



Cymdeithas Tai Cantref

Welsh Language Scheme

Welsh Language Scheme prepared in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993 (the Act) and the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations in Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, March 2006.

This Scheme received the approval of the Welsh Language Board under section 14(1) of the Act on 12 August 2010

1. STATEMENT

1.1 Aim of the Scheme

Cymdeithas Tai Cantref has adopted the principle, that in the conduct of public business in Wales, that it will treat the Welsh and English languages on an equal basis. This scheme notes how we will operate that principle in providing services to the public in Wales.

1.2 Objectives

- to enable everyone who uses a service or is in discussion with the Association to do so through the medium of Welsh or English according to the personal choice of the individual
- to ensure that the services available through the medium of Welsh are high quality services
- to promote the use of the Welsh language within Cantref and in the community
- to encourage others to promote and use the Welsh language
- to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in the workplace.

The Association acknowledges that members of the public can express their opinions and needs better in their chosen language. It also acknowledges that enabling the public to use the Welsh language is a matter of good practice rather than a concession, and that denying them the right to use their chosen language could place them in a disadvantaged position. Also the Association recognises that linguistic ability increases with usage and decreases with lack of usage. The Association will therefore offer the public the right to choose which language to use when dealing with it, in accordance with the principle above.

1.3 Mainstreaming

Cantref operates in accordance with the Assembly Government's definition of mainstreaming the Welsh language, namely:

'To consider the Welsh language in all aspects of your work and in everything you do, with the aim of ensuring that every opportunity is taken to promote and support the Welsh language; to contribute towards the Government's vision of a truly bilingual Wales; and to plan, provide and evaluate services in Welsh and in English.'

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Cymdeithas Tai Cantref was established in 1989 by the merger of two local housing associations: Cymdeithas Tai Pumlumon in Aberystwyth and Cymdeithas Tai Cantref in Newcastle Emlyn. Both these associations were established voluntarily by local people at the beginning of the 1980s with the aim of providing homes for young single people and local families in an attempt to stem the depopulation of rural towns and villages in the area. In addition, safeguarding Welsh speaking communities and supporting local business were central to the principles of the founders. From the beginning the Welsh language was the internal administrative language of Cantref and continues to be so today.

In 1989 the Association had about 200 units comprising mainly houses and flats for rent and units for the elderly. It now has over 1370 units. Cantref's main activity continues to be the provision of general needs housing but it also has a number of supported housing schemes for people who need help to live in the community and the association also manages Ceredigion Care and Repair.

2.2 Our Core Values

- Respecting the needs of our customers
- Encouraging innovative thinking
- Protecting the environment underpins the work we do
- Strengthening the communities where we work
- Promoting bilingualism

2.3 Our purpose

- To provide homes
- To let homes
- To provide customer services
- To provide neighbourhood management
- To govern effectively
- To ensure financial viability

2.4 Funding

Cantref is a 'Registered Social Landlord' and uses grants allocated by the Welsh Assembly Government. It also borrows from banks and building societies and receives assistance from county councils for some schemes.

2.5 Structure

Cantref is governed by a Board of unpaid volunteers. The Board of Management is elected annually by Cantref's shareholders and it can comprise of up to 15 members including 4 tenant board members elected by the tenants themselves and up to 3 co-opted members. The Board has one committee, the Audit Committee.

The Chief Executive is responsible to the Board for ensuring that their decisions and policies are carried out on a day-to-day basis. The Chief Executive leads the Senior Management Team of three with the Director of Finance and Director of Operations.

The Association employs 65 members of staff. Its main office is in Newcastle Emlyn and it has other project based offices in Fishguard, Cardigan and Aberystwyth.

2.6 Internal use of the Welsh Language

Welsh is the internal administrative language of Cantref. Most of its workforce is fully bilingual. Cantref offers support and encourages all staff to develop their Welsh language skills and their mastery of Welsh.

2.7 Areas of Operation

Cantref operates in 4 local authority areas: throughout Ceredigion; the northern parts of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire and the Dyfi Valley area of Powys including Machynlleth.

