



# **BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES**

## **WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME**

**PREPARED UNDER**

**THE WELSH LANGUAGE ACT 1993**

---

Comisiwn Ffiniau i Gymru

Boundary Commission for Wales 1 Drummond Gate London SW1V 2QQ

☎ 0171 533 5170 or 0171 533 5172 Ffacs/ Fax 0171 533 5176 GTN 3042 5170 or 3042 5172

Mae'r Comisiwn yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau teleffon naill ai yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg  
The Commission welcomes correspondence and telephone calls either in English or Welsh



# **BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES**

## **WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME**

### **STATEMENT**

This scheme has been prepared in accordance with section 21(3) of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and has received the full endorsement of the Welsh Language Board on 7 November 1997

## INTRODUCTION

### The Principle of Equality

The Boundary Commission for Wales has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality. This scheme sets out how the Boundary Commission for Wales will give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales.

### The Organisation

The Boundary Commission for Wales is an advisory Non Departmental Public Body sponsored and funded by the Home Office. It is constituted under schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended) as follows:-

<b>Chairman</b>	The Speaker of the House of Commons
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	A Judge of the High Court appointed by the Lord Chancellor
<b>Commissioner</b>	Appointed by the Secretary of State for Wales
<b>Commissioner</b>	Appointed by the Home Secretary
<b>Assessor</b>	The Registrar General for England and Wales
<b>Assessor</b>	The Director General of Ordnance Survey
<b>Joint Secretary</b>	An official of the Office for National Statistics appointed by the Home Secretary
<b>Joint Secretary</b>	An official of the Home Office appointed by the Home Secretary
<b>Assistant Commissioners</b>	Independent lawyers appointed by the Home Secretary to conduct public inquiries

The Commission holds its meetings either in London or in Cardiff and is supported by a Secretariat of three staff, currently provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), based in London.

The function of the Commission is to keep under continuous review the representation of the people of Wales in the House of Commons and in the European Parliament. Specifically, the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended) requires the Commission to conduct a general review of all the Westminster Parliamentary constituencies in Wales every eight to twelve years. The purpose of

such reviews is to give effect to the Rules for Redistribution of Seats in schedule 2 to the 1986 Act. Basically the rules require that every constituency in Wales should contain roughly the same number of electors whilst having regard to certain local government boundaries, special geographical considerations, and local ties.

After each such general review, the Commission is required by the European Parliamentary Elections Act 1978 (as amended) to conduct a supplementary review of the European Parliamentary constituencies in Wales. The purpose of such reviews is to ensure that each European Parliamentary constituency consists of whole Westminster Parliamentary constituencies and contains approximately the same number of electors as every other European Parliamentary constituency in Wales, having regard to special geographical considerations.

In between general reviews, the Commission has the discretionary power to conduct reviews of Westminster Parliamentary constituencies. Such interim reviews are normally conducted in two or more constituencies in order to realign Westminster Parliamentary constituency boundaries with altered local government boundaries. An interim review may subsequently lead to a supplementary review of European Parliamentary constituencies in order to realign the European Parliamentary constituency boundaries with the altered Westminster Parliamentary constituency boundaries.

When conducting reviews, the Commission is required to publish its provisional recommendations in newspapers circulating within the affected constituencies, to invite representations about those proposals, and to take such representations into account. The Commission also issues news releases and maps to assist in the understanding of its proposals.

The Commission must hold a public inquiry if it receives representations objecting to its provisional recommendations for:-

Westminster constituencies - from an interested local authority or from a body of 100 or more electors

European constituencies - from an interested local authority or from a body of 500 or more electors

The Commission also has the discretion to hold public inquiries if it decides that an inquiry is required, even if the statutory criteria have not been met. If the Commission revises its recommendations in the light of a public inquiry, those revised recommendations must be published and further representations invited. The Commission is not statutorily required to hold a further public inquiry but has the discretion to do so.

At the completion of each review, the Commission must submit its final recommendations to the Home Secretary in a report which 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 Home Secretary must also lay a statement of his reasons for those modifications. If approved by both Houses of 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 next following general election or European Parliamentary election.

