



Passenger Focus
Welsh Language Scheme

September 2009

Passenger Focus Welsh Language Scheme

Introduction

Under the [Welsh Language Act 1993](#) every public body providing services to the public in Wales has to prepare a scheme setting out how it will provide those services in Welsh.

This is Passenger Focus's Scheme.

It describes how Passenger Focus will give effect, so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, to the principle established by the Welsh Language Act that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

The scheme covers the services that Passenger Focus provides to the public in Wales.

In this Scheme, the term **public** means individuals, legal persons and corporate bodies. It includes the public as a whole, or a section of the public, as well as individual members of the public. The term includes voluntary organisations and charities. Directors and others representing limited companies are also within the meaning of the term 'public'. It does not, however, include persons who are acting in a capacity which is representative of the Crown, Government or the State. Consequently, persons who fulfil official functions of a public nature, even though they are legal persons, do not come within the meaning of the word *public* when they are fulfilling those official functions.

Further information about the scope and purpose of Welsh language schemes can be found in the Welsh Language Board's guidelines (www.byig-wlb.org.uk).

This scheme was prepared in accordance with Sections 12 to 14 of the Act - and in accordance with guidelines issued by the Welsh Language Board under Section 9 of the Act. It came into effect on Tuesday 29 September 2009.

Background – Passenger Focus

Passenger Focus is the independent public body set up by the Government to protect the interests of Great Britain's rail passengers. We are funded by the Department for Transport but our independence is guaranteed by an act of Parliament.

Our mission is to get the best deal for Britain's rail passengers. With a strong emphasis on evidence-based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground.

We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of rail passengers and we work with the rail industry, other passenger groups and government to secure journey improvements.

Campaigning for improvements

- we gather research and information, like the National Passenger Survey, where 50,000 rail passengers give us their views about their rail journeys, so we understand the issues that matter to passengers
- we work with government and the rail industry to ensure that the passenger voice is heard when making decisions about the future of the railways
- we focus on a number of key issues:
 - fares and tickets
 - quality and level of services
 - investment in the railway

Providing practical advice

- we provide passengers with advice on how to get the best from the national rail network, explain their rights and help them when things go wrong
- we work with other passenger groups to support them in their work

Resolving complaints

- if a passenger makes a complaint and they are unhappy with the response we can take up their complaint with the company involved

Standards of quality - policies, legislation and initiatives

Passenger Focus's policies, initiatives and services will be consistent with this scheme. They will support the use of Welsh and take advantage of opportunities where the use of Welsh will facilitate understanding and public perception.

We will ensure that as many Welsh speaking people as possible know about the services.

Dealing with the Welsh speaking public

Correspondence

Our normal practice will be as follows:

When someone writes to us in Welsh we will issue a reply in Welsh (if a reply is required). Our target time for replying will be the same as for replying to letters written in English.

When we initiate correspondence with an individual, group or organisation, we will do so in Welsh when we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh.

Subject to the scoring system referred to below, when we send standard or circular correspondence to several recipients in Wales about Welsh specific issues, it will be bilingual unless we know that all recipients would prefer to receive it in Welsh or English only.

Passenger Focus will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board to identify objectively any standard or circular correspondence which need not be published in Welsh, or bilingually (for instance, when the correspondence is very technical or lengthy).

Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual, when available.

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The above will apply to e-mail correspondence as well as paper correspondence.

Telephone communications

Because our main offices are located outside of Wales it is not practical for us to conduct telephone conversations in Welsh.

Public meetings

Passenger Focus holds various public meetings throughout the year and members of the public can ask to attend any of the meetings.

Invitations and advertisements for public meetings held in Wales will be bilingual.

If requested we will provide simultaneous or consecutive translation from Welsh into English at any of our public meetings held in Wales unless we have established that all participants are likely to speak the same language.

If requested we will provide papers and other information in Welsh for our public meetings held in Wales.

Other meetings with the public in Wales

Because our main offices are not based in Wales it would not be practicable for us to conduct face-to-face meetings with the public in Welsh.

Other dealings with the public in Wales

The National Passenger Survey form used for measuring passenger satisfaction with rail services in Wales is available in Welsh. A Welsh interviewer will be made available, on request. If we undertake Wales-specific research we will have the research material available in Welsh, if it is requested.

Our public face

Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising

All publicity, exhibition and advertising material we use in Wales, targeted specifically at the Welsh general public, will be produced bilingually, or as separate Welsh and English versions. If the Welsh and English versions are published separately, both versions will be equal in size, prominence and quality. Both versions will be available simultaneously and will be equally accessible.

Exceptions to the above will be:

- Material used at events such as Wales' National Eisteddfod where Welsh only publicity, public information, exhibition and advertising material will be used.
- Material aimed at a limited and specialised audience. We will consider the need to produce this bilingually in each case, whilst bearing in mind the nature of the audience and the subject being dealt with.

Any advertisements placed in English language newspapers (or similar material) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual, or will appear as separate Welsh and English versions. Both versions will appear simultaneously, and be of equal size, prominence and quality.

Publications

Scoring system – We will publish material in Welsh and English of equal quality and at the same time when the item is specifically about Welsh rail services.

If not available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be greater than that of a single language publication - and the price of separate, Welsh and English versions will be the same.

The above will also apply to material made available electronically on our website.

We will prepare a programme, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, setting out how we will increase the availability of bilingual publications, over time.