2.8 Housing Stock

Cantref manages 1,371 houses and flats (31 March 2009). Their locations by county are shown below:

Ceredigion	858
Pembrokeshire	321
Carmarthenshire	139
Powys	53

2.9 Service Users

Cantref's function is to provide houses for rent for people who can not afford to rent on the open market. It also provides assistance for people with special needs. Cantref manages Ceredigion Care and Repair which gives assistance and advice to elderly people who are not Cantref tenants regarding adaptations and repairs to their homes.

It is therefore essential that the Association can offer services to its customers in their language of choice.

Cantref works closely and in partnership with local authorities and various agencies and public bodies. It is in daily contact with the general public, including contractors, consultants and suppliers.

2.10 The Welsh Language - Census Statistics 2001

The 2001 census statistics show the number of Welsh speakers in Cantref's areas of operations as follows:

Local Authority	2001 Census	
	No.	Percentage %
Ceredigion	37,918	52
Carmarthenshire	84,196	50
Pembrokeshire	23,967	22
Powys	24,814	21

Cantref operates throughout Ceredigion where over half the population speak Welsh; in Carmarthenshire half the population speak Welsh.

Although the figures are lower in the other two counties, Cantref's housing stock in Powys and Pembrokeshire are located in the communities where the percentage of Welsh speakers is much higher than the county average:

Powys	Machynlleth	54%	Glantwymyn	60%
Pembrokeshire	Crymych	60%	Dinas	54%

2.11 Principles of Iaith Pawb

Cantref is committed to act in accordance with the principles of Iaith Pawb, the Welsh Assembly Government's action plan for a bilingual Wales.

We are aware that the lack of affordable housing in rural areas is one of the perceived reasons for outward migration of young people from rural Wales and the Welsh speaking areas. Cantref therefore takes part in a number of enterprises designed to facilitate access to housing, and to ensure that communities remain sustainable.

Cantref in partnership with other organisations jointly funds and manages the post of Rural Housing Enablers in three counties – Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire. The aim of these posts is to develop and support effective partnerships with rural and coastal communities in our areas of operation, to identify their housing needs and help to provide affordable housing.

The Association also supports the Homebuy Scheme which enables local people to buy their own homes in communities where purchase would not be possible due to market prices.

2.12 Contact Officer

The Contact Officer for this Language Scheme is:

Amanda Harries
Cymdeithas Tai Cantref
Llys Cantref
Church Lane
Newcastle Emlyn
SA38 9AB

e-mail: post@cantref.co.uk
tel: 01239 712000

3. PLANNING AND DELIVERING SERVICES

3.1 Policies and Initiatives

3.1.1 In formulating new policies and initiatives, or in amending policies, the Association will assess their linguistic impact and make sure they are consistent with this Language Scheme and will ensure that the measures in the Scheme are applied when new policies and initiatives are implemented.

3.1.2 The Association will consult the Board beforehand regarding any proposal which would directly affect this Language Scheme. This Scheme will not be amended without the prior agreement of the Board.

3.1.3 The Association will ensure that whoever is involved in the formulation of policies is aware of the Scheme and of the Association's responsibilities under the Regulatory Code and the Welsh Language Act 1993.

3.1.4 We will aim to ensure that the Association's new policies and initiatives promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language whenever possible.

3.2 Service Provision

3.2.1 It will be our standard practice to ensure that our services are available to the public in Welsh and in English and we will inform the public that those services are available in both languages.

3.2.2 The Association will carry out the commitments noted in the Scheme by implementing the following arrangements:

- organise the service team so that staff who can speak Welsh can deal with the public who speak Welsh;
- enable officers from one workplace who can speak Welsh to assist another workplace when the need arises;
- adopt systems or procedures which facilitate the provision of service in the chosen language of the person receiving the service;
- employ professional translators;
- raise awareness among the Association's staff of the Language Scheme;
- consider the need to increase the availability of Welsh language skills by means of training and recruitment.

