

Mid & West Wales
Fire and Rescue Authority
**Draft Welsh Language
Scheme 2010-2013**



This Draft Welsh Language Scheme
received the approval of the Welsh
Language Board for consultation
15.03.10

BWRDD YR IAITH
GYMRAEG • WELSH
LANGUAGE BOARD



Statement from the Chief Fire Officer & Chairman of the Fire Authority

We are pleased to present Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's revised Welsh Language Scheme.

Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality. This scheme sets out how the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales and is produced in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993.

This scheme sets out how we plan to develop our Services and enable them to discharge our obligations to the Welsh speaking population in accordance with local and national ambitions over the next three years. It outlines the Authority's commitment to treating the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality when providing services to the public whether they are individuals, groups or communities.

The Authority also recognises that individuals have a fundamental right to use the language of their choice and that we have a responsibility to acknowledge and facilitate the individual's right to do so.

Our vision is for the Authority to be a world class organisation. We are already good at what we do but know we can do even better and are fully aware that we have an important role in sustaining and fostering the Welsh language heritage. We are determined to better our bilingual service provision and are confident that over the lifetime of this scheme we will significantly improve our services and increase use of the Welsh language in our day to day business.

We look forward to working with our workforce, communities and partner organisations across the Mid & West Wales area to promote the use of the Welsh language and ensure it can thrive.

**Chief Fire Officer
Richard Smith**

**Chairman of the Fire Authority
Cllr Eurfyl Evans**

<u>Contents</u>	Page
1. Introduction	4
2. Our Strategy & Policy	6
3. Equality & Diversity	8
4. Service Planning and Provision	8
5. Dealing with the Welsh Speaking Public	11
6. Corporate Identity	14
7. Operational Activities	19
8. Linguistic Skills Strategy & Training	21
9. Recruitment	23
10. Administration of the Scheme	23
11. Implementation, Monitoring and Compliance	25

1 Introduction

This Scheme sets out Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's contribution towards achieving the aims set out in Iaith Pawb, the Welsh Assembly Government's National Action Plan for a bilingual Wales (2003) which includes the following objectives:

- Ensure that it is possible for public, private and voluntary bodies to provide more services through the medium of Welsh by 2011
- Increase the percentage of people who can speak Welsh to 25.8% by 2011
- Encourage mainstreaming of Welsh Language issues in the Local Government sector

The implementation of this scheme will link with other national and international legislation, including:

- Welsh Language Act (1993)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- Section 120 of the Government of Wales Act (1998)
- Clause 32 of the Local Government Act (2000)
- The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (2001)

1.2 Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service

The Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service covers some 4,500 square miles and makes-up almost two thirds of the landmass of Wales. A wide variety of risks are found within our operational area ranging from the petro-chemical industries in Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire and Briton Ferry; Neath, to the risks associated with heavily populated conurbations such as Swansea, Port Talbot and Llanelli. There is an extensive farming community and many other light industries throughout the area. These, together with an extensive coastline and inland waterways are some of the specialised risks within the Mid and West Wales region.

Since April 2003, the Service has been organised into six County Commands, which mirror the local authority areas of **Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, City and County of Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Powys**. Service Headquarters is located in Carmarthen with Community Risk Reduction HQ based in Morriston.

The Service is comprised of a mixture of wholetime, day crewed, retained duty system and volunteer stations, which number 57 in all. In addition, there are a number of specialist non-uniformed staff working in support roles such as human resources, finance, health & safety, fleet and estates management, ICT, policy development and general administrative functions.

The current complement of staff, both operational and support is approximately 1,400.

MWWFRS is governed by Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

1.3 Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority

The Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) comprises of 25 elected Members nominated from each of the six local authorities. They collectively form the “Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority” which is the main policy making body. The Fire and Rescue Authority meets on a quarterly basis and its work is supported by three main committees namely, Resources, People & Organisational Development, and Performance Review and Audit which meet regularly to consider matters within their areas of responsibility.

