



**Comisiwn Ffiniau
i Gymru**

**Boundary Commission
for Wales**

WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME

ANNUAL REPORT

2016 - 2017

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES
WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017

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Introduction

The Boundary Commission for Wales (BCW) has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales it will treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality.

The Commission are responsible for the approval of this report; its drafting was undertaken by the Secretary, Mr Steve Halsall. The report has been prepared in accordance with the Welsh Language Commissioner's template for reports 2015/16.

The Commission's Secretariat comprises 12 full time and 2 part time employees. Throughout the year, the Welsh Language Scheme continued to operate well, with no problems reported by the staff. No complaints were received in relation to the provision of services by the Commission through the medium of the Welsh language.

For the majority of the 2016/17 reporting period, the Commission followed its existing Welsh Language Scheme; accordingly, this Annual Report focuses largely on that Scheme. Our sister organisation, the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW), received its Final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commission on 25 July 2016, and is currently experiencing a period of busy transition, as the organisation moves from the Welsh Language Scheme to Welsh Language Standards. The BCW will also embrace these standards and the 2017/18 Welsh Language Annual Report will focus solely on the Welsh Language Standards as imposed in the Welsh Language Commissioner's Final Compliance Notice (to the LDBCW) of 2016.

The BCW is an advisory Non Departmental Public Body sponsored and funded by the Cabinet Office (CO). The Commission holds its meetings at its Offices in Cardiff, and is supported by a Secretariat (that also supports the LDBCW). The BCW is constituted under schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 with the following membership:

Chair	The Speaker of the House of Commons
Deputy Chair	A Judge of the High Court appointed by the Lord Chancellor
Two Commissioners	Appointed by the Secretary of State
Assessor	The Registrar General for England and Wales
Assessor	The Director General of Ordnance Survey
Secretary	Officer appointed by the Secretary of State to head the Secretariat

The BCW's function is to keep under continuous review the representation of the people of Wales in the House of Commons. Specifically, the 1986 Act (as amended) requires the Commission to conduct a general review of all the Parliamentary constituencies every five years.

When conducting a review, the BCW is required to publish recommendations, to invite representations about the proposals, and to take any representations into account. The Commission must hold at least two and not more than five Public Hearings in Wales.

At the end of a review, the Commission must submit its final recommendations to the Secretary of State in a report that she/he is required to lay before Parliament together with a draft Order in Council giving effect to the Commission's recommendations, either with or without modifications. If modifications are proposed, the Secretary of State must lay a statement of reasons for those modifications. If approved by Parliament, the Order is submitted to be made by Her Majesty in Council. After the Order in Council has been made, the new constituency boundaries take effect at the following general election.

1. COMPLIANCE WITH THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME

a. Report against each target within the timetable

Measure	Timetable Target	Report
<p>Ensure the Commission will adopt a bilingual corporate identity</p>	<p>Already implemented</p>	<p>100% of the printed information on the Commission's letter headings, compliment slips, staff business cards and other corporate stationery is bilingual, with both languages being shown with equal prominence.</p> <p>The Commission's 'pop-up stand' and 'roll-up banners' are bilingual, with both languages being shown with equal prominence and the Welsh language appearing first.</p> <p>The Commission maintains a fully bilingual website, and social media messages (eg, on Facebook and Twitter) are published bilingually. Staff members have access to Welsh language grammar and spellcheck facilities, such as 'Cysgeir' and 'Cysill', to improve confidence and encourage the wider use of written Welsh. A Welsh Language Phrases document has been created, and is updated as necessary, which provides non-Welsh speaking staff with standard phrases to be used in documents/emails/letters etc. Simultaneous translation facilities are provided at all public meetings.</p> <p>All publications / publicity associated with the Commission's reviews make it clear that the public can deal with the Commission in Welsh. Where public hearings are held, the Commission ensures that simultaneous translation facilities are always available, thus projecting a positive image of the BCW as an organisation that has a bilingual corporate identity. Publications are produced either bilingually or simultaneously in Welsh and English. Future English language versions of BCW publications will advise that Welsh language versions are also available. Letters accompanying publications include a line</p>

