



WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME CYNLLUN YR IAITH GYMRAEG

INTRODUCTION

Cardiff Community Housing Association (CCHA) is a community based housing association, and is one of the leading providers of affordable housing in Cardiff. We manage over 2,500 good quality, affordable homes, for rent and sale, and meet the needs of a wide range of people. We work in the Adamsdown, Blackweir, Butetown, Cardiff Bay, Cathays, Llanederyn, Rumney, Splott, Tremorfa and Trowbridge communities of the city; we have been working in Cardiff for the last thirty years.

Our Vision

To deliver affordable, good quality homes and services to our customers in an accountable manner and, by working in partnership with other agencies, help develop and sustain thriving communities.

Our Key Objectives

1. the delivery of excellent customer services
2. providing new homes and maintaining them to a high standard
3. improving the communities where we work
4. taking a prudent, yet innovative, approach to managing our business
5. making Team CCHA a great thing to be part of

CCHA is a charitable housing association; we are Charter Mark and Investors in People accredited.

CCHA has adopted the principle established under the WELSH LANGUAGE ACT 1993 that in the conduct of public business it will, to the best of its ability, treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.

The context for this commitment is the demand for Welsh among our customers, the linguistic profile of the areas in which we work, appropriateness to CCHA's circumstances, and thus what is reasonably practicable. We have established this by consulting with our customers, our team and by using other public information available to us.

We have established that the demand for Welsh language services is currently modest in the areas where we work. We, therefore, believe that it is inappropriate for the Association to adopt a fully bi-lingual policy for its work and service delivery. However, we will make it known to all with whom we do business that we welcome dealings in either Welsh or English, and we respect the right of our customers to communicate with us in the language of their choice. The scheme outlines the services we are committed to providing through the medium of Welsh.

We intend to work with the WLB to further develop this scheme in accordance with their advice and with any Welsh Assembly Government requirements. We intend to embrace the Welsh language in the right spirit.

SERVICE PLANNING

New Policies and Initiatives

As and when we develop new policies, we will ensure that we assess any linguistic consequences.

We will also ensure that staff and advisors involved in policy formation are aware of the scheme and the organisation's responsibilities under the Act.

We want to provide the best possible service to all those with whom we work. We do not wish a person's choice of language to impair the effectiveness of the service we provide.

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

- ◆ when CCHA is the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, it will endeavour to ensure that the public service provision is compliant with our Language Scheme
- ◆ when CCHA joins a partnership led by another body, our input to the partnership will comply with our Language scheme and we will encourage the other parties to comply
- ◆ where CCHA is a partner in a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt a language policy. When acting publicly on behalf of the consortium, we will act in accordance with our Language scheme

Delivery of Service

We aim to deliver a high standard of service in both Welsh and English. The delivery of our Welsh Language service links directly to our Communication Scheme, a summary of which is as follows:

Communication Services

We will ensure through clear signposting that our customers are aware of the communication services we provide. All key documents will contain the following statement:

If you would like any of our information translated into Welsh please ask. You can do so by visiting us or writing to us at the address below or by telephoning 029 2046 2142. Please ask for Customer Services. If you would find it easier to talk to us in Welsh we can arrange for a Welsh speaker to be present at an appointment.

Cardiff Community Housing Association
Callaghan House
50 Meteor Street
Adamsdown
Cardiff

CF24 OHE

This statement will be displayed in all CCHA's reception areas.

We aim to welcome and enable contributions in other community languages and other communication methods, namely:

- ◆ sign language
- ◆ alternative formats: audio CD or tape, and Braille
- ◆ large print formats
- ◆ translation services

We will endeavour to establish the chosen language of our customers and ensure that we honour the standards set down by our scheme.

A full copy of the Communication Scheme is available upon request.

We will strive to ensure that we have sufficient members of staff who are competent and confident enough to offer assistance and service to Welsh speakers, appropriate to the needs of our customers and the organisation.

THE WELSH SPEAKING PUBLIC

Written communication

CCHA welcomes correspondence in either Welsh or English. We will advise our customers that communication with CCHA is welcomed in either Welsh or English.

We undertake to deal with correspondence promptly and efficiently. We will respond within the same time scale regardless of the language in which correspondence is written.

Correspondence received requiring a reply will be responded to in the language in which it has been received.

We will endeavour to establish each tenant's preferred language and ensure this is clearly noted on individual files and establish a database of those who wish to deal with the organisation in Welsh. Should CCHA initiate correspondence then this will be in the preferred language of the recipient if known.

All staff will be provided with guidance on language equality in relation to written communication. If it is not possible for our staff to answer correspondence in Welsh to a high standard, we will use professional translators.

Verbal Communication in Public Reception Areas, Face to Face and by Telephone

CCHA welcomes personal enquiries in Welsh or English.

All staff will be provided with guidance on language equality in relation to verbal communication.

When callers wish to speak Welsh, the Switchboard/ Reception staff will direct calls to an appropriate identified Welsh speaker, if this is possible. Where no Welsh speaker is available, callers will be given the opportunity either to continue the call in English or have a Welsh speaker call them back. A written reply in Welsh will then be made.

When home visits or interviews are undertaken and where the stated preferred language of the applicant/tenant is Welsh we will endeavour to provide a Welsh speaking member of staff if this is possible and practical.

THE ORGANISATION'S PUBLIC FACE

Corporate Identity

We undertake to develop a bilingual corporate image of the organisation. CCHA's name and address and any basic information will appear in both languages on all public documents e.g. letterheads, publications, signs, business cards, compliments slips, fax front pages.

When applying to Cardiff County Council for permission to name a new development, the Association will endeavour to suggest appropriate Welsh names with a local connection, where appropriate. Where developments are given a Welsh name, the Welsh spelling will be used on all signage, unless the local authority/post office dictates otherwise.