The FRA works through its committees and individual elected members to:

- Make decisions and oversee performance
- Agree the annual budget
- Agree the risk reduction plan
- Monitor and scrutinise performance
- Monitor and scrutinise finances and budgets; including revenue and capital expenditure
- Ensure the Service is delivering value for money
- Ensure the Service reflects the diverse communities it serves

Fire and Rescue Authority Members are committed to the following values:

- Openness and transparency
- Honesty and integrity
- Tolerance and respect
- Equality and fairness
- Appreciation of cultural difference and sustainability

The Service is funded directly by its six constituent Local Authorities on a basis commensurate with population.

The Principal duties of the Fire & Rescue Authority are incorporated in the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004, namely:

- Promoting Fire Safety through the provision of information, publicity and encouragement to prevent fires and deaths; and injuries by fire
- Giving advice, on request, about how to prevent fires and restrict their spread in buildings and other property, and on means of escape in the event of a fire
- Making provision for protecting life and property in the event of fires

- Making provision for rescuing and protecting people from serious harm in the event of road traffic accidents
- Responding to other emergencies or eventualities as required to protect people, property, or the environment

2. Our Strategy and Policy

2.1 MWWFRA's Strategic Plan 2010-2015 - The organisation has developed a Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 outlining the strategic vision for Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority for the next 5 years with a clear focus on improving the safety of our communities and of our employees. To enable us to do this, we have identified our priorities so that we can continually improve our services. If we are to continue to make Mid & West Wales a safer place to live work and visit, it is vital that we respond to the wider opportunities and threats which influence our ability to deliver the service our communities deserve.

2.2 Vision - Our vision is to be a world class organisation by engaging, connecting and inspiring people to deliver an excellent service.

Mission - To build safer communities.

Aims

1. To save lives and protect communities.
2. To be trusted and respected by our communities.
3. To be seen as more than an emergency service.
4. To manage within budget.
5. To make efficiencies year on year.
6. To match our resources to priorities.
7. To seek out and utilise alternative resources.
8. To manage our people effectively.
9. To fully develop risk reduction planning.
10. To develop effective partnership working.
11. To develop our workforce into effective and empowered people.

What's Important to us:

Treating people with:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Trust
- Honesty

We Will achieve this by:

- Valuing and caring for people and cultures
- Providing a service with professionalism and pride
- Encouraging creativity, innovation and challenge
- Taking responsibility and being accountable

2.3 Fire & Rescue National Framework for Wales 2008-2011 - The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's vision and priorities for the three Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales. It describes what the Assembly Government expects of the FRAs during the lifespan of the Framework, and sets the FRAs' role in the context of the wider public sector agenda and 'One Wales'.

The National Framework requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce a Risk Reduction Plan which must focus on community and corporate risk in a holistic way. It is a blueprint for how we manage risk within our communities. The objectives of the risk reduction plan must link to the Assembly's objectives for reducing deaths and injuries resulting from fire and road traffic collisions.

One of the 3 main priorities of the framework is for FRAs :

“to strengthen their equality and diversity agenda to ensure that each FRA is fully representative of, and is fully engaged with, the diverse communities it serves, enabling it to meet its statutory and non statutory functions”

In addition it states that:

“It is important that bilingual skills are integrated into FRAs' workforce planning, in order to ensure that FRAs are able to deliver bilingual services in line with statutory schemes and to reach out to the communities they serve. FRAs should close any gaps that may exist between current and required levels of bilingual skills by providing training for staff who wish to learn Welsh and recruit staff with bilingual skills to specific posts within FRAs.

