

Forestry Commission Wales Welsh Language Scheme



Second Edition

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Foreword

to the second edition

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. The Forestry Commission scheme covers the services that we provide to the public in Wales.

It describes how we 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.

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.

The scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board under Section 14 of the Act. It came into effect on 08/06/07, and replaces the original scheme approved by the Board on 01/04/2000.



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

Since publication of our original scheme, we have implemented the requirements of the scheme and monitored our progress against the targets set and reported to the Welsh Language Board, as necessary. As our relationship and alignment to the Welsh Assembly Government has developed since 2000, we have formed the view in conjunction with the Welsh Language Board, that a revised scheme is necessary to update a number of our commitments and targets.

In preparing this revised version of the scheme, we have taken the opportunity to refine, consolidate and enhance the wording of various measures by modifying them and introducing further clarity to them.

Context and vision to the second edition

A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR A BILINGUAL WALES

In February 2003, the Welsh Assembly Government published *laith Pawb*, a 'national action plan for a bilingual Wales'. The plan represents the first ever national framework for action planned at governmental level for preserving, sustaining and promoting the Welsh language throughout Wales. As an organisation dedicated to the stewardship of Wales's woodlands and one that acts as the Welsh Assembly Government's Forestry Division, we support the aims of this strategy for cultural diversity. We are pleased to present our revised Welsh Language Scheme as an important sectoral contribution towards the realisation of this broader national strategy.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The provision of services bilingually in Welsh and English by public bodies in Wales is one of the statutory equalities issues in Wales since the passing of the Welsh Language Act 1993. We recognise that language is an essential part of a person's identity and that members of the public can express their views and needs better in their preferred language.

In implementing the measures of this scheme, we will emphasise respect for the rights and fair aspirations of the users of the Welsh language. Therefore, our strategy for the forward planning of our services is based on the belief that it is always fair and reasonable for the public in Wales to expect to receive a service or communication from the Forestry Commission in Welsh or English, according to their choice.

THE FORESTRY COMMISSION'S VISION FOR THE NEXT DECADE

During the initial period of implementation of our Welsh Language Scheme, we focused on establishing firm foundations for operating bilingually and offering language choice when dealing with the public. We have now evolved a vision for our future development as a bilingual organisation. In operating this revised scheme over the next decade we have several long term objectives which we will seek to achieve. Over the next ten years we will:

- operate increasingly as a naturally bilingual organisation, and forward plan to increase the proportion of staff with Welsh speaking and writing skills in order to:
 - i. realise the scheme's commitments and;

ii. decrease staff dependency on the translation service.

- encourage our staff to take pride in the Welsh language and the Forestry Commission's commitment to providing bilingual services;
- foster a greater interest in our work among Welsh speakers and learners, with a view to attracting more applicants from Welsh communities to pursue careers with the Forestry Commission and within the wider forestry sector;
- nurture more Welsh speaking specialists in the forestry, community and environmental fields relevant to the Forestry Commission's work to help contribute towards an increased use of Welsh in specialist subject areas;
- influence other organisations and individuals both within and outside the forestry and environmental sectors to operate in accordance with good bilingual practice;
- seek opportunities to promote and develop the use of Welsh proactively through the medium of our services and specialisms;
- take advantage of opportunities to interpret our commitment to the Welsh language as a parallel to our work of managing and safeguarding the woodlands of Wales.

Introduction

The Forestry Commission in Wales

STATUS

1.1 The Forestry Commission is the Government department responsible for advising on and implementing forestry policy in Great Britain. Prior to devolution the Forestry Commission fell under the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the Secretary of State for Wales. Following devolution these arrangements changed. The Forestry Commission in Wales now reports to the Welsh Assembly Government. The Assembly has taken on the formal powers in relation to forestry in Wales, including the power of direction over the Forestry Commission and financial responsibility for its activities in Wales. Non-devolved issues such as international policy, plant health, research and the UK forest standard remain as GB issues.

1.2 Forestry Commission Wales came into being on 1 April 2003 and serves as the forestry department of the Welsh Assembly Government to advise on and implement forestry policies. It also manages the national forest estate in Wales, amounting to some 125,000 hectares, to deliver public benefits. The responsibility for forestry policy and its financial framework rests with the Minister for the Department of Environment, Planning and Countryside.

