

Welsh Language Scheme
Newydd Housing Association

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 1 May 2008.

1. Opening Statement

Aim of the Scheme:

Newydd Housing Association is the subsidiary of The Cadarn Housing Group and as the public facing member of the Group has been delegated responsibility for establishing a Welsh Language Scheme. The Cadarn Housing Group will comply with this scheme.

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

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

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. 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.

2. Introduction

Background and Corporate Values

Newydd Housing Association is the subsidiary member of The Cadarn Housing Group which was established as in 1974 with the aim of providing affordable, high quality accommodation.

Since that time the organisation has established itself as one of the leading housing associations in Wales providing affordable accommodation for rent and sale and a number of housing related services. Key milestones in our development have been:

- Continuing development of new housing for single people, families and older people
- Operates a Care & Repair service in the Vale of Glamorgan offering a range of support services to older home owners and tenants
- Received the transfer of over 400 homes on the Glyntaff estate near Pontypridd from the local authority and successfully completed a multi million pound improvement programme
- Established a group structure in 1998 with The Cadarn Housing Group as the parent and Newydd Housing Association as subsidiary in order to achieve flexibility, clear identities and efficiencies
- Provision of information technology services to external clients including software products for the housing and care sectors
- Established an in house architecture capability in 2000 by acquiring a community architectural practice
- Operating a homeless leasing initiative since 2005 in partnership with local authorities to provide high quality temporary accommodation as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast provision
- Received the transfer of Newtown Housing Association in 2006 and over 200 rented homes in Newtown, Powys
- A member of Integrate (a network of housing associations) in order to provide a collaborative vehicle for effectively delivering the social housing grant programme and maximising procurement economies and quality

The Group now provides 2,500 homes across 11 local authority areas in Wales as well as a range of housing services.

The Cadarn Housing Group consists of Cadarn and Newydd Housing Association.

Cadarn

The parent of the Group providing central support and services to Newydd and a range of services to external customers:

- IT services
- Architectural services
- Maintenance services
- Project management services
- HR services
- Corporate services

Newydd

The subsidiary of the Group providing landlord and housing services across south and mid Wales:

- Housing for rent
- Housing for low cost sale
- Housing advice
- Sheltered housing
- Care & Repair services
- Community development services
- Homeless leasing services
- Accommodation with care and support

The Group remains true to its not for profit principles and its primary focus is to maximise community benefit. The Group's structure allows a flexible approach to achieving this mission based on the skills, resources and expertise available to it.

Newydd Housing Association fulfils much of the role of a housing association through the ownership and management of housing and related services along with a range of community based initiatives. However, as a corporate entity, The Cadarn Housing Group operates as an innovative social business to tackle wider strategic objectives than a traditional housing association. These include supporting the growth and success of the social economy through the provision of support services to the social business sector.

Structure and Area of Operation

The Group is governed by voluntary Board members who meet on a regular basis in order to decide strategy, monitor performance and develop the business. An Audit Committee oversees systems of internal control. Cadarn and Newydd operate

separate Boards with nomination rights to achieve the required control and co-ordination.

Newydd operates from four offices, most central services are delivered from its registered offices at Coryton while front line services to tenants and the public are delivered through public reception facilities in Barry, Pontypridd and Newtown.

Homes are located in the following local authority areas:

Local Authority	Affordable Rent	Affordable Home Ownership	Managed Under Management Agreements
Caerphilly		10	
Cardiff	31	12	40
Carmarthenshire		1	
Ceredigion		12	
Merthyr Tydfil		5	
Neath Port Talbot	68	4	
Powys	219	6	
Rhondda Cynon Taff	711	18	
Swansea			20
Torfaen	35		
Vale of Glamorgan	1211	59	317
Totals	2275	127	60

Service Users

Service users fall into several main categories:

- Tenants and leaseholders living in owned or managed homes (over 90% of these are located in the Vale of Glamorgan, Powys and Rhondda Cynon Taff).
- Members of the public looking for accommodation or advice about housing options.
- Older people looking for advice and assistance from our Care & Repair scheme in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- External organisations in Wales and outside of Wales who use services such as information technology and architecture.