3. Equality & Diversity

Promoting the Welsh language is a key part of this Authority's equality and diversity agenda. **Our commitment to providing a fully bilingual Service extends beyond our Welsh Language Scheme alone. Bilingual skills will be integrated into our workforce planning and will be embedded into the implementation of the outcomes of our Single Equality Scheme.**

In addition to adhering to National guidance such as the Fire & Rescue National Framework for Wales 2008-2011 we will take cognisance of Local Government frameworks to 'mainstream' equality and diversity and embed the Welsh language into our key policies, for example:

Welsh Local Government Equality Improvement Framework - The purpose of the Equality Improvement Framework is to bring about improvement in employment opportunities, service delivery, and policy outcomes that address equality and diversity. It is a support framework for Local Authorities providing guidance on mainstreaming the nine equality strands, namely race, gender, disability, Welsh language, sexual orientation, religion and belief, age, people with caring duties and transgender.

This document has been assessed against the Authority's Equality Impact Assessment framework.

4. Service Planning & Provision

4.1 Policies

The Authority aims to mainstream the Welsh Language by considering it in all aspects of our work and assessing its impact on our strategies, policies and procedures.

We will build the Welsh Language into our corporate planning processes through including the Welsh Language as an implication on the front cover for all corporate reports. All reports submitted to our Fire and Rescue Authority, Policy Board and Service Delivery/Improvement groups are accompanied by a front sheet that provides readers with a summary of the report, its likely consequences and any endorsements needed. The sheet includes a number of possible implications to be considered when making a decision on the content of the report, one of which is the Welsh Language. This ensures that the possible impact in relation to the Welsh Language is considered when putting forward business proposals.

In addition, the Authority ensures that its Equality Impact Assessment process monitors new, or changes to, existing policies, strategies or plans for their impact

on the Authority's commitment to language equality and provides a route for ensuring steps are taken to conform with the Authority's scheme.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that staff and advisers involved in policy formulation are aware of the scheme and the organisation's responsibilities under the Act and that the measures contained in the scheme are applied to new policies and initiatives when they are implemented.

Directors, Corporate Heads, Heads of Departments and County Commanders have a responsibility to ensure that staff who are involved with policy formulation are made aware of the contents and the aims described in the above paragraphs and to ensure that they are fully taken into account when planning new initiatives and policies.

The principle to treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality should be an early consideration when planning new policies. The requirement to deliver services in both Welsh and English should be mainstreamed throughout the process of planning and in providing new and existing services.

4.2 Service Delivery

In delivering its services to the public the Authority is committed to ensuring that the public may choose their preferred language in their dealings with Service employees.

It will undertake to do this by:

- ensuring a positive bilingual image at public reception points
- proactively advising the public
- making Welsh speaking staff available to assist others whenever necessary or requested
- adopting procedures and systems, outlined in the Scheme, which facilitate service provision in the language chosen by the service user
- employing professional external translators
- encouraging personnel to learn Welsh

Directors will be fully aware of the requirements of the Scheme and will have a duty to ensure that all the requirements are implemented within their departments.

Where services are not immediately available through the medium of Welsh they will be covered by the timetable for action which will be formulated according to priority needs and demand.

The Authority is committed to encouraging and supporting the use of Welsh in its relationship with other public bodies, for example in delivering community fire safety education in schools, and in undertaking consultation meetings with

representatives of community councils and in partnership working. A number of community education employees are available to provide fire safety education through the medium of Welsh at local schools and other community based activities.

4.3 Supervisory Arrangements with Third Parties

The Authority recognises that it has an important role to play in improving the provision of bilingual services through our affiliation with third party suppliers. The following activities will assist the Authority in promoting language equality through its relations with other agencies.

4.3.1 Procurement

The Authority will ensure that third party suppliers who provide services directly to the public fully understand and implement, wherever possible, the commitments of this Scheme when operating on behalf of the Authority. The appropriate aspects of the Scheme will be incorporated into tendering documents, contracts, agreements and conditions.

The Director of Resources is responsible for ensuring that any third party suppliers are aware of their responsibilities under the Authority's Welsh Language Scheme and for monitoring compliance.