1.3 Despite the impact of devolution, Forestry Commission Wales remains part of the Forestry Commission, a cross-border public body with a Chairman and Board of Commissioners. The responsibilities and powers of the Forestry Commissioners are derived mainly from the Forestry Acts 1967 and Plant Health Act 1967. There are a number of other applicable Great Britain Acts and Statutory Instruments, including the Forestry Commission Bye Laws 1982.

NATURE OF THE BUSINESS, OUR STRATEGY, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Strategy

1.4 The Welsh Assembly set out its vision for forestry in Wales in 'Woodlands for Wales', published in July 2001 and updated in 2007. It sets a course to provide real social and community benefits, both locally and nationally, whilst supporting thriving woodland-based industries and contributing to a better quality environment throughout Wales. 'Woodlands for Wales' can be found on the Forestry Commission Wales website at www.forestry.gov.uk/wales.

Aims and objectives

1.5 The aims and objectives of Forestry Commission

Wales flow from Woodlands for Wales and from the wider objectives of the Welsh Assembly Government. As a predominately rural activity, forestry plays a major part in delivering rural development, but also has an increasingly important role in helping to deliver other objectives such as urban regeneration, social and environmental justice, renewable energy and healthier lifestyles. Forestry Commission Wales has five strategic, outcome related objectives expressed in our Corporate Plan 2005/06 – 2007/08 [Better Woodlands for a Better Wales - published March 2005]:

- Sustainable woodland management;
- Woodlands supporting effective and durable communities;
- Woodlands making a positive contribution to a thriving and sustainable Welsh economy;
- Woodlands contributing to a more healthy and resilient environment;
- Effective and efficient customer focused delivery.

Introduction

The Forestry Commission in Wales

1.6 These objectives are built around the theme of sustainable forest management and the delivery of outcomes which are built on the economic, environmental and social outputs from forest management that will help achieve our overall vision of Better Woodlands for a Better Wales. We will work towards our vision in a number of ways:

- **Stewardship** - We act as stewards for the Assembly woodland estate, which accounts for 38% of woodland in Wales;
- **Grants** - Outside the estate we encourage stewardship and good woodland management by giving targeted grants, reaching a further 15% of woodlands in Wales;
- **Business** - We generate income from the Assembly estate through the sustainable harvesting of timber and other activities and reinvest in projects that deliver our social and environmental goals;
- **Regulation** - We regulate forestry practice throughout Wales by licensing felling and replanting; through environmental impact assessments; and by acting as Relevant Authority for access to woodlands with statutory rights;
- **Policy, communications and research** - We consult widely with stakeholders and maintain a close working relationship with both the Welsh

Assembly Government and the Forestry Commission outside Wales;

- **Partnerships** - To maximise delivery, we seek to work in partnerships with others at local, district or national levels on projects where this will help us meet our strategic objectives.

1.7 Forestry Commission Wales' annual spending plans can be found on the Welsh Assembly Government's website at www.wales.gov.uk.

Location

1.8 The National Office for Forestry Commission Wales is in Aberystwyth from where most of our departmental and corporate functions are delivered. The management of the Assembly woodland estate is delivered from four Forest District offices based in Dolgellau, Welshpool, Llandovery and Resolven, near Neath. The Grants and Licences team operate from two area offices at Clawdd Newydd, near Ruthin and Abergavenny. We also have a number of sub-offices throughout Wales, most notably in Llanwrst where our National Customer services team are based.

1.9 The wider Forestry Commission operates across Scotland and England, as well as having an Executive

Research Agency [Forest Research], which operates at a GB wide level. There is a service headquarters for a number of GB shared services based in Edinburgh, as well as other GB wide Business unit staff based in the countries, including Wales. As of 1 April 2007, the Forestry Commission employed 3330 staff, of whom 376 are based in Wales. Of the staff based in Wales, 27% of them are Welsh speakers. These staff are predominantly rural based in the North and west of Wales.

Service planning and delivery

POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND INITIATIVES

2.1 The Director and the Forestry Commission Wales Management Board will ensure that the principle of language equality is considered in all aspects of our work, and that each Unit operates in accordance with the scheme. All agreed deviations from equality are detailed in this scheme. Financial support for the scheme will be provided from within the existing planned expenditure.

2.2 All new projects and policies formulated and operated by Forestry Commission Wales or on our behalf will be subject to the requirements of this scheme. During the planning and preparation of any such projects and policies, we will ensure that they are consistent with the aims of this scheme.

