

TAR25 response on Welsh Language

Background

Ogi is a vertically integrated Network Operator based in South Wales providing Telecommunication and IT services to residential, business and wholesale customers. We are headquartered in Wales and almost all our employees live and work in Wales. Community is at the heart of all we do and as such supporting the Welsh Language is very important to us, whether that is in our written communication, spoken communication or through our contact centre. We were also the first UK ISP to offer Welsh Language support on Customer WiFi routers. (See [Ogi and eero bring Welsh language support to WiFi kit - Ogi](#))

Ofcom Statement on Welsh Language within TAR25

“A21.71 The Welsh language has official status in Wales. To give effect to this, certain public bodies, including Ofcom, are required to comply with Welsh language standards in relation to the use of Welsh, including the general principle that Welsh should not be treated less favourably than English in Wales. Accordingly, we have considered the potential impact of our review on (i) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and (ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. To the extent we have discretion in the formulation of our proposals in this Consultation, we have considered the potential impacts on opportunities to use Welsh and treating Welsh no less favourably than English where relevant. We do not consider that, under our SMP powers, we are able to specify a language requirement in relation to Openreach’s publication requirements as set out in Volume 3, Section 2 and Section 4 and in Volume 5, Sections 3 and 4. However, noting that Openreach operates across the United Kingdom, we invite Openreach to consider the needs of its customers in Wales. To this extent, we consider our proposals are likely to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities to use Welsh and treating Welsh no less favourably than English.”

Ogi Response

Ofcom’s own use of Welsh language, both centrally and via Ofcom Wales is exemplary.

However, we consider the statement “we invite Openreach to consider the needs of its customers in Wales” to lack weight. Whilst it may be true that your SMP powers may not enable you to specify language requirements in relation to Openreach we would invite Ofcom to strengthen this statement.

Given Openreach Significant Market Power (SMP) and BT’s Universal Service Obligation (USO) they could be considered a de facto Public Body and therefore have obligations under the Welsh Language Act (1993), Welsh Language Measure (2011) and Welsh Language Standards Regulations (2022). BT Group policy states they have had a voluntary bilingual policy in place since 1994 ([Welsh Language Policy - BT Group](#)) so it should not be problematic for Openreach if Ofcom were to reference that policy and expect that it continues.