Printed Literature and Published Reports

CCHA will publish its Annual Report in Welsh and English. We will ensure through clear signposting that our customers are aware of the communication services we provide.

There may be particular documents for which the publication or provision of a Welsh language version is appropriate; where reasonable, this will be provided. If at any future time a significant demand for Welsh language documents is demonstrated then this policy will be reviewed.

As new documents are produced, we will assess the need to provide Welsh language versions of them. Where we do produce Welsh language documents our preference will always be for bilingual documents, rather than separate Welsh and English versions.

Public Meetings

At formal meetings, CCHA will usually conduct the proceedings in English; however, we will assess if translation services are necessary in relation to specific matters e.g. we will attempt to establish the language choice of attendees/participants, and provide translation services if there is sufficient need. We will advise attendees, in advance if possible, if Welsh speaking staff are in attendance.

We welcome meetings with the public in Welsh or English, but due to a shortage of Welsh speakers in some fields, we cannot guarantee a face to face meeting in Welsh on all occasions. If we regularly fail to meet the demand we will consider taking action such as relocating staff, training and recruitment.

www.ccha.org.uk

Our internet site is currently in English. It makes clear the communication services we provide. Our Welsh Language Scheme will be posted on our website.

There may be particular web pages for which the publication or provision of a Welsh language version is appropriate; where reasonable, this will be provided. If at any future time a significant demand for Welsh language documents is demonstrated then this policy will be reviewed.

The 'home page' of our website will contain a welcoming greeting in Welsh. We will consider the requirements of our Scheme when providing or planning new information technology systems, or when providing interactive media.

Signs and Notices

All new or replacement signs erected outside CCHA premises or attached to buildings and signs inside our premises will be bilingual. If separate, the signs in Welsh and English will be of equal size and legibility.

Policies, Forms and Associated Explanatory Information

Forms and explanatory information issued to tenants and applicants will usually be available in English. We will ensure through clear signposting that our customers are aware of the communication services we provide.

There may be particular documents for which the publication or provision of a Welsh language version is appropriate; where reasonable, this will be provided. If at any future time a significant demand for Welsh language documents is demonstrated then this policy will be reviewed.

Press Notices and Press Conferences

Usually, these will be conducted in English. There may be notices or events where bilingual presentation is considered appropriate; where reasonable, this will be provided.

Advertising

All advertising and publicity campaigns need to be considered on an individual basis, being always mindful of the size and nature of the target audience the circumstances surrounding the campaign, timing, prestige, demand and value for money.

Usually, advertising will be conducted in English. Where appropriate, we will ensure through clear signposting that our customers are aware of the communication services we provide.

There may be particular advertisements for which the publication or provision of a Welsh language version is appropriate; where reasonable, this will be provided.

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE SCHEME

Staffing and Recruitment

CCHA is committed to providing quality services to all those with whom it does business in both the Welsh and English language.

Our aim is to ensure that we have sufficient numbers of staff competent in Welsh in those areas where we need these skills. In drawing up job descriptions and person specifications, careful consideration will be given to any potential need for written or spoken capabilities in Welsh.

Where the ability to communicate in Welsh is an essential requirement of the post, then the advertisement will appear bilingually and may be placed in additional Welsh language publications. Supplementary information, such as job descriptions, will be available in Welsh for posts with Welsh language requirements.

Learning Welsh at Work

CCHA undertakes to support staff to learn Welsh wherever it is able to do so. The type of language training offered to staff will be appropriate to each individual's personal and professional needs, and the requirements of the organisation's business, but could include:

- ♦ general introduction to the language for complete learners
- ♦ confidence building sessions for staff with some knowledge of the language
- ♦ Welsh for front line staff
- ♦ advanced courses for more proficient speakers. Improving proficiency in written Welsh

Board Members

CCHA will encourage a mix of Welsh and English speakers on its Board of Management by including language in the annual review of Board Member skills. The Board may decide to prioritise Welsh speakers within the recruitment and co-option of new members.

Administrative Arrangements

The commitments and arrangements set out in this scheme have been approved by CCHA's Board; Directors will carry the full authority of the organisation in their implementation.

CCHA will ensure that everyone in the organisation is familiar with the scheme and that staff know how it should be implemented and what is expected of them.

Introduction to this policy will be part of CCHA's staff induction process.

Monitoring Our Welsh Language Scheme

It will be the responsibility of all Directors to ensure that staff are aware of CCHA's Welsh Language Scheme and of CCHA's responsibilities within it.

The Chief Executive has responsibility on a corporate level for monitoring the Scheme; however, each Director will have responsibility for their specific areas of operation. The scheme will be the subject of an annual report to the Association's Board and tenants; a copy of the report will be sent to the Welsh Language Board.

Written complaints, from tenants, clients and members of the public, resulting from a failure to comply with the scheme, will be included in the monitoring process. Other elements in the monitoring system will include:

- ♦ the proportions of English language and Welsh language correspondence answered within the target deadline
- ♦ the number and distribution of Welsh speakers in the organisation
- ♦ the number of members of staff taking Welsh language courses
- ♦ the extent to which the Association's public face is fully bilingual; e.g. signs, letterheads
- ♦ the number of requests received for Welsh language versions of specific publications, application forms and publicity materials
- ♦ the number of tenancies that have requested communication in Welsh

COMPLAINTS STATEMENT

Complaints about the way in which the Association is delivering its service commitment as identified in this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's standard complaints policy and procedure, which will be available in Welsh.

We will ensure that members of the public who deal with the Association know about this Scheme and we will ensure that it is published in a prominent location on our website.

CARDIFF COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION: MAY 2009