The Welsh Language

We provide services to the public across eleven local authority areas with a significant presence in five of these, Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Neath Port

Talbot, Cardiff and Powys. While we operate throughout Wales outside these local authority areas services are provided to or through other organisations rather than directly to the public.

The 2001 census provides the most up to date picture of Welsh language issues in Wales.

The numbers of people aged over 3 who are able to speak Welsh as shown in the table below:

Local Authority Area	%
Vale of Glamorgan	11.3
Rhondda Cynon Taff	12.5
Neath Port Talbot	18.0
Cardiff	11.0
Caerphilly	11.2
Merthyr Tydfil	10.2
Powys	21.1
All Wales	20.8

To put these percentages into context, within the five local authority areas where the Group has a significant public service role there are over 120,000 people who are able to speak Welsh. The census figures also show that the incidence of Welsh speaking is most dominant in the age range 3 to 19 years with a sharp fall off amongst the older age groups. For instance in the Vale of Glamorgan 37.2% of 15 year olds can speak Welsh while only 5.4% of people in their 50's can do so. Clearly this demonstrates the impact of Welsh language lessons in schools and the existence of Welsh medium schools and it can therefore be assumed that the incidence and demand for Welsh speaking will increase over time.

In 2006 all tenants were asked to state their language preferences. One tenant requested information be provided bilingually. No tenants requested the use of Welsh only. This exercise was repeated in October 2007 and four tenants requested information in Welsh.

We also review the capacity of its staff to deliver services through the medium of Welsh on an annual basis. At September 2007 we employed 11 staff (or 14% of the total workforce) who regarded themselves as Welsh speakers. A list of Welsh speakers who are willing to assist in the delivery of front line services, translation or interpretation is available to all staff on our intranet. The intranet is also a resource for translation and pronunciation of common words and phrases.

The Welsh Assembly Government's action plan for a bilingual Wales (Iaith Pawb) sets out the three strands of the strategy as follows:

1. A National Policy Framework, with the Assembly Government setting the policy agenda and providing strategic leadership to sustain and encourage the growth of the Welsh language
2. The Language and the Community, focussing on policies and actions which promote economically and socially sustainable communities throughout Wales including those where Welsh is widely spoken within the community at large
3. The Language and Rights of the Individual, focussing on the rights and responsibilities of the individual. The Assembly Government's policies will continue to encourage individuals to learn Welsh and to facilitate and empower them to use the language in all aspects of life in Wales.

Newydd Housing Association is committed to supporting the principles of Iaith Pawb through the implementation of this Welsh Language Scheme.

The Chief Executive is the contact point for this Welsh Language Scheme and can be contacted at the registered office at Ty Cadarn, 5 Village Way, Tongwynlais, Cardiff CF15 7NE, telephone 02920 629364 or e-mail enquiries@cadarn.co.uk

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 implemented when new policies and initiatives are implemented.

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

3.1.3 We 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.

3.2 Service Provision

3.2.1 We will ensure that as many of our services as possible are available in Welsh and we will inform the public when they are available.

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 office who can speak Welsh to assist another office 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 The Association 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

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 We are committed to communicating with customers in the format and language of their choice. All documents published after the approval of this Scheme will contain the following statement:

If you require translation facilities or information in other languages or formats, including Welsh, Braille, large font or on CD or tape then this is available on request. You are also able to use our Language Line service to speak to someone in your preferred language. Please ask for details.

This statement is displayed in the reception areas of our public facing offices in several languages, including Welsh.

4. Dealing with the Welsh speaking Public

4.1 Correspondence

4.1.1 The Association welcomes correspondence in Welsh.

4.1.2 All correspondence will be dealt with promptly and correspondence through the medium of Welsh should not in itself lead to delay.

4.1.3 When someone writes to us in Welsh, we will provide a reply in Welsh (if a reply is needed).

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 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).