2.3 Whenever possible, our consultation documents will discuss the relationship between the Welsh language and the policies, initiatives and services under development.

2.4 When we contribute to the development of delivery of policies, initiatives, services or new legislation led by other organisations, we will do so in a way which is consistent with this scheme.

2.5 The Welsh Language Officer, reporting directly to the Head of Secretariat and Communications, will be given the responsibility for overseeing the scheme on a day to day basis and for maintaining a monitoring process. This Officer is identified in Forestry Commission literature and on our website. The Forestry Commission Wales Director and the Management Board will be responsible for identifying the need for any evolutionary changes to the scheme and for providing the Welsh Language Board with the required reports. The Welsh Language Officer will be the contact for enquiries regarding the scheme and its operation.

DELIVERING SERVICES

2.6 Our normal practice will be to ensure that our services are available to the public in Welsh. The implementation of our Welsh Language Scheme is largely based on delivering services in Welsh to the general public by means of a Unit responsibility approach.

- Unit Managers will identify how their service provision will be delivered in English and Welsh on a team basis;
- We will ensure that each member of staff has access to a copy of the scheme and to staff guidance relating to specific team functions and the service provided by that team to the public. The scheme and the staff guidance will also be made available on the organisation's intranet.

2.7 All proposed departures from the scheme which may affect our services to the public, or services to the public undertaken on our behalf or through partnership arrangements will be discussed and agreed with the Welsh Language Board prior to adoption or implementation. Any proposals affecting the scheme or that of any other organisation will similarly be agreed with the Board beforehand:

- The delivery of services to the public will be enhanced by a strong Welsh language ethos in the workplace, which includes the proper integration of Welsh within all aspects of the organisation's operation;
- Management Board members and Unit Managers will be responsible for encouraging the use of Welsh within the workplace wherever practical;
- Members of staff may use Welsh or English in their work so long as this is consistent with the scheme and does not impede the effectiveness of internal communication;
- There will be encouragement for Welsh speakers and Welsh learners to make more use of their oral and written Welsh in all aspects of their work, and for Welsh speakers to support learners' efforts in this regard.

Service planning and delivery

OUR REGULATORY FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES UNDERTAKEN ON OUR BEHALF BY THIRD PARTIES

2.8 Any agreements or arrangements made with third parties will be consistent with the relevant parts of the scheme, when these relate to the provision of services to the public in Wales. This will ensure that third parties provide those services in accordance with the scheme.

STANDARDS OF QUALITY

2.9 Services provided in Welsh and English will be of equal quality and will be provided within the same timescale.

AWARDING GRANTS

2.10 When we award grants for activities to be undertaken in Wales, including public access and recreation, we will include conditions with regard to the use of Welsh. We will take into account the Welsh Language Board's guidelines on awarding grants.

Dealing with the Welsh speaking public

CORRESPONDENCE

3.1 The Forestry Commission welcomes correspondence in both Welsh and English. When someone writes to us in Welsh we will reply in Welsh. Our target time for replying will be the same as for letters or e-mails in English (10 working days).

3.2 When we initiate correspondence with an individual, group, or organisation, we will do so bilingually unless we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh or English only. All standard letters and circulars intended for the public will be bilingual.

3.3 We will initiate correspondence in Welsh following face-to-face or telephone conversation in Welsh unless we know that the recipient would prefer correspondence in English.

3.4 Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual, when available. Enclosures sent with Welsh letters will be Welsh or bilingual, when available. All hard-copy Welsh correspondence that we issue will be signed. All Welsh e-mail correspondence that we issue from Wales will bear a Welsh (or bilingual) electronic signature.

TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

3.5 We welcome telephone enquiries in English or Welsh. Since 2006, we have had a single contact telephone number with a customer service team based in Llanrwst answering all incoming calls to the Forestry Commission. Calls to the National Customer Services contact centre will be answered with a bilingual greeting. The caller will be encouraged to use his/her preferred language.

3.6 Our Welsh speaking staff will answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting and use bilingual messages on their personal answering machines. We will encourage the rest of our staff to do likewise. Local office answering machines that are linked to the contact centre will have a bilingual recorded message.

3.7 If the caller wishes to speak Welsh, our contact centre staff will try to connect to a Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry. If no Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry is available, the caller will be given the choice:

- i. have a Welsh speaker return the call as soon as possible;
- ii. continue the call in English or;
- iii. submit their query in Welsh by letter or e-mail.