In fulfilling these functions, and in order to provide a service in both languages, this is what we shall do.

## **SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY**

### **New Policies and Initiatives**

In formulating and implementing any new policies and initiatives, the Boundary Commission for Wales is committed:-

- to the promotion and facilitation of the principle of equality in the use of the Welsh language:-

whenever consideration is given to making changes to existing policies, or the introduction of new policies and initiatives, an assessment of the linguistic consequences will be made. If necessary, the Commission will consult with the Welsh Language Board for advice

- to ensure that any new policies and initiatives are consistent with this Welsh Language Scheme and do not undermine it:-

consideration of changes to existing policies or the adoption of new policies and initiatives shall include checks to ensure consistency with and support for this scheme

- to consult with the Welsh Language Board in advance regarding proposals which will affect this scheme, or the schemes of other organisations:-

consideration of changes to existing policies or the adoption of new policies and initiatives shall include consultation with the Board

- to obtain the Board's agreement to any alteration to this scheme:-

the Commission will seek and obtain the Board's written approval before implementing any change to this scheme

- to ensure that Commissioners and Secretariat staff involved in policy formulation are aware of this scheme and the Commission's responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act 1993:-

all Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Assessors and Secretariat staff will be provided with personal copies of this scheme and changes made to it approved by the Board

- to ensure that the measures contained in this scheme are applied to any new policies and initiatives when they are implemented:-

checks will be made by the Commission and, where required, with the Board's assistance, that new policies and initiatives are in accord with the requirements of this scheme

- to further the principle of equality in the use of the Welsh language:-

the Commission's notepaper, compliment slips, news releases, newsletters, press notices and public inquiry statements will confirm that the Commission welcomes contact and dealings in the Welsh language

### **Delivery of Services through the Medium of Welsh**

The Commission is committed to treating the English and Welsh languages equally in delivering its services. Therefore, all documents published by the Commission will be published in both languages.

Other specific actions the Commission will take are:-

- notepaper, compliment slips, postcards and all other stationery will be printed bilingually and contain a standard statement that the Commission welcomes contact in the Welsh language
- correspondence initiated by the Commission with individuals or groups who are known to prefer corresponding through the medium of Welsh, will be in Welsh
- newsletters, news releases, press notices, information booklets, public inquiry statements, reports to the Home Secretary and any other material published by the Commission will be produced bilingually and as one document, and shall contain a standard statement that the Commission welcome contact in the Welsh language

- any headings, keys, legends, lists, explanatory notes or copyright warnings added by the Commission to maps procured from map suppliers, will be produced bilingually
- the Commission will endeavour, whenever possible, to engage Welsh speaking Assistant Commissioners to conduct its public inquiries, particularly when it is anticipated that there might be a number of Welsh speaking contributors
- the Commission will engage professional external translators to attend its public inquiries to provide an instantaneous interpretation service
- the Commission's Secretariat will respond to service providers either in English or Welsh, as the provider may require

The Commission's Secretariat of three staff, who also work for the Boundary Commission for England, are based in London. Despite previous attempts, it has not proved possible to recruit a Welsh speaker. However, the Commission will continue to endeavour to employ a Welsh speaker amongst its Secretariat whenever new staff are recruited. To further this aim, the Commission will include the ability to speak Welsh as a desirable requirement for posts within its Secretariat.

In the absence of a Welsh speaker within the Secretariat, the Commission will employ the services of one or more professional external translators to provide translations and to respond to telephone calls in Welsh during normal office hours.

Specifically, the Commission is committed:-

- to reply in English or Welsh to all correspondence according to the language chosen by the correspondent
- to respond to all correspondence within ten working days of receipt of a letter regardless of whether the reply is to be sent in English or Welsh
- to answer all telephone calls in English or Welsh as chosen by the caller

Until such time as the Commission are able to recruit a Welsh speaker to the Secretariat, telephone callers who choose to speak Welsh will be informed, in English, that there is no one available within the Secretariat who can speak Welsh. They will be asked for their name and telephone number, and told that a professional interpreter will call back immediately, or at a time more convenient to the caller, to receive their questions. The caller will also be informed that the interpreter will relay the questions to the Secretariat, receive the answers and then

pass them on to the caller. Any supplementary questions will then be answered in the same manner. Any caller who is not content with this arrangement will be given the option of writing to the Commission in Welsh and receiving a full written reply in that language, or of continuing the conversation in English.