3.3 Services provided for the public by other organisations

Regulatory functions and third party services

3.3.1 Any contracts or arrangements made with a third party will be consistent with relevant sections of this Scheme.

Partnerships

3.3.2 Cantref works in partnership with public bodies, organisations from the voluntary sector and other agencies. We operate on many levels when working with others:

- when the Association is the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, it will ensure that the public service provision is compliant with the Language Scheme
- when the Association joins a partnership led by another body, the Association's input to the partnership will comply with the Language Scheme and the Association will encourage other parties to comply
- when the Association is a partner in a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt a language policy. When acting publicly in the name of the consortium, the Association will act in accordance with the Language Scheme.
- when the Association deals with partners, it will be common practice for members of staff to use Welsh where this is practical and reasonable.

3.3.3 The Association will ensure that officers are aware of the requirements of the Language Scheme when operating in partnership.

3.4 Quality Standards

3.4.1 Services provided in Welsh and in English will be equal in quality and they will be provided within the same timetable.

3.4.2 The Association will highlight this central principle in key documents such as corporate plans and annual reports. It should be outlined also in other situations where statements are made regarding equal opportunity and standard of service

4. DEALING WITH THE WELSH SPEAKING PUBLIC

4.1 Correspondence

4.1.1 The Association welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English. This is stated on our headed paper and other means of communicating with the public.

4.1.2 All correspondence will be dealt with promptly and correspondence through the medium of Welsh should not in itself lead to delay. Our targets for replying to correspondence in Welsh will be the same as our targets for replying to correspondence in English.

4.1.3 Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh.

4.1.4 All correspondence following a telephone or face-to-face conversation in Welsh or a meeting where it was established that Welsh is the preferred language of the person will be in Welsh.

4.1.5 When we commence correspondence with an individual, group or organisation, we will do so bilingually unless we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh or in English only.

4.1.6 When we send out standard correspondence or a circular to a wide audience, it will be bilingual.

4.1.7 If a separate Welsh and English language version of any correspondence must be published, our standard practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time and for the same price (if relevant).

4.2 Communication over the telephone

4.2.1 The Association welcomes telephone calls in Welsh and our standard practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or in English when dealing with us over the telephone.

4.2.2 Every member of staff will answer external telephone calls with a bilingual greeting, with the Welsh greeting first.

4.2.3 There will be a bilingual message on each member of staff's personal answering machine, the Welsh message first. There will be bilingual instructions on the switchboard answering machine outside office hours.

4.2.4 If a caller wishes to speak Welsh, the switchboard will transfer the call to a Welsh speaker who is qualified to deal with the inquiry.

4.2.5 If a caller phones a direct line and wishes to speak Welsh, but the person taking the call cannot do so, then this will be explained courteously and the call will be transferred to a colleague who speaks Welsh and who is qualified to deal with the inquiry.

4.2.6 If a qualified Welsh speaker is not available, the caller will be given a choice, either

- to wait for a Welsh speaker to phone back as soon as possible
- to submit the inquiry in Welsh by letter or e-mail, or
- to continue with the call in English.

4.2.7 In order to achieve the aim of treating the Welsh and English languages on an equal basis, we will ensure that we have bilingual officers, by means of training/recruitment to enable Welsh speakers to deal with the Association in Welsh over the telephone.

4.3 Public Meetings

4.3.1 When public meetings are held by the Association, including conferences and other similar events, we will explain to those present that they will be welcome to contribute through the medium of Welsh or English. There will be circumstances in which it will be appropriate on the basis of information, to hold all the activities bilingually, in Welsh only or in English only.

4.3.2 The organiser will assess whether translation facilities are needed. As well as considering whether the Association has been informed of the chosen language of the attendees, he/she will consider the location of the event, who is likely to be present, and the subject in question.

4.3.3 When there are Welsh speakers among those invited to attend, or if it is known that Welsh speakers intend to be present, translation facilities will be arranged and meetings will be held bilingually.

4.3.4 Our standard practice will be to provide any written materials such as leaflets or other documents used at public meetings, in bilingual form.