3.8 The Commission's internal telephone directory, which is available to all staff and the contact centre team on the intranet, indicates where staff work, their job titles, and who are fluent Welsh speakers and learners.

3.9 When we set up telephone help-lines or similar facilities, to give information, services or support to the public, we will provide a Welsh language service. This will be advertised alongside the English language service. Both services will share the same telephone number.

Dealing with the Welsh speaking public

PUBLIC MEETINGS

3.10 We will provide simultaneous or consecutive translation from Welsh into English at our public meetings unless we have established that all participants are likely to use the same language.

3.11 Invitations and advertisements for public meetings will be bilingual and either say that translation facilities will be available or invite the public to let us know in advance in which language they wish to speak.

3.12 We will encourage contributions in Welsh and select suitably qualified Welsh speaking members of staff to attend public meetings. We will provide bilingual papers and other information for public meetings and ensure that reports and papers produced after meetings are published in Welsh and English.

OTHER MEETINGS WITH THE PUBLIC IN WALES

3.13 When we arrange face-to-face meetings with the public, we will establish their language preference at the earliest opportunity and ensure that a suitably qualified Welsh speaking member of staff deals with those whose prefer to speak in Welsh. If no suitably qualified Welsh speaker is available, we will offer the

choice of continuing the meeting in English, or deal with the subject by correspondence in Welsh.

3.14 Forestry Commission staff who undertake visits to schools and voluntary groups will offer the choice of a talk or presentation in Welsh or English.

OTHER DEALINGS WITH THE PUBLIC IN WALES

3.15 When we undertake public surveys, we will ensure that all aspects of communication with the public will be bilingual. Respondents will be asked if they wish to respond to the survey in Welsh or English.

3.16 When we arrange seminars, training courses or similar events for the public in Wales, we will assess the need to provide them in Welsh. In conducting this assessment, we will consider the preferred language of those attending and the availability of Welsh speaking trainers.

The Forestry Commission's Public face

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS, EXHIBITIONS AND ADVERTISING

4.1 All of the publicity, public information, exhibition and advertising material we use in Wales will be produced bilingually, or as separate Welsh and English versions where the English version is for circulation throughout Britain. If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately, both versions will be equal with regard to 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' eisteddfods where Welsh only publicity, public information, exhibition and advertising material may 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.

4.2 Any advertisements placed in English language newspapers and periodicals 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 equal with regard to size, prominence and quality. In Welsh language publications advertisements will be in Welsh only.

4.3 Television, cinema, broadband and radio advertising will be conducted in Welsh, where appropriate. Television campaigns, which appear on S4C during Welsh programmes will be in Welsh. Radio campaigns broadcast during Welsh language programmes on commercial radio stations will be in Welsh. We will avoid using Welsh language subtitles, or dubbing adverts into Welsh (excepting voice-overs).

4.4 Telephone response lines and other ways of responding to campaigns in Wales will be bilingual or will include a separate Welsh response service. Any audio-visual displays, audio tours or interactive media that we prepare will be bilingual. When staffing exhibitions stands and displays, we will ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary.

PUBLICATIONS

4.5 We will publish all material made available to the public bilingually, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. If versions have to be published separately, for practical reasons because of the size of the document, both versions will be of equal size and quality. Each version will contain a message stating that the publication is also available in the other language.

4.6 If not available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be greater than that of a single language publication. When we issue separate Welsh and English versions they will have the same price.

4.7 Some of the scientific and technical reports based on the Commission's work intended for a specialist and limited audience will be published in English only. Others such as future revisions of the UK Forest Standard and Forest Guidelines that have a more policy dimension or a broader audience, will be published in full bilingually. A middle category of technical publication has been identified where the Welsh version may be made available on the website only and printed on demand.

4.8 The decision on whether Welsh is a requirement for scientific and technical documents except those specifically stated in paragraph 4.7 will be made by a scoring system, which will be agreed with the Board. It sets out clearly those items that will always be bilingual and those that will usually be in one language, as well as how these versions will be made available. The criteria will be applied to all new publications including revisions.

The Forestry Commission's Public face

WEBSITE

4.9 We will maintain a fully bilingual website. The Welsh and English language versions of publications will be posted on our website at the same time.

When re-designing new websites or re-developing our existing website, 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.