### **Standards of Quality**

The Commission is committed to delivering an equally high quality of service in English and Welsh and will include this fact in the form of a statement in its information booklets. The Commission will apply the principles of the Citizen's Charter equally to the provision of services in English and Welsh throughout all parts of Wales and will monitor the standards set.

Specifically, the Commission will:-

- set the same time targets for responding to letters and telephone calls in English and Welsh
- treat all English and Welsh enquirers with the same courtesy and tact
- apply the same style, format, typesize, quality and prominence to both the English and Welsh versions of its bilingual documents

## **CONTACT WITH INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS WHO WISH TO CORRESPOND OR SPEAK IN WELSH**

### **Correspondence**

The Commission is committed to the principle of equality set out in the Welsh Language Act and welcomes written correspondence in Welsh, just as it does in English. A short statement to this effect will be included on the Commission's headed notepaper, compliment slips, postcards, newsletters, news releases, press notices, information booklets, reports to the Home Secretary and other publications. When correspondence in Welsh is received the Commission will ensure that:-

- a response will be made within the same time scale as a response would be made to a letter received in English
- a signed reply in Welsh will be sent, whenever a reply is necessary
- following telephone communication in Welsh, correspondence initiated by the Commission to the caller will be in Welsh, unless the caller has indicated otherwise. The name of each caller will be added to the list of those known to want to communicate in the Welsh language

- correspondence initiated by the Commission will be bilingual if the language of the recipient is not known
- correspondence initiated by the Commission with those who are known to prefer corresponding through the medium of Welsh will be in Welsh
- any circulars and standard letters to the public in Wales will be issued bilingually

All correspondence received by the Commission in Welsh will be sent electronically within one working day to an external professional translator in Wales. The translator will be required to return the English translation within two working days. If a response is required, a reply in English will then be prepared within two working days and sent electronically to the translator. The translator will be required to send the Welsh translation to the Commission in a suitable computer format, by first class post, within two working days. The data on the floppy disk will be used to enable the Commission to send a signed reply in Welsh to the correspondent within ten working days of receipt of the original letter.

A mailing list will be established of the names and addresses of those persons and organisations who are known to prefer to conduct their correspondence with the Commission through the medium of Welsh. Correspondence to persons and organisations on the list will be sent in Welsh. The Commission will, however, send correspondence to such persons and organisations in bilingual form when it is initiating a general or standard letter, form or circular to a large number of recipients at the same time.

### **Telephone Communication**

The Commission is committed to the principle of equality set out in the Welsh Language Act and welcomes telephone calls in Welsh, just as it does in English. The Commission's Secretariat is a very small group of ONS staff based in ONS accommodation in London. The switchboard service is provided by ONS. However, the Commission's Secretariat have allocated a direct line to the receipt of telephone calls from those wishing to speak in Welsh.

The Secretariat staff have been trained to deal with calls received on the dedicated line. A set of instructions is kept by the telephone and a record of all calls received on it will be kept. The existence of the dedicated line will be advertised in Commission newsletters, news releases, press notices, information booklets and stationery. The Commission will also confirm that it welcomes telephone calls in the Welsh language.

Until such time as it is possible to employ a Welsh speaker, callers to the dedicated line will be told that there is no one available in the Secretariat who can speak Welsh. They will be asked for their name and telephone number, and told that a

professional interpreter will call back immediately, or at a time more convenient to the caller, to receive their questions. The caller will also be informed that the interpreter will relay the questions to the Secretariat, receive the answers and then pass them on to the caller in Welsh. Any supplementary questions will then be answered in the same manner. Any caller who is not content with this arrangement will be given the option of speaking in English or writing to the Commission in Welsh and receiving a written reply in Welsh. This procedure will be advertised in the Commission's publications.