4.3.5 As well as translation equipment, we will assess the need for members of staff who speak Welsh to be present to welcome the public and to deal with their inquiries. Our staff will make their language abilities evident at meetings, for example, by greeting people bilingually and using the Welsh Language Board's 'Iaith Gwaith' badges.

4.4 Other Meetings

4.4.1 The Association welcomes meetings with the public in Welsh or in English and makes sure that arrangements are made to enable any member of the public who desires to do so, to discuss matters in Welsh.

4.4.2 When we arrange or attend a face to face meeting with the public, we will find out their chosen language at the first opportunity and, wherever possible, we will ensure that a qualified member of staff who speaks Welsh deals with those who note that their chosen language is Welsh.

4.4.3 Bilingual staff are expected to make use of the Welsh language where simultaneous translation service is provided in meetings.

4.5 Communicating with the public in other ways

4.5.1 We will consider the best ways of meeting the needs of Welsh speakers in whichever way we deal with the public.

4.5.2 The Association is committed to enabling the public to deal with us in Welsh through electronic communication, on line or other media.

5. THE PUBLIC FACE OF THE ASSOCIATION

5.1 Corporate Identity

5.1.1 Cantref has adopted and introduced a totally bilingual identity. Our public image, including our address, logo, corporate slogan, visual identity and any other standard information used on the Association's materials and goods (such as headed paper, fax paper, business cards, publications etc) and in other circumstances such as signs, vehicles and buildings, is bilingual.

5.2 Signs

5.2.1 All information signs owned by the Association, including at internal locations to which members of the public have access, are totally bilingual.

5.2.2 The size, standard of clarity and prominence of the words on the signs will respect the principle of language equality.

5.2.3 It will be the Association's standard practice to provide bilingual signs, but on occasions when Welsh and English signs are provided separately, they will be equal in terms of form, size, quality, clarity and prominence.

5.2.4 There are processes in place to ensure the accuracy of text, and we will co-ordinate and review this carefully, especially when work is contracted out.

5.2.5 When developing a new housing estate or other accommodation site, the Association will propose a Welsh name for the estate that is consistent with the heritage and history of the area.

5.2.6 It is acknowledged that local authorities have the final say in the naming of new estates; the Association will encourage them (in cases where names proposed by the Association are not accepted) to give a Welsh or bilingual name for the estate.

5.3 Publishing and Printing Materials

5.3.1 All material aimed at the public will be bilingual with both languages appearing in the same document.

5.3.2 Our standard practice will be to provide bilingual publications, but on some occasions for practical reasons, we will publish separate Welsh and English versions. In such cases, we will distribute the versions at the same time. They will also be equally readily available and both versions will include a message noting that a version is available in the other language. The Association will not publish material in the one language and offering to send a copy in the other language when a request is received.

5.3.3 When a document is published which has a price, the price of a Welsh version of the document will be no higher than the price of the English version

5.3.4 We will ensure that staff and those with responsibility for printing are aware of the policy and procedures for publication.

5.3.5 All the information to be published on the Association's public website will be bilingual, and material will be available in both languages at the same time.

5.3.6 We will ensure that Welsh text in our publications is of a high standard and that the tone is appropriate for the target audience.

5.4 Forms and explanatory material

5.4.1 Every form and explanatory material published by the Association for use by the public will be bilingual.

5.4.2 Our standard practice will be to produce bilingual forms with both languages appearing together in the same document.

5.4.3 In some cases (perhaps due to the complexity of a form) production of a bilingual version will not be practical, and separate Welsh and English versions may be more appropriate. In such cases, the Welsh and English versions will be published at the same time, be equally as easy to obtain in our office and other distribution centres, be distributed together and include a message which confirms that the form is also available in the other language.

5.4.4 We will ensure that consistency of terms is a regular practice in the preparation of forms.

5.5 Press Releases

5.5.1 Press releases are a prominent part of the Association's public face and we will therefore publish them bilingually when appropriate to the circumstance, but in Welsh only when using Welsh-language publications.