4.10 We will provide Welsh versions of the interactive pages on our website. Whenever we post English language publications on our website, the Welsh versions will be posted at the same time, if available.

FORMS AND ASSOCIATED EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

4.11 We will ensure that all forms and associated explanatory material for use by the public in Wales will be fully bilingual, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. This will include interactive forms published on our website.

4.12 If Welsh and English versions have to be published separately, for practical reasons because of the size of the document, both versions will be of equal

size and quality. We will ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will contain a message stating that the form is also available in the other language.

4.13 Bilingual forms will be sent to the public unless we know that the recipients would prefer to receive the information in Welsh or English only. When other organisations distribute forms on our behalf, we will ensure that they do so in accordance with our Scheme.

CORPORATE IDENTITY

4.14 We will adopt a bilingual corporate identity in Wales. Our name, contact details, logo, slogans and other standard information will appear in Welsh and English on all material, which displays our corporate identity. This includes our stationery and material such as business cards, identity badges, passes, car park tickets, acknowledgement cards, complement slips, invitations and Commission vehicles.

4.15 The size, quality, legibility and prominence of the text on all material must adhere to the principle of equality. We may use Welsh only branding for some initiatives.

SIGNS IN WALES

4.16 We will ensure that all of our permanent and temporary signs, which give information to the public will be bilingual with the Welsh and English text being treated equally with regard to size, legibility and prominence.

4.17 We will adhere to this practice whenever signs are being installed for the first time, or whenever we are replacing signs. Signs used at events such as the eisteddfod may be in Welsh only. If separate Welsh and English signs are provided, they will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence.

OFFICIAL NOTICES, PUBLIC NOTICES AND STAFF RECRUITMENT NOTICES

4.18 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. The Welsh and English versions will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence. For Welsh language publications, the notices will be in Welsh only.

The Forestry Commission's **Public face**

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

4.20 Recruitment notices placed in English language journals 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 bilingual.

PRESS RELEASES AND CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

4.21 Press releases to the Welsh language press and broadcasting media in Wales will be issued in Welsh where deadlines permit. Press releases on our website will be bilingual. We will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.

Implementing the scheme

STAFFING

5.1 Bilingual ability is desirable for all Forestry Commission posts based in Wales and essential for some posts. The need for bilingual skills will vary from post to post and from location to location, and will be determined according to the following categories :

Category A - Posts for which fluency in Welsh is essential on appointment.

Category B - Posts for which the standard of Welsh required is a set target of achievement within a specified timescale.

Category C - Posts for which fluency in Welsh is desirable.

5.2 The language competency requirements of posts will be determined initially by Unit Managers in consultation with the Human Resources team and then notified to the Welsh Language Officer. Where there is no agreement, the language skills category of the post will be determined by the Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the relevant Head of Team [Management Board member].

5.3 For Category A posts, the postholder will need to be fully bilingual, either in both written and spoken Welsh and English, or in spoken Welsh and English only. In such cases the need for bilingual skills is

immediate, and the officer should be fluent at appointment.

5.4 For some posts [Category B] for which Welsh is essential, it may be acceptable for a non-Welsh speaker or Welsh learner to be appointed on condition that Welsh is learned within a clearly defined timescale to the standard required to fulfil the needs of the post. Staff appointed to these posts will be committed to a specified training programme over a set period, that will lead to them achieving the required standard by the end of the training period.

5.5 Where fluency in Welsh is not essential for a particular post (Category C), we will still follow our proactive policy of encouraging the acquisition and use of the language in order to promote a bilingual ethos throughout the organisation.

5.6 Category A posts, for which fluency in both Welsh and English is an essential competency, are key posts involving significant direct contact with the public. They include for example, posts in the National Customer Services team, Communications team and front-line operational and community engagement staff. In addition, there will be posts for which Welsh and English are essential in order to meet the Unit

commitments as detailed elsewhere in this scheme. As an organisation we will aim to have staff with expertise across all our subject areas who are competent in spoken and written Welsh. In all of these areas and service situations, we will aim to ensure that service provision is of equal quality and equal availability in Welsh and English.

5.7 Where Welsh is an essential qualification for a post, the interviewing panel will test the candidates' proficiency in written and / or spoken Welsh, according to the post's requirements.