The Authority will refer to the Welsh Language Board's guidance on "Procurement" when developing advice and guidance on language equality in procurement for relevant staff and will undertake a rolling programme of sample reviews for third party suppliers to monitor compliance with the scheme.

Where relevant, bilingual service provision will be specified within tenders for contracts. There may be contracts or arrangements of short duration or of a specific nature where it is not practical to require full compliance with the Authority's scheme. In these circumstances relevant aspects of the scheme will be included.

4.3.2 Partnerships

The Authority works in partnership with public bodies, organisations from the voluntary sector and other agencies and works on many levels ranging from strategic focus to front line delivery.

- When the Authority is the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, it will ensure that the public service provision is compliant with its Welsh Language Scheme.
- When the Authority joins a partnership in which another public service body is leading, the Authority input to the partnership will comply with the

- Welsh Language Scheme of that body and the Authority will encourage other parties to comply.
- When the Authority is a partner in a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt a bilingual policy. When acting publicly in the name of the consortium, the Authority will act in accordance with its Welsh Language Scheme.
 - When the Authority joins or forms a partnership, it will ask prospective partners about their Welsh Language Schemes, language policies or the means by which they will operate bilingually. Within any partnership, the Authority will gladly receive and offer advice and support to the other partner organisations.
 - The Authority will prepare guidance for officers who are involved in partnership working, outlining the Authority's responsibilities in accordance with the language scheme and stating how officers should apply the requirements of the Language Scheme to the partnership's work.

5. Dealing with the Welsh Speaking Public

The Authority is committed to delivering an equally high standard of service through the medium of Welsh and English in all geographical localities that it serves, and will notify the public of this intention in documents where statements on equal opportunity action and service delivery are made.

5.1 Correspondence

The public are welcome to deal with the Authority in writing in either Welsh or English.

When standard letters are issued to the public they will be issued bilingually and will include a standard statement stating that correspondence is welcomed in Welsh or English:

'Mae croeso i chi ysgrifennu yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / You are welcome to correspond in English or Welsh.'

Letters and e-mails received by the Authority in Welsh will be acknowledged and responded to in Welsh.

5.2. Telephone Communication

The Authority is committed to welcoming telephone calls through the medium of Welsh and English to all offices and stations and will ensure that:

- The Authority has a single contact number for telephone communication and the telephone operators offer a fully bilingual service.
- receptionist posts at Service HQ and Swansea County Command and Community Risk Reduction HQ will be Welsh essential.
- all receptionists at each of the administrative centres and County Commands will receive regular training on the provisions contained with the Scheme.
- in the County Commands the telephone greeting will be given bilingually and training along with refresher training will be provided to non-Welsh speaking receptionists.
- callers who wish to pursue their calls through the medium of Welsh will be redirected to Welsh speaking personnel if the receptionist is non-Welsh speaking.
- an internal directory of Welsh speaking personnel is available on the Business Information System for use by Service personnel.
- if Welsh speakers are not available then the name and telephone number of the caller will be taken and the caller informed that a Welsh speaking member of staff will return their call within 30 minutes.
- Staff who have a direct telephone line are encouraged to answer bilingually to promote better language choice. The form and content of the bilingual greeting will depend on the employee's degree of competency in the Welsh language.
- Answer phone machines on office extensions and mobile phones will have a bilingual recorded message

5.3 Face to Face

A bilingual reception service will be available for visitors and telephone callers at Service HQ and at Swansea County Command and Community Risk Reduction HQ. The ability to speak Welsh will therefore be an essential skill for those frontline posts.

All other reception staff based in the County Commands will receive regular ongoing Welsh language awareness training. In its reception areas the Authority will maintain an image that positively encourages the use of the Welsh language through the adoption of the "Iaith Gwaith" scheme at all locations.

The Authority will seek to ensure that all public reception areas convey a positive and welcoming bilingual image.