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		<p>advising the public that the Commission welcomes communications in Welsh or in English.</p> <p>Two (16.66%) members of staff at the Commission's Secretariat are Welsh speakers and one staff member has been attending Welsh language lessons.</p> <p>A Use of Welsh at Work Policy has been created, which is available for all staff members, and a complementary training session with staff members is to be held soon. This will educate and remind staff as to the organisation's obligations in respect of the Welsh language.</p>
Ensure new policies take account of the principle of the equality of the English and Welsh languages	Already implemented	The Secretary manages all new policies and initiatives personally and, as the Commission's monitoring officer, he ensures that the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme and Welsh Language Standards with which the Commission must abide, are complied with.
Establish the provision of a Welsh Translation Service	Already implemented	<p>Translation Services for the Commission are under contract, which was due to expire at the end of March 2017. The Commission extended its contract with the current provider for a further 12 months as the Commission is experiencing an extremely busy period, and because contract monitoring raised no major concerns about the existing providers. The current contract, therefore, expires at the end of March 2018, when a full tender exercise will be undertaken, where full assessments of capability and quality will be carried out.</p> <p>Welsh-speaking members of staff at the Commission routinely quality assure translations.</p>
All stationery will be printed bilingually	Already implemented	<p>At present, all letter templates are bilingual, and the IT system automatically generates letters bilingually. Any new letter templates that are prepared will all be professionally translated.</p> <p>100% of the printed information on the Commission's letter headings, compliment slips, staff business cards and other corporate stationery is bilingual, with both languages being shown with equal prominence.</p>
All press notices will be published bilingually	Already implemented	All Commission press notices are published bilingually. In the event of any notices requiring separate publications, the English language publication would advise, in Welsh, that Welsh language versions are also available. Publications include a line advising the public that the Commission welcomes communications in Welsh and in English.
All news releases and newsletters will be issued	Already implemented	All of the Commission news releases are published bilingually.

bilingually		
All information booklets will be printed bilingually	Already implemented	All information booklets are printed bilingually. In the event of any booklets requiring separate publications, the English language publication would advise, in Welsh, that Welsh language versions are also available.
All reports submitted to the Secretary of State will be prepared in bilingual form	Already implemented	Separate Welsh language and English language versions of the BCW Annual Report for 2015/16 were published with both versions available simultaneously and with both languages being afforded equality in terms of format, size and prominence. The BCW Annual Report for 2016/17 will also be published bilingually. The English language version will advise the reader, in Welsh, that a Welsh language version of the Annual Report is also available.
All other printed material will be printed bilingually	Already implemented	100% of printed material produced by BCW is printed bilingually, or as separate Welsh and English language publications. When separate publications are produced, both versions are made available simultaneously, with both languages being afforded equality in terms of format, size and prominence. Where future documents that are published separately, the English language publication will advise, in Welsh, that Welsh language versions are also available.
All stationery will invite contact in the Welsh language	Already implemented	Any letters issued stated that we welcome correspondence in Welsh or in English.
All publications will invite contact in the Welsh language	Already implemented	The BCW published its 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies Initial Proposals Report during September 2016 – this was published bilingually. All publications / publicity associated with the Commission’s reviews make it clear that the public can deal with the Commission in Welsh. Publications are produced either bilingually or simultaneously in Welsh and English. Future English language publications will advise, in Welsh, that Welsh language versions are also available. Letters accompanying publications include a line advising the public that the Commission welcomes communications in Welsh and in English.
Reply to all correspondence in the language used by the correspondent	Already implemented	100% of Welsh correspondence was responded to in Welsh. The majority of Welsh correspondence was processed in accordance with a contracted translation service. Simple translations were provided by Welsh-speaking members of staff.

<p>Respond to all correspondence within the same time frame whether it is received in Welsh or English</p>	<p>Already implemented</p>	<p>In excess of 800 pieces of correspondence (including emails, letters and communications through the Commission’s consultation portal) were received by BCW during the reporting period, including 798 representations. Response times to correspondence and representations received by the Commission was the same, irrespective of the language used in the original correspondence.</p> <p>The Secretary was able to monitor this performance because the majority of Welsh correspondence was processed in accordance with a contracted translation service. Welsh-speaking staff members responded to occasional correspondence in Welsh or bilingually; this is monitored as the Secretary and/or Deputy Secretary are copied in to responses.</p> <p>Furthermore, the presence of two Welsh-speaking members of staff helped enable the Commission to respond well within timescales as correspondence received in Welsh can often be translated to English and passed to non-Welsh speaking colleagues for consideration without delay.</p>
<p>Correspond in Welsh with those who prefer the medium of Welsh</p>	<p>Already implemented</p>	<p>100% of persons or organisations working in Welsh or preferring to receive letters in Welsh were written to in Welsh. Either Welsh-speaking staff provided the written material or Welsh language documents were prepared using contracted translation services.</p>
<p>Maintain a listing of those who prefer to correspond in Welsh</p>	<p>Already implemented</p>	<p>The Secretariat maintains a database of those wishing to deal with the Commission in Welsh.</p>
<p>Ensure that facilities exist to allow those wishing to communicate in Welsh on the telephone to do so. Provide guidance to Secretariat staff to enable them to handle telephone calls from Welsh speakers</p>	<p>Already implemented</p>	<p>100% of telephone calls were answered bilingually. All members of staff at the Secretariat are able to provide a bilingual telephone greeting. During the year all telephone calls received from Welsh-speaking members of the public were dealt with by Welsh-speaking members of staff.</p> <p>If no Welsh-speaking members of staff are available, under the terms of the translation contract, the Commission’s translation service could provide simultaneous translation. Alternatively, arrangements could be made for a Welsh-speaking member of staff to call back on his / her return.</p>
<p>Provide an instantaneous interpretation service at Public Hearings</p>	<p>Already implemented</p>	<p>The Commission held five Public Hearings during the reporting period: in Wrexham, Bangor, Llandrindod Wells, Carmarthen and Cardiff. Procedures are in place, based on</p>

