Ofcom's Annual Report for the Welsh Language Commissioner

Our progress complying with the Welsh language Standards 2018-19

Ofcom's Annual Report for the Welsh Language Commissioner – Welsh document

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1. About Ofcom

1.1   Ofcom is the independent communications regulator in the UK. Headquartered in London, we regulate the TV, radio and video on demand sectors, fixed line telecoms, mobiles, postal services, plus the airwaves over which wireless devices operate. Ofcom makes sure that people in the UK get the best from their communications services and are protected from scams and sharp practices, while ensuring that competition can thrive. Our powers and duties are set out in a number of Acts of Parliament.

1.2   Ofcom is funded by fees from industry for regulating broadcasting, communications networks and postal services. Our budget is set by Government and, as a public body, we seek efficiencies wherever possible. In recent years we have delivered like-for-like, real-terms reductions in our spending.

Ofcom in Wales

1.3   While Ofcom's headquarters are in London, we ensure that we have a perspective across the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. We have a statutory duty to have regard to, among other things, the views and interests of those who live in different parts of the UK. Our operations in the Nations are led by senior Directors in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. Our National offices can draw on the full resources of the whole organisation to tackle issues that affect one part of the UK.

1.4   The Ofcom Wales office is based in Cardiff, employing four full-time staff and one part-time. Most of these colleagues are fluent Welsh speakers, while another is learning Welsh – alongside a member of Ofcom's Advisory Committee for Wales.[1] Ofcom provides information to encourage staff to learn Welsh on the staff intranet. Welsh lessons for staff are also funded by the organisation.

1.5   Ofcom Wales has not recruited new staff over the past year.

Ofcom's commitment to the Welsh language

1.6   Ofcom works hard to meet our Welsh language obligations. We are proud of our commitment and the way in which we integrate the Welsh language into our work in a practical manner. We actively encourage people to communicate with Ofcom in the language of their choice, be it in English or Welsh.

1.7   In 2017, we increased our commitment to the Welsh language by implementing the new Standards. These included 141 commitments to our work in Welsh, such as more consumer research and information about our work.

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[1] Ofcom funds these Welsh lessons, which are provided twice weekly for staff by an external tutor who visits the Ofcom Wales office.

1.8   Ofcom's final compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner carries Ofcom's full authority, support and approval.

1.9   The Senior Welsh Language Advisor manages Ofcom's Welsh language activities. This includes translation requirements, social media, print and online production. She ensures the organisation is compliant with Welsh language standards legislation.

Engaging with the Welsh language Commissioner

1.10   Ofcom has engaged constructively with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office for many years, ensuring that we have a thorough understanding of the Commissioner's requirements.

1.11   We have attended briefing sessions arranged by the Commissioner, responded in a timely manner to all queries and arranged meetings with the Welsh Language Commissioner to update on recent developments in our work.

2. Our approach

2.1   Ofcom seeks to treat the Welsh and English languages equally. When providing a service in the Welsh language, we always ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language. This applies to:

- the visual presentation of material;
- when and how the material is published, provided or exhibited;
- the size, position and prominence of the material in any public place and its publication format.

2.2   Our approach is designed to allow citizens and consumers to engage with communications issues through the Welsh language.

2.3   We aim to innovate in our communications, and to encourage greater engagement from Welsh speakers. This includes inviting a range of external Welsh speaking contributors to take part in our public events, producing Welsh language interactive content and engaging Wales related content on social media.

2.4   In deciding when to provide a Welsh language service, we apply a consistent criterion. If the service in question relates to matters that affect – or is likely to be of particular relevance to – consumers, citizens and businesses in Wales, then we will provide a Welsh language service as standard practice.

2.5   When producing our Welsh language communications, we tailor our approach to ensure that content is relevant to our audiences in Wales and communicated in an engaging way. Examples are provided below.

Our progress over the past year

2.6   We remain committed to promoting the Welsh language and enabling people to interact with Ofcom in their preferred language, be it Welsh or English. We have achieved this in a way that is proportionate and consistent with our existing duties.

2.7   In total, Ofcom translated around 750,000 words into Welsh over the past year[2]. We are committed to complying with the Standards pertaining to translation.

2.8   Equally, we need to ensure that our communications are working for our audience. The table below demonstrates that we should consider other ways of sharing information with our audiences, who have shown a keen interest in our Welsh language videos which we've shared on social media.[3]

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[2] From July 2018 to July 2019
[3] Our Digital Dependency videos, filmed in Welsh at the National Eisteddfod, and shared on our new Welsh Twitter account in August 2018 gained over 500 views in a day.

Document name	Total of unique downloads over a month since the publishing date	
	English	**Welsh**
Ofcom Annual Report 2019	943	5
Connected Nations: Wales 2018	48	9
Media Nations: Wales 2019	25	5
Ofcom Annual Report on the BBC 2018	871	11

Note that these figures don't include searches from Google or from direct links

2.10   We launched our Welsh language Twitter account, @OfcomCymraeg, in December 2017, to share Ofcom's work in Welsh. We regularly promote our Welsh account on the Ofcom UK English account and also via yr Awr Gymraeg and at our events. The Ofcom Cymraeg Twitter account has tweeted an average of four tweets each day – over 2,000 in total – but has only 240 followers. Our English language account has 42,800 followers. This also suggests a proportionate approach is required in our social media output.