Websites

Our website will include some pages in both Welsh and English.

We will prepare a programme, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, setting out how we will increase the Welsh language content of our website, over time.

When designing new websites, or redeveloping our existing websites, we will take into account the Welsh Language Board's *Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards* and any other guidance issued by the Board with regard to developing websites.

Whenever we post English language publications on our websites, the Welsh versions will be posted at the same time, if available.

Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices

Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices placed in English language newspapers (or similar media) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual, or appear as separate Welsh and English versions. Notices will be in Welsh in Welsh language publications.

The Welsh and English versions will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence – whether produced as a single bilingual version, or as separate Welsh and English notices.

In the English language media, posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential will be advertised in Welsh, with a brief description in English.

Recruitment notices placed in English language journals (and other publications) with a UK-wide distribution may be in English, unless the post is one where the ability to speak Welsh is essential, in which case the notice may be fully bilingual, or in Welsh with a brief explanation in English.

Any official notices, public notices or staff recruitment notices placed elsewhere in Wales will be where appropriate bilingual.

Press releases and contact with the media

Press releases to the Welsh language press and broadcasting media in Wales will be issued in Welsh where deadlines permit.

When we send out these releases we will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.

Implementing the scheme

Staffing

We have no offices in Wales. However we do have a regional manager that works in Wales for Welsh Passengers along with a Board member who was appointed by the Welsh Assembly to represent the interests of Welsh rail passengers.

We will seek information about the Welsh language skills of job applicants and existing staff.

Recruitment

For any posts having extensive and regular contact with the public in Wales we will consider whether fluency in Welsh should be a desirable or essential skill – and this will be stated in job competencies and advertisements.

Language training

We will support and fund training for staff that, as part of their duties, have extensive and regular contact with the public in Wales – and who wish to learn Welsh, or improve their Welsh.

We will allow staff to attend these courses during work.

Vocational training

Whenever practicable, we will provide vocational training in Welsh to develop the ability of staff who, as part of their duties, have extensive and regular contact with the public in Wales.

Information and communications technology

The need to provide information and services in Welsh, and operate in accordance with this scheme, will be catered for as we develop, design and purchase information and communications technology products and services.

As we develop or procure ICT systems we will take into account the Board's Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards.

Partnership working

When we are the strategic and financial leader within a formal partnership, we will ensure that any public service aspects comply with this Scheme.

When we join a formal partnership which another organisation is leading, our input to the partnership will comply with this Scheme and we will encourage the other partners to comply.

When we are a partner in a consortium, we will encourage the consortium to comply with this Scheme. When acting in the name of the consortium, we will operate in accordance with this Scheme.

The above refers only to formal partnerships dealing with services available to the public in Wales.

Internal arrangements

The measures in this Scheme carry the full **authority**, support and approval of our organisation.

Managers will have the **responsibility** of implementing those aspects of the scheme relevant to their work.

We will appoint a senior member of staff to **coordinate** the work required to deliver, monitor and review this scheme.

We will prepare, and continuously update, a detailed **action plan** to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board setting out how we will ensure that we will operate in accordance with this scheme. The action plan will come into effect on the date on which the Scheme comes into effect, or as soon as possible thereafter. The plan will include targets, deadlines and a report on progress

against each target. The overall aim of the action plan will be to ensure that we deliver the commitments set out in this scheme as soon as possible.

We will ensure that we use only qualified translators or interpreters for translation of electronic and printed material – and for simultaneous translation.

The scheme will be **publicised** to our staff, and to the public in Wales. It will be published on our website in a prominent place.

We will produce guidance, for our staff to ensure that they know how to implement the measures contained in this scheme.

We will arrange **briefing and training**, sessions for our staff to increase awareness of this scheme - and to explain how it will affect their day to day work.

Any form of contact with the public in Wales, which is not specifically dealt with by this Scheme, will be undertaken in a manner which is consistent with the general principles enshrined in this scheme.

Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations

When we release information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, we will translate them into the applicant's preferred language provided that the number of words to be translated is less than 500.

Monitoring

We will monitor our progress in delivering this Scheme against the targets set out in its accompanying action plan. We will report to our management team and Passenger Focus Board on that progress.

Our existing monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this scheme, as appropriate.

We will report to the Welsh Language Board on our progress in delivering this scheme, when requested by them.

Our target is to ensure that we act in accordance with this scheme within four years of its coming into effect. We will use a self-assessment procedure, to be agreed the Welsh Language Board, in order to monitor progress against this target.

Reviewing and amending the scheme

We will review this scheme within four years of its coming into effect.

Also, from time to time, we may need to review this Scheme, or propose amendments to this Scheme, because of changes to our functions, or to the circumstances in which we undertake those functions, or for any other reason.

No changes will be made to this Scheme without the Welsh Language Board's approval.

Complaints and suggestions for improvement

Complaints related to this Scheme, or suggestions for improvement, should be directed to the senior member of staff with responsibility for the Scheme, at the following address:

Amy Stockton
Head of Communications

Whittles House
14 Pentonville Road
London
N1 9HF

Or by e-mail to: amy.stockton@passengerfocus.org.uk

We will cooperate with the Welsh Language Board in order to resolve complaints - and during any investigations held under Section 17 of the Welsh Language Act.



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Passenger Focus is the operating
name of the Rail Passengers Council