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		previous practice, to facilitate the use of the Welsh language at public meetings/hearings, including the provision of a simultaneous translation service and Welsh-speaking staff members in attendance whenever possible.
Ensure that the Commission's information signs at Public Hearings are fully bilingual	Already implemented	As stated previously, the Commission held five Public Hearings during the reporting period; only fully bilingual 'pop-up stands', 'roll-up banners' and temporary signs were used at all hearings.
Reference to this scheme shall be included in the Commission's information booklets	When next reprinted	Information booklets published during the reporting period included: Guide to the 2018 Review; Quick Guide to the 2018 Review; and, the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales, 2016 Information Booklet. All information booklets were published bilingually. The 2016 Information Booklet contained reference to the BCW Welsh Language Scheme.
Ensure the scheme is included in the Secretariat's staff training manual	On-going	The Secretariat does not have a staff training manual, per se. Desk instructions and checklists were produced ahead of the 2018 Parliamentary Review (on which work commenced 2016), and these will be updated as necessary. The instructions and checklists will contain references to the Scheme, and will ensure Welsh language versions of Reports are quality assured and published according to the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme.
Ensure all Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Chairs and Secretariat staff are provided with personal copies of the scheme and any subsequent alterations to it	On-going	All Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Chairs have been provided with copies of the Scheme. Staff members are reminded regularly of the Commission's commitments under the Welsh Language Scheme, either through discussions in the office or during monthly team meetings. As the Commission's Secretariat has only 14 members of staff, with the majority working in an open-plan environment, the dissemination of information is easily achieved, and staff members are particularly well-informed about the Commission's commitment to the Welsh language. The Scheme is held in an Index of policies, regulations, codes and instructions, and is accessed by all staff via their computers.
Ensure that the ability to speak Welsh is listed as a desirable requirement for future Secretariat postings	On-going	Three posts were advertised during 2016/17. All posts were advertised, in the first instance, as Welsh Essential; unfortunately, no applicants responded until the posts were advertised as Welsh Desirable, and no applicants were Welsh speakers.

Ensure all service providers are made aware of the contents of this scheme	On-going	Where appropriate, service providers are made aware of the contents of the Welsh language Scheme. No new contracts were issued during the reporting period. It is intended to include reference to the Commission's Welsh Language Standards with which the Commission will need to comply in future tender documents and contracts
Ensure internal monitoring of the scheme	On-going	The Commission's Welsh Language Scheme is incorporated into all desk instructions and checklists, and the office systems are such that the Secretary is the monitoring officer and approves the majority of output from the Secretariat. The Secretary manages all new policies and initiatives personally and, as the Commission's monitoring officer, he ensures that the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme is complied with. Procedures have been agreed whereby the Welsh Language Commissioner would be consulted during future reviews on Welsh place-names. Welsh-speaking members of staff at the Commission routinely quality assure translations, thus ensuring the quality of Welsh language documents is maintained.

2. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEME

a. *Report on requirements in relation to the Welsh language in contracts, explaining any arrangements to review or strengthen the consideration given to the Welsh language*

New contracts were issued during 2016/17 included those in respect of transcription services at public hearings, advertising and public relations. Where appropriate, the Commission specified the requirements as to the use of Welsh in tender documents and contracts.

Due to the nature of the Commission's work, the majority of services to the public are provided by staff members at the Commission's Secretariat. Where services are provided to the public on behalf of the Commission (for example, when simultaneous translation was provided during Public Hearings), those tendering were made aware of the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme.