### **Public Inquiries**

Those attending the Commission's public inquiries held under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended) and the European Parliamentary Elections Act 1978 (as amended) are welcome to speak in English or Welsh. All inquiries are held in Wales and the Commission's information booklets, press notices, news releases and statements concerning public inquiries, will make it clear that any interested person or organisation may attend any of the Commission's public inquiries and contribute through the medium of English or Welsh.

The Commission will endeavour, whenever possible, to engage Welsh speaking Assistant Commissioners to conduct its public inquiries, particularly when it is anticipated that there might be a number of Welsh speaking contributors. Assistant Commissioners are not appointed by the Commission but are independent lawyers appointed by the Home Secretary. The Commission will instruct Assistant Commissioners to announce at the commencement of each day of each public inquiry that submissions may be made in English or Welsh, and that an instantaneous interpretation service is available.

The Commission will engage two professional external translators to provide an instantaneous interpretation service at its public inquiries. They will also be asked to assist the Secretariat member present at the inquiry in dealing with any enquiries from those wishing to speak in Welsh. The Commission will provide both translators with a comprehensive background brief for the inquiry at least six weeks before its commencement. The Commission will ensure that the translators have, or are supplied with, the necessary translation equipment to enable them to provide an efficient and effective instantaneous interpretation service at public inquiries.

### **Other Meetings with the Public**

Outside of public inquiries, the Commission does not normally have any other face to face contact with the public either in Wales or in England. However, in the

absence of a Welsh speaking member of the Secretariat, should any person visit the Secretariat's offices in London and wish to communicate through the medium of Welsh, it will be explained that there is no-one available who can speak Welsh and that a professional external translator will provide a consecutive interpretation service over the telephone during the conversation.

### **Other Dealings with the Public**

Any information published by the Commission on its Internet Web Site will be published in bilingual form. The site will also contain a statement that the Commission welcomes contact in either English or Welsh. A copy of this Welsh Language scheme will be placed on the Internet in both languages. The address of the Commission's web site is:-

<http://www.coi.gov.uk/coi/depts/GBW/GBW.html>

## **THE PUBLIC FACE OF THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES**

### **Corporate Identity**

The Commission is committed to adopting and presenting a fully bilingual corporate identity in Wales. Specifically:-

- the Commission's logo will be shown bilingually
- standard information such as the Commission's name and "Welsh welcome" message will be shown bilingually on all Commission stationery and all published documents
- in all bilingual documents, both languages will be shown with equal prominence i.e. typeface, typesize, style, quality and legibility

### **Information Signs**

The Commission does not own, lease or occupy any property or building in Wales. The Commission's public inquiries in Wales are normally held in accommodation, such as Council Chambers, provided by local authorities. Any temporary signs erected at inquiry venues, to direct people to the inquiry, will be bilingual and equal prominence will be given to both languages.

### **Published and Printed Material**

All Commission stationery and public documents produced by the Commission will be printed bilingually and published as one document i.e. press notices, news

releases, newsletters, information booklets, map labels, public inquiry statements and reports to the Home Secretary. The Commission will normally publish such documents in “tumbled” format.

If, for any reason, it is not possible to issue any publication as one document, the Commission will simultaneously publish and issue together separate English and Welsh versions. For example, when despatching news releases or newsletters, separate English and Welsh versions will be sent together in the same envelope. The Commission will consult the publication “A guide to bilingual design” when publishing new material and may, if necessary, consult with the Welsh Language Board.

### **Forms**

Presently the Commission does not use any forms in conducting its business. However, should it decide to adopt the use of forms in the future, they will be produced bilingually and, if possible, as one document.

### **Press Notices**

The Commission will publish all its press notices in bilingual form.

### **Recruitment Advertising**

In any recruitment campaign, whether conducted within or without ONS, the Commission will endeavour to recruit Welsh speakers to its Secretariat.

