adult Education Scheme. 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, seven people had enrolled in Welsh Language learning programmes ranging from Entry Level to Proficiency Level; 4 had enrolled with Cardiff University and 2 with the University of South Wales and one with *Learn Welsh The Vale*.
- 7.2 CH will continue to monitor take-up and keep the effectiveness of this approach under review.

Number of staff who have received Welsh language awareness training:

- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 We also publicised Welsh language events in the local area, for those staff who may have had an interest in attending and also helped subsidise a Welsh Summer Playscheme.

8 Information Technology

There were no IT systems that 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 25 instances where customers contacted CH relating to its Welsh Language Service, a summary of which is below:

- A customer filed accounts online in Welsh but the accounts appeared in English on the company record. We apologised to the customer and explained that this issue will be resolved once our beta service is further developed (as explained in paragraph 4.5) and is available in Welsh.
- A customer phoned our Contact Centre and had to wait until a Welsh speaker was available, in line with the terms of our Welsh Language Scheme. Whilst waiting, the customer could hear staff talking about them. We apologised to the customer and reminded the Contact Centre of our Welsh Language commitments.
- We incorrectly rejected an appointment form as the occupation was written in Welsh. An apology was sent to the customer who re-submitted the form and staff were reminded of our Welsh Language commitments.
- A bilingual Confirmation Statement form was only available through the search option on gov.uk and not on the forms page. We apologised to the customer and sent a bilingual form through the post. This form has now been added to the Welsh forms page.
- We had problems with accents appearing incorrectly on some computer-generated letters. A customer complained that M[^]on appeared on his address instead of M^ôn. This matter has now been resolved and no further complaints received.
- There was an issue with Welsh certificates showing incorrect information. We are still working to fully resolve this matter but the customer who brought this to our attention was sent an apology with the correct certificate.
- Letters for newly appointed directors were sent to a director in English only. It is not always possible to know the language choice of the director on appointment and as these letters are computer generated, on this occasion, it went out in English. A Welsh version of the letter and insert was sent to the customer with an apology and measures have been put in place to try and prevent this happening again in the future.

- We received a Welsh 'Tweet' referring to our online company registration service being available in English only. It was not clear which service this 'Tweet' referred to so a reply was sent with links to our Welsh WebFiling service. No further response was received.
- December is a peak filing month for company accounts and we received an unprecedented number of accounts filed in Welsh over the period. They were taking longer than normal to be processed, and several complaints were received. We apologised to those customers who were affected but confirmed that Welsh was treated in the same way as English accounts.
- Two complaints were made regarding the Contact Centre telephone number which has no Welsh option to choose. This option is not possible on our system but we did remind the customers that a direct Welsh phone number is available on our website in keeping with our Welsh Language Scheme.
- We received several complaints that a Welsh speaker is not immediately available in our Contact Centre. Complainants have been reminded that, in keeping with our Welsh Language Scheme, we will transfer the call to a Welsh speaker, if one is available, or take their number and arrange for a Welsh speaker to call them back.
- We received a complaint regarding the fact that our beta service does not allow a company to incorporate in Welsh. Welsh incorporation is available through our WebFiling service. It is not yet possible to incorporate a company, either in English or Welsh, on the beta service.
- An English authentication code was sent to a Welsh speaking customer. After investigating the complaint, it appeared the customer had requested the letter via our English service. A Welsh letter is provided through our Welsh service.
- A Welsh 'Tweet' contained a link to an English blog on gov.uk because it was of interest to all directors. A customer complained that the blog was not available in Welsh. These blogs are out of our control as the pages are owned by GDS.
- We received complaints about gov.uk and the difficulty in accessing some pages in Welsh. As this website is controlled by GDS we have to comply with their requirements. However, we were able to direct customers to the required pages and advise them on how to access Welsh services in future.

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.

CH - 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 2017/18.
Review Strategic plan quarterly to link to the Welsh Language Action Plan	Quarterly	Strategy and Policy	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.
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.
2. Staffing			
Maintain ongoing Welsh Language training, targeted at language speaking skills	Ongoing	Human Resources	Paragraph 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.
3. Publicity campaigns, exhibitions, advertising and press releases			
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			
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	CH continues to ensure that Welsh forms are updated at the same time as English forms.
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. Throughout the period our Customer Delivery Support team have reviewed the provision of our Welsh letters.
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			
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			
Ensure that customers who want to conduct their business in Welsh can ask (in English) to speak to a Welsh speaker	Ongoing	Customer Services	Paragraph 6 of the report
8. Signs			
Ensure that all public signage for the Cardiff office is displayed bilingually	On going	Building Services	All public signage is produced bilingually
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.	Ongoing	Customer Services	Paragraph 9 of the report
Monitor complaints regarding bilingual service	Ongoing	Customer Services	The Welsh Service Advisor monitors all complaints regarding the bilingual service as per Paragraph 9 of the report.