It is intended to include reference to the relevant Welsh Language Standards with which the Commission must abide in future tender documents and contracts.

b. *Evidence that there are robust governance and internal scrutiny arrangements in place for the language scheme*

The Secretary managed all new policies and initiatives personally and, as the Commission's monitoring officer, he ensured that the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme was complied with.

Two (16.66%) members of staff at the Commission's Secretariat are Welsh speakers who are available to: answer queries from colleagues pertaining to the Welsh language; respond to Welsh language emails; answer queries from Welsh speaking members of the public; and, quality-assure Welsh language publications.

As the Commission's Secretariat has only 14 members of staff, with the majority working in an open-plan environment, the dissemination of information is easily achieved, and staff members are particularly well-informed about the Commission's commitment to the Welsh language. The Secretary monitored the appropriate use of Welsh throughout the reporting period. Furthermore, staff members are reminded regularly of the implications of the Scheme, for example via team meetings and office discussions.

The Commission's Welsh Language Scheme was incorporated into all desk instructions and review checklists, and the office systems are such that the Secretary approves the majority of output from the Secretariat. Furthermore, the relevant Welsh Language Standards are to be incorporated into desk instructions and checklists. The Commission's IT system automatically generates all circulars and standard letters bilingually.

A revised version of the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme was approved by Commission Members in February 2015. All staff members were made aware of the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme during team meetings, and regular reminders are issued in relation to the Welsh Language Standards. Plans for transition from Welsh Language Scheme to Welsh Language Standards have been discussed at length during Commission and Team Meetings, which all Commission and staff members attend.

c. *Summary of valid complaints received and action taken*

A Language Preference Form and Language Preference Excel tables have been created for staff to complete when correspondence is entered into and meetings are arranged; these will serve to remind staff that a Welsh language translation service is to be provided where stakeholders wish to speak Welsh at meetings and no Welsh-speaking staff or Commission members are available to attend.

A Welsh Language Complaints Code has been created and is due to be presented at a future Commission Meeting. The intention of the Code is to ensure that all Commission and staff members understand the organisation's response to complaints, and to fully inform members of the public how to issue

a complaint should they feel their rights to use the Welsh language in dealings with the Commission have been infringed.

d. ***Evidence of arrangements for ensuring the quality of Welsh language content on the corporate website / plans for increasing and improving Welsh language content***

The Commission's website is fully bilingual. Staff members at the Secretariat are responsible for updating the Commission's website, and are reminded regularly of the Commission's responsibilities under the Welsh Language Scheme. Desk instructions and checklists will help ensure that all content on the corporate website is bilingual. Furthermore, publications are routinely quality checked by Welsh-speaking members of staff at the Commission prior to publication on the website.

3. WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS

a. ***Information on the Welsh language skills of the workforce and a report on the data***

As the Commission's Secretariat is small, the language skills of staff were known without the need for a survey. Two Secretariat staff members (16.66%) are Welsh speaking. A member of staff has completed a formal Welsh language evening course. Two further members of staff have expressed an interest in attending Welsh language courses, and the Business Support Manager is in the process of sourcing such training.

Three posts were advertised during 2016/17. All posts were advertised, in the first instance, as Welsh Essential; unfortunately, no applicants responded until the posts were advertised as Welsh Desirable, and none of the applicants stated they were Welsh speakers.

During the 2017/18 reporting period, a small staff survey will be conducted to establish and formally record the staff members' Welsh language skills.

b. ***Evidence of investment in Welsh language training and an explanation of other action taken to improve workforce skills***

One member of the Commission's Secretariat completed a Welsh Language course during the year. Staff members were reminded that the Commission considers providing financial support, in appropriate cases, should they wish to take up language training. Two further members of staff have expressed an interest in attending Welsh language courses, and the Business Support Manager is in the process of sourcing such training.

Welsh speaking members of staff at the Secretariat provide guidance and tuition to non-Welsh speaking colleagues regarding the pronunciation of Welsh place names and basic greetings, as required.

c. *Evidence of provision of language awareness training*

Staff members of the Commission's Secretariat undertake Welsh language awareness training. As stated above, the Commission's Secretariat has only 14 members of staff, with the majority working in an open-plan environment, and the dissemination of information is easily achieved, with Welsh language issues being discussed on a regular basis at Team and Commission meetings. Therefore, Commission and staff members are particularly well-informed about, and supportive of, the Commission's commitment to the Welsh language.