5.4 Website

All material produced by the Authority and available to the public on the website will be made available in Welsh and English during the life of this scheme. Users will be offered a choice of language on the home page, with all subsequent material being available in the user's preferred language.

The Authority will work to ensure that the two languages are treated on an equal basis in relation to its e-government systems and will adopt the Welsh Language Board's "Bilingual Software Standards and Guidelines" in order to develop the appropriate bilingual systems.

5.5 Public meetings

The Authority is committed to ensuring that when public meetings are held, members of the public will be welcomed to contribute through the medium of Welsh and English.

Notices advertising public meetings will be bilingual and will note that members of the public will have the right to contribute through the medium of Welsh or English.

Members of the public will be invited to indicate in advance to the Authority their preferred choice of language which will enable arrangements to be made for a simultaneous translation service. The Authority will strive to enable these arrangements to be made with the minimum of notice but would seek ideally at least ten working days notice.

Organisers of public meetings should consider the provision of translation facilities in conjunction with booking other resources for the meeting, having regard to the subject matter, location of the meeting and likely attendees, as well as prior indications of the languages to be used.

They should also assess the need for Welsh speaking staff to attend and what role they will play in proceedings, and outline the role of the Chair and the translator in facilitating the use of Welsh and use of translation equipment.

When members of the public indicate that they wish to contribute through the medium of Welsh, the presentations will be bilingual and steps will be taken to ensure that the Welsh language will be given equal status at the meeting.

5.7 Dealing with the Public in other ways

The Authority is committed to ensuring that it will give effect to the principle of equality set out in the Act in relation to all its meetings with the public.

The Authority will inform the public of its right to exercise this choice of language prior to any meetings for example, Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs), Crucial Crew events, thereby ensuring that appropriate provision may be made.

When organising a meeting with a member of the public, the choice of language will be established. If Welsh is the chosen language the Authority will ensure that a Welsh speaking officer meets with the public.

If the meeting occurs without adequate time to arrange for a Welsh speaking officer to be present, then the client will be given a choice of:

- Arranging a further meeting with a Welsh Speaking Officer
- Having a Welsh Speaking third party present
- Holding the discussion in English

The above principles will apply equally to meetings in external premises and meetings held in the home of a member of the public.

Employees who are Welsh speaking will be encouraged to make their linguistic ability known to members of the public by participating in the Working Welsh Scheme which will identify them as Welsh speakers.

5.8 Translation Services

With regard to translation services the Authority will secure its translations from external translators who will be expected to be either members of the Association of Welsh Translators, or be working towards membership.

The Authority will ensure that software, reference books and training are available for staff who work bilingually.

The Authority will work with North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Authority, South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority, the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Assembly Government to establish a consistent Fire and Rescue terminology in Welsh.

6. Corporate Identity

6.1 Corporate Image

The Authority will ensure that it has a fully bilingual corporate logo and that its stationery (including letterheads, business cards, identification badges, publications and other goods materials) have bilingual standard information

where the size, quality, legibility and prominence of text will respect the principle of equal treatment. This standard also applies to electronic communication.

Where the Authority engages in any aspect of marketing, advertising, promotion or publicity of its functions, services and activities for the public, its standard practice will be to do so bilingually.

6.2 Publications

Literature such as documents, pamphlets, booklets, circulars, certificates, posters and forms (including explanatory notes and instructions) shall be issued bilingually. Specific publications directed at the public for example, the Risk Reduction Plan, Annual Report, Customer Care information, Complaints procedures, Invitations, Posters, Receipts, Invoices, Job Descriptions, Person Specifications will be published bilingually, with a presumption in favour of single bilingual documents rather than separate Welsh and English versions.

Anything produced by the Authority that is aimed at residents, businesses, visitors to the Service area or for the general public will be deemed to fall under this remit.

Staff, consultants, designers, publishers and translators will be expected to work within the guidelines produced by the Welsh Language Board for bilingual design along with guidelines produced by the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority for dealing with the Authority's corporate identity.