2.11   Where possible we provide tailor-made information for the Welsh speaker via the @OfcomCymraeg account. Welsh speakers are also fluent English speakers and appreciate bespoke messages in Welsh, rather than reading translations of the English messages that span our UK activities on the @Ofcom account. For example, we have shared Welsh case studies from our Connected Nations Wales report, tweeted live from our Cardiff events and shared videos and photos from our spectrum officers' visits to sites across Wales. These initiatives have been well received by our stakeholders.

2.12   In deciding what to share on social media in Welsh, we consider in the same way as when we decide on document translation, the relevance and likely interest to the consumer in Wales.

2.13   In March we produced a six-minute video on Welsh radio, filmed in Carmarthen with several Welsh language contributors and shared at a stakeholder event in the Cardiff office.

2.14   We launched our new Welsh language website, Boost Your Broadband in December 2018, our high profile campaign to help people get better broadband deals.

2.15   We are continuing to develop Welsh content on our Ofcom website, with a new CMS (Content Management System) upgrade completed in August 2019, to ensure its features are equivalent to the English language site.

2.16   We launched our new Welsh language consumer information campaign, 'It's Never Been Simpler to Switch', in September 2019. Running on radio and online over ten weeks, the campaign aims to raise awareness of switching measures and improve engagement in the mobile and broadband markets.

2.17   Welsh is seen and heard every day at Ofcom Wales. Our stakeholder events are naturally bilingual to ensure that we meet stakeholders' expectations to communicate with us in Welsh. Ofcom's presentations are displayed bilingually using two screens. We provide simultaneous Welsh-to-English translation at each event including this year our Ofcom Annual Plan event in January; our Radio in Wales event in May and our Wireless Innovation event in July.

2.18   A Welsh speaking Ofcom staff member was present in our BBC News focus groups in Bangor and Swansea in May 2019, to facilitate and encourage discussions in the Welsh language.

2.19   We have produced a range of major publications recently in the Welsh language, including [Ofcom's Annual Report 2018-19](); [Connected Nations Wales 2018](); [Media Nations Wales 2019](); the [BBC Annual Report 2018-19](); and our [Review of Regional TV Production and Programming Guidance 2019]().

2.20   Our [major consultations]() include a Welsh language response form, to ensure Welsh speakers can provide feedback and comments in the language of their choice.

2.21   Finally, Ofcom now audits how we take the interests of Welsh language speakers into account when we make regulatory decisions. As outlined in Ofcom's compliance notice, we have adopted a formal process of identifying the outcomes for Welsh speakers in a more structured and measurable manner when making policy decisions. We do this through our [Welsh Language Standards Implementation Plan](). This is modelled on a framework used across Ofcom to evaluate outcomes for consumers.

Complaints

2.22   Ofcom has not received any direct complaints related to our compliance with the service delivery standards during the past year.

2.23   Ofcom's Complaints Procedure explains how we aim to deal with complaints about our service delivery standards. The [Complaints Procedure]() can be viewed on our website and is also available as a hard copy in the Ofcom Wales office. Members of the public can contact us at any time to discuss Welsh language matters or related complaints, and we encourage them to do so on the website.

A1. Our standard procedure for translating documents

A1.1   **Assessing the need for translation.** If a document (for example a consultation, report, executive summary, news release, web page, tweet or stakeholder-update email) relates to matters that affect – or are likely to be of particular relevance to – consumers and citizens in Wales, then we will publish a Welsh language version of the document simultaneously with the English.

A1.2   **Regular discussion about translation requirements.** Decisions to translate are discussed and agreed through a weekly meeting between Ofcom's Nations teams, including our Senior Welsh Language Advisor, and our main communications team based in London.

A1.3   **Working closely with policy teams.** The person leading a project is informed by the communications team, and the Senior Welsh Language Advisor, of the need to publish a Welsh language version of the document. This requirement is then incorporated into our publication schedule, to ensure the Welsh version is not treated 'less favourably' and is published at the same time as the English version.

A1.4   **Working closely with translators.** Ofcom Wales has a very positive working relationship with our translators. They are alerted as far as possible in advance of forthcoming translation requirements, and a timetable for turnaround is agreed to coincide with the publication date. An approximate word count is also provided when possible. Our translators consistently translate Ofcom documents to the highest standard on a timely basis. They also maintain a glossary of complex Ofcom terms, to ensure consistency across translations. They seek to ensure that Welsh translations are as clear and comprehensible as possible, by following "Cymraeg Clir" ("Clear Welsh") principles.

A1.5   **Checking for quality.** Welsh language documents are then proofed and edited by the Senior Welsh Language Advisor, before being forwarded to the communications team for simultaneous publication alongside the English versions.