5.6 Marketing and Publicity Campaigns

5.6.1 Our marketing campaigns will comply with the relevant sections of this scheme

5.6.2 In implementing advertising and publicity activities, including production of pamphlets, audio materials, organising exhibitions and seminars, advertising campaigns and market research, we will implement the following objectives:

- produce all publicity materials in Welsh and in English
- conduct advertising campaigns in the press in Welsh and in English
- advertise on posters and information boards in Welsh and in English
- conduct public surveys bilingually, whether through the post or face to face
- conduct direct marketing campaigns in Welsh or in English
- set up bilingual exhibitions and information stalls.

5.6.3 Some of the activities above will be conducted only in Welsh in specific Welsh medium events such as an Eisteddfod.

5.7 Official Notifications, Public Notifications and Staff Recruitment Advertisements

5.7.1 Our standard practice will be to ensure that our official notifications, public notifications and staff recruitment advertisements appear bilingually with the Welsh and English versions together. They will be equal as regards form, size, quality, clarity and prominence.

5.7.2 Information packs, such as job descriptions and person specifications will be prepared in Welsh and in English for all our posts.

5.7.3 When using the Welsh language press to advertise, our advertisements in those publications will appear in Welsh only.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF THE SCHEME

6.1 Staffing

6.1.1 As the Association is eager to see the Welsh language being used internally and externally, the ability to speak Welsh will either be 'desirable' or essential' for all posts.

6.1.2 The Association will make arrangements to ensure, to the extent that it is reasonably practical, that workplaces which have contact with the public have access to sufficient staff with appropriate Welsh language skills in order to enable those workplaces to provide a service in Welsh. The degree to which this is necessary or possible will vary, depending on the service and on the area.

6.1.3 We will respond to any lack of skills by means of our recruitment and training, or by considering the possibility of relocating staff internally.

6.1.4 We will set Welsh language requirements (desirable or essential) on some posts, by considering the following factors:

- The amount and frequency of contact with the public.
- The current ability of the team to deliver a face to face service though the medium of Welsh.
- The expertise of the post, i.e. skills in the Welsh language could be vital in some specific fields.

6.1.5 In assessing our staffing needs, we will provide for a possible increase in the demand for services through the medium of Welsh as schemes are implemented and as Welsh speakers respond to the offer of service in Welsh.

6.1.6 Our standard practice will be to ensure that our reception areas and main switchboard can offer service in Welsh at all times

6.1.7 We will provide resources for implementing the Language Scheme in a sensitive way by encouraging and supporting all staff members to take part. We will develop skills in the language as well as a supportive attitude towards providing bilingual services. We will ensure that non-Welsh speaking staff should not feel under threat and we will support staff who wish to learn the Welsh language through appropriate training. We will treat language skills in a similar way to any other skills which need to be developed in the workplace.

6.2 Recruitment

6.2.1 It will be clearly specified whether the ability to use Welsh is desirable or essential in the qualifications section of the post and in advertisements. We will also note the level of competence necessary for the post, for example 'ability to converse in Welsh but training and assistance will be given with written Welsh' / 'ability to speak and write in Welsh essential'.

6.2.2 If an applicant who cannot speak Welsh is appointed to a post where the ability to speak Welsh is considered essential then the ability to learn the language up to a specific level of skill, within a reasonable period of time to be agreed, will be one of the conditions of appointment. Progress towards the target will be monitored regularly. Where the ability to speak Welsh is desirable, opportunity to learn Welsh will be provided.

6.3 Welsh Language Training

6.3.1 We will support this Language Scheme by encouraging and supporting members of staff to learn Welsh or to improve their skills in Welsh.

6.3.2 We will plan our training programme carefully and concentrate resources on those parts of our service where there is frequent communication with Welsh speakers, or where there are linguistic requirements to the post.

6.3.3 It is useful that learners know of colleagues who can speak Welsh and we will encourage staff to try to help those who are learning.

6.3.4 The Human Resources Manager will include language courses in the training programme in accordance with the training plan for individual members of staff. Progress as a result of training will be measured as part of the Association's personal development arrangements.

6.3.5 Dictionaries and electronic material will be available to help members of staff who are learning Welsh.

6.3.6 The Association will also provide awareness training for staff with regard to the requirements of this Scheme. Our standard practice will be to include such training in the induction of new staff.