- If fluency in both Welsh and English is essential for a post, interviews for that post will be conducted using both Welsh and English. The interview panel will require at least one fluent Welsh speaker who will be responsible for assessing the candidate's level of ability in Welsh, against the required standard. Interviews for all other posts will ideally include at least one Welsh speaker who will be responsible for conducting part of the interview in Welsh for candidates who have accepted the offer of a bilingual interview;
- Standard guidance and instructions for interview panel members responsible for the assessment and evaluation of skills in Welsh will be prepared

Implementing the scheme

and distributed by the HR team in consultation with the Welsh Language Officer;

- We will include in the text of our job application forms and internal recruitment notices, a request for applicants to indicate their choice of Welsh or English as the preferred language for their interview;
- Applicants for posts will receive a copy of the further details of the post and other relevant employment documentation in bilingual format.

RECRUITMENT

5.8 When fluency in Welsh is considered to be desirable or essential this will be stated in job competencies and advertisements.

5.9 When no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for Category B posts where Welsh is essential (or whilst a candidate unable to speak Welsh has been appointed and is learning the language), we will make temporary arrangements under which the Welsh language service can be provided (by using, for example, Welsh speaking staff from elsewhere in our organisation to deliver parts of the service).

5.10 The Forestry Commission has great difficulty in

recruiting suitably qualified Welsh speaking staff into some posts, notably Forester and other specialist grades. We plan to address this particular problem in a proactive way.

- We will commit to funding a rolling programme of student scholarships from academic year 2007/08 via the Welsh Scholarship scheme instigated by the Countryside Council for Wales. The approach will be to offer scholarships for Welsh speaking students who study for relevant forestry and land-based qualifications. These students might study anywhere in the UK. For those students who chose to study for their qualification via the medium of Welsh then we would offer a 'top-up' to the basic scholarship. We will also provide sandwich-year placements to all the students who require one as part of their studies;
- Information about the Forestry Commission and the wider forestry sector will be distributed to educational establishments and other influential organisations both within and outside Wales as part of the process of encouraging Welsh speakers to take an interest in the Forestry sector as a career.

5.11 Contracts of employment will be provided in Welsh or English in accordance with the appointee's stated language preference.

LANGUAGE TRAINING

5.12 Our staff will be encouraged to learn or improve their Welsh and we will support those who wish to undertake language courses where it will be of benefit in their work or where they have aspirations to move into a future role where Welsh is required or likely to be helpful.

5.13 We will fund the courses and ensure the training is compatible with their working hours.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

5.14 We will develop the ability of our Welsh speaking staff to operate in Welsh by providing vocational training in Welsh, whenever practicable.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

5.15 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 ICT standards.

Implementing the scheme

5.16 We will modify our existing information and communications technology systems to ensure that they enable us to provide information and services in Welsh and operate in accordance with this scheme.

The Grants and Licences online service is the Commission's web-based system used to deliver the new Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) grants system. It is our policy to conduct as much as possible of BWW work through a web-based electronic system in Welsh and English. It will provide all the advisory, technical and general information needed by people involved with woodland management.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

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

5.18 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.

5.19 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.

INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS

5.20 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 have appointed the Head of Secretariat and Communications to co-ordinate the work required to deliver, monitor and review this scheme.

5.21 We will prepare, and continuously update, a detailed action plan to be agreed with the 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.

5.22 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. Our staff guidance notes will be amended to reflect 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.

5.23 We will ensure that we use only qualified translators to help with the delivery of this scheme. We will expect those translators to be members of the Association of Welsh Translators.

5.24 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

5.25 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.

MONITORING

5.26 We will monitor our progress in delivering this scheme against the targets set out in the action plan and report to Director Wales. Our existing monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this scheme.

Implementing the scheme

5.27 We will report to the Welsh Language Board on our progress in delivering this scheme, when requested by them. We will also use a self-assessment procedure, to be agreed with Board, in order to monitor progress.

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

REVIEWING AND AMENDING THE SCHEME

5.28 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

5.29 Complaints related to this scheme, or suggestions for improvement, should be directed to Director Wales at the following address:

Forestry Commission
Victoria Terrace
Aberystwyth
SY23 3QQ

Or by e-mail to: fcwenquiries@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Forestry Commission Wales serves as the forestry department of the Welsh Assembly Government and is responsible to Welsh Ministers

Contact

Forestry Commission Wales
Victoria House
Victoria Terrace
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Welsh Assembly Government