Advice - The following section is intended as advice regarding how to produce bilingual documents in an appropriate format. This guidance is to be read in conjunction with the Authority's "Corporate Style Guide". Documents will fall into 3 categories, namely:

- A. those which should be produced as fully bilingual
- B. those which should have separate English and Welsh versions
- C. those which should be produced in English only

Category A – Fully Bilingual

The standard way of producing fully bilingual documents is to have the language back-to-back in a tilt and turn or flip-over style. Some high profile documents are produced with languages side-by-side. All posters produced, whatever the target audience will be fully bilingual, both languages on the same side.

Any items that go into the press, e.g. advertisements and notices are usually designed side-by-side. Business acknowledgement and calling cards are usually back to back.

All bilingual documents must state the following:

“This publication is available in other languages or formats on request”
“Mae’r cyhoeddiad yma are gael mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais”

Category B – Separate English and Welsh versions

In cases where documents or forms are very bulky (e.g. with an extremely large page count) or complex, separate versions must be issued simultaneously and be of the same quality. Both versions should be given equal prominence in promotion and display and distributed together in the post. It is intended that bilingual forms will be introduced when supplies of existing monolingual forms have been exhausted.

Also, if a charge is made, both versions must cost the same and no additional charge may be made for the production of a publication in Welsh or any other alternative format. A minimum print run in Welsh should be agreed beforehand and it is recommended that this should be no less than 20% of the total. In some circumstances greater numbers should be produced (i.e. if 100 are being produced in English, then an additional minimum of 25 should be produced in Welsh).

All separate documents must state that it is available in alternative language formats and below are the recommended phrases to be included in the publications:

For the English only version:

This publication is available in Welsh and other languages or formats on request

Mae’r cyhoeddiad yma are gael yn Gymraeg ac mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais

For the Welsh only version:

Mae’r cyhoeddiad yma are gael yn Saesneg ac mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais

This publication is available in English and other languages or formats on request

Category C – English Only

This category contains mainly internal documents such as reports, draft documents and internal communication. This does not exclude Welsh from being used internally, or exclude any internal documentation from being translated, but there is no necessity to do this as with Category A or B items. Category C items will be translated however, if a request for it to be made available in Welsh is received from the public.

If the intended recipient's preferred language is unknown the bilingual version will be issued or the Welsh and English versions will be issued simultaneously.

The Authority's Directors will decide in individual cases whether a document should be published bilingually or monolingually, having regard to size and nature of the publication, the size and nature of the target audience, distribution, costs, likely demand, timing and value for money. If it is not practical to produce a full bilingual version, publications will have an appropriate bilingual content wherever possible.

6.2 Forms

The Authority is committed to ensuring that:

- all forms and explanatory material such as Fire Safety Information Sheets will be available and offered to all in Welsh and English as separate documents or bilingually.
- where Welsh and English forms are published separately they will be issued simultaneously and be equally available at all distribution points and distributed together in the post or over the counter. The documents will carry a message noting that they are available in Welsh and English.
- all other various materials printed for the public shall also appear bilingually and will include such items as invitations, posters, cheques, cards, news, timetables, receipts, invoices and maps.
- the Authority will formulate a policy of using everyday Welsh on forms

6.3 Signage

The Fire Authority is committed to ensuring all new and replacement public information signs for which the Authority is responsible for will be bilingual or where separate Welsh and English signs are provided, the size, quality, legibility, and prominence of text will have equal treatment.

The Fire Authority is committed to ensuring that:

The Welsh language will appear above and to the left on all bilingual signs.

6.4 Vehicle Livery

The Authority's vehicle livery is bilingual, with Welsh text appearing above or to the left of the English. When the term 'FIRE' is placed on new vehicles/appliances, this will also appear bilingually, subject to this being consistent with the provisions of appropriate Road Traffic Regulations.