6.4 Vocational Training

6.4.1 Human resources managers and staff who have responsibility for training will assess the need for specific Welsh language vocational training for staff

6.5 Administrative Arrangements

6.5.1 This Scheme has the full authority, support and approval of the Association. The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Language Scheme and all the Association's members of staff have a responsibility to know how to implement the Scheme effectively.

6.5.2 The relevant Director will be responsible for implementing the clauses of the Language Scheme.

6.5.3 We will nominate an existing member of staff to be responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the work of the Scheme from day to day.

6.5.4 In order to promote the use of Welsh in the workplace we will provide resources such as dictionaries, Welsh terminology software and other Welsh medium software for staff.

6.6 Reviewing the Implementation of the Scheme

6.6.1 The following senior officer has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this Scheme:

The Chief Executive
Cymdeithas Tai Cantref
Lôn yr Eglwys/Church Lane
Castell Newydd Emlyn/ Newcastle Emlyn
SA38 9AB
Tel: 01239 712000
e-mail post @cantref.co.uk

6.6.2 Monitoring this Scheme will be a continuous and structured activity. This will include monitoring the following fields:

- compliance with the Scheme
- quality of service – to look at complaints and at the front line service
- management and administration
- adequacy of linguistic skills – based on commitments 6.1-6.4
- mainstreaming.

6.6.3 We will use the Association's standard complaints procedure to record and deal with complaints about this Scheme and will ensure that it will be possible to monitor specific complaints about the Scheme. Cantref's Complaints Policy is available on request from:

The Chief Executive
Cymdeithas Tai Cantref
Lôn yr Eglwys/Church Lane
Castell Newydd Emlyn/ Newcastle Emlyn
SA38 9AB

Tel: 01239 712000
e-mail post @cantref.co.uk

6.6.4 The Chief Executive will report to the Management Board annually and will send a copy of the report to the Welsh Language Board. The report will follow a format agreed with the Board and will include information about the nature of any complaints and improvement suggestions received from the public in respect of the Scheme.

6.7 Publication of Information

6.7.1 We will include a statement in our annual report noting where members of the public can obtain a copy of our annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Board.

6.8 Publicity

6.8.1 We will ensure that members of the public who deal with the Association know about this Scheme and its contents, and how they can conduct their dealings with the Association in Welsh.

6.8.2 Our methods of publicising the Scheme and its contents will follow our usual corporate publicity arrangements, and will include ensuring that the Scheme is published in a prominent location on our website.

6.8.3 We will ensure that the Association's staff and agencies are familiar with the measures included in the Scheme in order to ensure that attention is paid to the measures whenever appropriate.

Timetable Action Plan

Task	Officer	Completion
Provide language awareness training for staff with regard to the requirements of the Scheme	Chief Executive (Human Resources)	End September 2010
Include requirements of scheme in individual work plans / personal development plans	Chief Executive (Directors / Managers)	June Annually (on completion of personal work plans)
a. Identify staff's needs for Welsh language training and relevant resources and b. organise an improvement programme based on the needs identified	Chief Executive (Human Resources / Managers)	a. September 2010 b. September 2010
Allocate sufficient budget for language training	Director of Finance	September 2010
Clearly define the language requirements of all posts in the recruitment advertisement and job description	Chief Executive (Human Resources / Managers)	On-going
Include Welsh Language Scheme in induction programme for new staff	Chief Executive (Human Resources / Managers)	Start June 2010 on-going
Monitor conditions of employment and learning targets if an appointment is made subject to learning Welsh.	Chief Executive (Human Resources / Managers)	September 2010 On-going
Compose a standard bilingual greeting for all publicised telephone numbers and personal voicemail numbers	Chief Executive (Personal Assistant)	July 2010
Conduct an audit of the Association's public signage	Chief Executive (Personal Assistant)	July 2010
Prepare annual monitoring report to the Board and the Welsh Language Board	Chief Executive (Personal Assistant)	Sept 2011 & annually thereafter