4. MAINSTREAMING THE WELSH LANGUAGE

a. *Information on arrangements for assessing the impact of policies on the Welsh language and any action taken to review arrangements to ensure appropriate assessments are conducted*

The Secretary manages all new policies and initiatives personally and, as the Commission's monitoring officer, he ensured that the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme was complied with.

When policy decisions are made, the Commission routinely considers the impact such decisions may have upon the opportunities for persons to use Welsh or treat Welsh no less favourably than English; this is particularly so as the positive image of the Welsh language is thoroughly embedded in the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat. During the reporting year, all policy documents were published bilingually.

When the Commission consults upon policy decisions, the consultation and covering documentation is published bilingually, with responses welcomed in Welsh or English (examples of such documents can be viewed on the Commission's website).

The Secretariat is currently working towards creation of Policy Impact Assessment documents, which will be presented at a future Commission meeting. The Assessments will thereafter be used routinely by Commission and staff members.

5. PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

a. *Identify risks and priorities for next year*

The Commission prepares an annual business plan that underpins the budget and expenditure for the year. The plan for 2016-2017 incorporated resources to fulfil the Commission's obligations specified in the Welsh Language Scheme. The Commission's annual operational plan for 2017-18 will also incorporate resources to ensure the Commission's obligations pertaining to the Welsh Language Standards will be fulfilled.

The Commission submitted its response to the Welsh Language Commissioner's Draft Compliance Notice before the consultation deadline in May 2016. The Commission then prepared an Action Plan to facilitate the

transition from Welsh Language Scheme to Welsh Language Standards. A Use of Welsh at Work Policy has been created, which is available for all staff members, and a complementary training session with staff members is to be held soon. This will educate and remind staff as to the organisation's obligations in respect of the Welsh language. This information will also be shared with the Commission members. Transition work is ongoing.

Welsh speakers' requirements were well accommodated during the public hearings at the end of 2016; the Commission had held a meeting with its translation provider to ensure simultaneous translation facilities were available for the duration of the hearings.

A number of Commission desk instructions and letter templates have been revised; requirements under the Welsh Language Scheme were considered as part of that process. Furthermore, it is intended to include reference to the Commission's Welsh Language Standards with which the Commission will need to comply in future tender documents and contracts.

b. Examples of relevant good practice

The Commission is encouraged by the fact that no complaints were received about the Welsh language service provided during the reporting year.

Two (16.66%) members of staff at the Commission's Secretariat are Welsh speakers, and are available to: answer queries from colleagues pertaining to the Welsh language; answer queries from Welsh speaking members of the public; make contact with stakeholders whose preferred language is Welsh; and, quality assure Welsh language publications.

The Commission uses bilingual templates. Desk instructions have been distributed to staff, to ensure that all aspects of the Commission's work are issued bilingually. Checklists are used by staff when conducting electoral reviews, which ensure Welsh language versions of Reports are quality assured and published according to the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme and Standards. Staff members have access to Welsh language grammar and spellcheck facilities, such as 'Cysgeir' and 'Cysill' to improve confidence and encourage the wider use of written Welsh.

The Commission advertised 3 roles during 2016/17. All posts were advertised, in the first instance, as Welsh Essential; however, due to the dearth of interest in the posts, despite added efforts to disseminate the job adverts, the roles had to be subsequently advertised as Welsh Desirable.

During the year all telephone calls received from Welsh-speaking members of the public were dealt with by the Chair or the Welsh-speaking members of staff. Routine telephone calls from the Chair to the Welsh-speaking staff are usually in Welsh.

The Commission's website is fully bilingual, and all notifications on social media are issued in Welsh and in English simultaneously.

Simultaneous translation facilities are always provided at all Public Hearings; such facilities are automatically taken into account during budget preparation.

Commission signs (a 'pop-up stand' and 'roll-up banners') are all bilingual, with the Welsh language appearing before the English language. Any temporary signs are composed bilingually.

All documents are published bilingually by the Commission, including pamphlets/leaflets; newsletters; minutes; consultation papers; booklets; guidance; reports; receipts; and, maps. Where separate Welsh language and English language documents are published, both versions are made available simultaneously, with both languages being afforded equality in terms of format, size and prominence. Examples of these documents are available on the Commission's website.

c. Evidence of efforts to monitor the quality of Welsh language services and/or service user surveys

The requirements of the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme are to be incorporated into all desk instructions, and the office systems are such that the Secretary is the monitoring officer and approves the majority of output from the Secretariat.

Staff members at the Commission are dedicated to ensuring that all Welsh language publications are quality assured by Welsh speaking members of staff prior to publication.