4.1.6 We will keep a record of those persons who wish to deal with the Association in Welsh.

4.1.7 We will agree arrangements for correspondence and for arranging translation.

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 In order to achieve the aim of treating the Welsh and English languages on an equal basis, we will take the following steps to enable Welsh speakers to deal with the Association in Welsh over the telephone:

- ensure that we have available bilingual front line/reception officers, by means of training/recruitment
- provide an internal directory of Welsh speakers to whom calls can be transferred
- provide staff with guidelines on how to deal with telephone calls from Welsh speakers and ensure that they are familiar with the arrangements

4.3 Public Meetings

4.3.1 When public meetings are held by the Association, including conferences and other similar events, those present 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 We will invite attendees to inform the organisers whether they wish to use Welsh or English.

4.3.3 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.

4.3.4 When there are Welsh speakers among those invited to attend, or if it is known that Welsh speakers intend to be present, translation facilities should be arranged.

4.3.5 Based on the requirements of attendees, written materials such as leaflets or other documents used at public meetings, may be provided in bilingual form.

4.3.6 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, but due to the shortage of Welsh speakers, we cannot guarantee a face to face meeting in Welsh. In such circumstances we will politely explain the situation and offer other options, such as to organise translation or proceed with the meeting in English.

4.4.2 If it is obvious that there is a consistent demand for face to face meetings through the medium of Welsh, and that we are failing to meet that demand, we will consider taking action such as training or appointing bilingual staff.

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 The Association has adopted and introduced a totally bilingual identity.

5.2 Signs

5.2.1 When we renew or re-erect any signs we will ensure that the new versions are totally bilingual. Signs erected for the first time will be 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.

5.3 Publishing and Printing Materials

5.3.1 We will produce documents aimed at the public in general in a bilingual form.

5.3.2 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.

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

5.3.4 Our website will be in English but bilingual documents published on our website will be available in a bilingual form on our website and the website will contain a copy of this scheme in Welsh and an explanation of how to access services and information in Welsh.

5.3.5 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 We will produce bilingual forms when it is reasonably practicable and appropriate under the circumstances.

5.4.2 When we produce bilingual forms, 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 should:

- be published at the same time
- be equally as easy to obtain in offices 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 The Association will try to establish the chosen language of members of the public by including a “language choice” question on the first form in a series. Once the chosen language of an individual is known, we will distribute material in Welsh, English, or bilingually from then on, as appropriate.

5.4.5 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. Due to geographical areas in which we predominantly work the main recipients of press releases will be the English language media. Press releases in Welsh will be issued to Welsh language media as appropriate under the circumstances.

5.6 Marketing and Publicity Campaigns

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

5.7 Official Notifications, Public Notifications and Staff Recruitment Advertisements

5.7.1 Our official and public notices will be bilingual when it is appropriate under the circumstances. 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 every post where Welsh language skills are essential.

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

5.7.4 Advertisements for posts for which Welsh language skills are essential will appear in Welsh in all publications, with an explanatory note in English for English or bilingual publications.

6. Implementation and Review of the Scheme

6.1 Staffing

6.1.1 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 staff with appropriate Welsh language skills 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.

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

6.1.3 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 unit or office to deliver a face to face service through the medium of Welsh
- The expertise of the post, i.e. skills in the Welsh language could be vital in some specific fields
- If it is a post in a specific geographical area, on an assessment of the number/percentage of Welsh speakers in the area.

6.1.4 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.

6.2 Recruitment

6.2.1 When it is desirable or essential that an applicant should possess skills in the Welsh language, this will be noted clearly in the qualifications section of the post and in advertisements. We will also note the level of competence necessary for the post, for example "to be a fluent Welsh speaker".

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.

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

6.3.4 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 Board of Management. The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Language Scheme and all members of staff have a responsibility to know how to implement the Scheme effectively.

6.5.2 Managers will have responsibility for implementing those aspects of the Scheme which are relevant to their work,

6.5.3 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:

Chief Executive, The Cadarn Housing Group, Ty Cadarn, 5 Village Way, Tongwynlais, Cardiff CF15 7NE, telephone 02920 629364 or e-mail enquiries@cadarn.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.

6.6.4 The Chief Executive will report to the 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.