## **IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE SCHEME**

### **Welsh Speaking Staff**

The Commission’s Secretariat is based in London and Commission meetings, which are not open to the public, are held either in London or Cardiff. The Commission has no workplaces which have face to face contact with the public in Wales but it does arrange for public inquiries to be held in Wales. At such public inquiries the Commission will:-

- endeavour, whenever possible, to engage Welsh speaking Assistant Commissioners, particularly when it is anticipated that there might be a number of Welsh speaking contributors
- engage two professional external translators to provide an instantaneous interpretation service to those attending the inquiries, including the reporters providing the verbatim transcription service
- ensure that the necessary translation equipment is provided

- produce bilingually all inquiry documentation
- provide any signage needed in bilingual format

The Commission's Secretariat also work for the Boundary Commission for England. The staff have contact with the public in Wales through correspondence and telephone calls. The Commission has not yet been able to recruit a Welsh speaker to its Secretariat. When considering the replacement of existing staff or the recruitment of extra staff, the Commission will endeavour to employ a Welsh speaker. However, the Commission will continue to use the services of external professional translators for the production of all documents issued by it and for other purposes, where appropriate.

The ONS Joint Secretary to the Commission will monitor the scheme to ensure that standards are being maintained and to see whether any improvements can be made. He will notify the Commission of any complaints made about the scheme or its implementation, and of any improvements that could be made to the scheme. The Board will be consulted where necessary.

### **Vocational Training through the Medium of Welsh**

If a Welsh speaker is recruited to the Secretariat an assessment will be made of what training, in areas such as telephone skills, drafting ability, word processing, simultaneous interpretation and written translations, that individual requires. The Commission are aware that they can seek assistance from the Board and others, such as the Languages Lead Body in carrying out such an assessment.

### **Administrative Arrangements to facilitate the Scheme**

The Welsh language will be given equal treatment in the provision of all the Commission's services.

The measures in this scheme have been, and any future amendments to them will be, approved by the Deputy Chairman and the two Commissioners and will carry the full authority of the Commission. All Assistant Commissioners will be supplied with a copy of this scheme and their standard brief will include guidance on operating the scheme at public inquiries.

The ONS Joint Secretary to the Commission will be responsible for ensuring that the scheme is implemented. The Secretariat's staff training manual will include a copy of the scheme.

If the Commission is unable to recruit a Welsh speaker, it will continue to use the services of professional external translators. Should the Commission decide to adapt

or replace existing computer systems, or to obtain new systems, the ability to implement the commitments in this scheme will be included in the specification.

### **External Contractors**

The Commission will only engage external professionally qualified translators who will be supplied with a copy of this scheme and required to abide by the commitments and standards in the scheme.

Suppliers of services to the Commission will be provided with a copy of this scheme and requested to assist the Commission in fulfilling its commitments. Any procurement exercise carried out by the Commission will include a requirement to ensure that the measures in the scheme are observed.

When a local inquiry is held in local authority accommodation, the Commission will request the local authority to provide signs to direct the public to the inquiry. All such signage will be in bilingual form and otherwise meet the commitments in this scheme.

### **Monitoring the Scheme**

The ONS Joint Secretary will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this scheme and will be accountable to the Deputy Chairman and the two Commissioners. The Joint Secretary will ensure that:-

- any changes to existing policies or consideration of new policies or initiatives will be consistent with this scheme
- all services delivered to the public in Wales by the Commission will treat both languages equally
- that any printed matter will be in bilingual form with equal prominence given to both languages
- that signage provided at local inquiries by local authorities on behalf of the Commission will be in bilingual form
- response times and other standards will be met
- efforts will be made to recruit a Welsh speaker

Any complaints will be dealt with promptly, investigated by the Joint Secretary and reported to the Deputy Chairman and the two Commissioners, and a response sent to the person making the complaint.

Suggestions for improvement to the scheme from members of the public will be welcomed, reported by the Joint Secretary to the Deputy Chairman and the two

Commissioners for consideration, and a response given to the person making the suggestion. Any amendment to this scheme consequently approved by the Commission will be cleared with the Board before implementation.

At the end of each general and supplementary review, the Commission will, by means of one of its bilingual publications, seek the views of those who took part in the review about the Welsh language services provided by the Commission during the review. The Commission will report annually to the Board on its implementation of the scheme and on any complaints or suggestions received.

### **Reporting Performance against Standards**

Annually, the Secretariat will supply the Commission with information comparing performance with the standards set out in this scheme. This will include:-

- the number of persons and organisations sent a copy of this scheme
- how the public have been made aware that the Commission welcomes dealings in both languages
- the number of persons and organisations on the list of those preferring to correspond in the Welsh language
- the percentage of other correspondence initiated in bilingual form
- the percentage of correspondence correctly replied to in the language used by the correspondent
- the percentage of replies sent within ten working days of receipt of a letter
- the percentage of public documents published bilingually
- the percentage of public inquiries at which a simultaneous interpretation service was provided

The Secretariat will notify the Commission if any of the targets have not been met and give reasons.

### **Publicity**

The Commission will take the following steps to publicise this scheme and to bring it to the attention of those with an interest in its work:-

- the Commission will issue a newsletter inviting those interested to apply for a copy of this scheme
- the Commission will send a copy of this scheme, and any amendments to it approved by the Board in the future, direct to those organisations who are known to have an interest
- references to the availability of the scheme will be included in the Commission's news releases, newsletters, press notices, local inquiry statements and information booklets
- all Secretariat staff will be provided with a copy of the scheme
- a copy of the scheme will be placed on the Internet

The availability of a bilingual service will be publicised in the Commission's news releases, newsletters, press notices, local inquiry statements and information booklets.

#### **TARGETS FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME**

<b>Target</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Ensure the Commission will adopt a bilingual corporate identity	Already implemented
Ensure new policies take account of the principle of the equality of the English and Welsh languages	Already implemented
Establish the provision of a Welsh Translation Service	Already implemented
All stationery will be printed bilingually	Already implemented
All press notices will be published bilingually	Already implemented
All news releases and newsletters will be issued bilingually	Already implemented
All information booklets will be printed bilingually	Already implemented
<b>Target</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
All reports submitted to the Home Secretary will be prepared in bilingual form	Already implemented
All other printed material will be printed bilingually	Already implemented

All stationery will invite contact in the Welsh language	Already implemented
All publications will invite contact in the Welsh language	Already implemented
Reply to all correspondence in the language used by the correspondent	Already implemented
Respond to all correspondence within the same time frame whether it is received in English or Welsh	Already implemented
Correspond in Welsh with those who prefer the medium of Welsh	Already implemented
Maintain a listing of those who prefer to correspond in Welsh	Already implemented
Ensure that facilities exist to allow those wishing to communicate in Welsh on the telephone to do so	Already implemented
Provide guidance to Secretariat staff to enable them to handle telephone calls from Welsh speakers	Already implemented
Provide an instantaneous interpretation service at public inquiries	Already implemented
Ensure that the Commission's information signs at public inquiries are fully bilingual	Already implemented
Reference to this scheme shall be included in the Commission's information booklets	When next reprinted
Ensure the scheme is included in the Secretariat's staff training manual	January 1999
Ensure all Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Assessors and Secretariat staff are provided with personal copies of the scheme and any subsequent alterations to it	On-going
Ensure that the ability to speak Welsh is listed as a desirable requirement for future Secretariat postings	On-going
Ensure all service providers are made aware of the contents of this scheme	On-going
Ensure internal monitoring of the scheme	On-going
Provide annual reports to the Welsh Language Board	April 1999 and annually thereafter

## **Enquiries**

Any enquiries, comments or suggestions about this scheme, whether in English or Welsh, should be addressed to:-

Terry Bergin  
Boundary Commission for Wales  
RG/11  
1 Drummond Gate  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

Telephone enquiries in the Welsh language:	0171 533 5172
Telephone enquiries in the English language:	0171 533 5170
Facsimiles:	0171 533 5176
Government telephone network number:	3042 5170

**Internet**

A copy of this scheme and further information about the work of the Commission can be found on the Commission's web site on the Internet at:-

<http://www.coi.gov.uk/coi/depts/GBW/GBW.html>