6.5 Press & Media

The Authority recognises that official press releases and notices to the media are very much part of the corporate image of the Fire and Rescue Service and are a principal means of communicating with members of the public.

The Authority is therefore committed to ensuring that press releases and notices to the press and media are bilingual. However, where urgent matters are concerned which may involve public safety, it may be necessary to issue releases in English only in the first instance whilst a Welsh translation is obtained from our translators.

All interviews to the Welsh speaking press and media will be given by Welsh speaking staff.

Over the lifetime of this scheme, the Authority will ensure that when producing publicity (including videos, tapes or materials produced to promote, publicise or explain the Fire and Rescue Service's schemes, policies, procedures, legislation or other services), displays, exhibitions, marketing campaigns and response mechanisms, the display material will be fully bilingual. Where aimed at the Welsh-speaking public, such material will be produced bilingually or in Welsh only.

Advertising or promotional campaigns produced by the Authority, through any public media and aimed at the public in Wales will be bilingual.

6.6 Consultation

All public consultations conducted by the Authority will be conducted bilingually or in English or Welsh, according to the preference of the consultee. This includes consultation with external stakeholders e.g. residents, service users, businesses, voluntary organisations, partner organisations, Town and Community Councils.

Where the preference is not known, questionnaires, consultation documents and associated information will be published bilingually and be equally accessible to consultees.

Stakeholders will also be given the choice of participating in interviews, discussion groups or interactive forums in English or Welsh.

When planning consultation consideration will be given to whether Welsh speakers or English speakers should be consulted as a specific target group.

6.7 Official and Public Notices, Staff Recruitment Advertising

The Authority is committed to:

- ensuring that all official notices, public notices and recruitment advertisements will be published bilingually and be equal in terms of format, size, quality, legibility and prominence. The Welsh will appear above and to the left hand side.
- where proficiency in Welsh is deemed to be an essential requirement for a post, the recruitment advertisement for that post will normally be in Welsh only with a footnote in English explaining the purpose of the advertisement. Such adverts will be equal in format, size, quality, legibility and prominence to equivalent advertisements in English.
- The Authority will consider advertising Welsh essential posts in the Welsh Language media, such as Y Cymro and Golwg.
- If no suitably qualified individuals apply, the post in question may be re-advertised bilingually stating that the successful candidate would be required to learn Welsh within an agreed timescale.
- In posts where Welsh is desirable, the advertisement will appear bilingually in the English language press within Wales.
- Posts advertised in journals and periodicals published outside Wales but which are circulated throughout the United Kingdom will be advertised bilingually.

7. Operational Activities

7.1 Emergency Fire & Rescue Response

In all emergency operational functions where the Service is responsible for delivering its emergency services to the communities within Mid and West Wales the official language will be English.

The nature of a firefighter's work, with the risks inherent to his/her own safety and their responsibilities for the safety of others, entails a more rigorous discipline than is necessary in most occupations. The need for one language to be used to deliver clear, concise and unambiguous instructions is crucial in order to provide an effective operational service to members of the public. The safety of personnel and the public is of paramount importance and the language policy position set out above is deemed by the Authority, whilst striving to give full effect to the principle of equality, to be appropriate in these circumstances.

Historically, therefore, there has been little imperative to consider the linguistic make-up of operational crews. However since the enactment of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 the role of the firefighter has been enhanced to incorporate community fire safety work as a statutory provision. Firefighters are

now required to deliver community safety to the community and it is essential therefore that these services are delivered in the language choice of the recipient.

Consideration of the linguistic make-up of crews is now undertaken by the Human Resources Department when new firefighters are appointed to posts so as to ensure that appropriate provision is made

7.2 Control Room Services

Within the Mid and West Wales Fire And Rescue Service Control Room the Authority will endeavour that 50% of staff on each watch will be bilingual.

Familiarisation training on place-names throughout the Service is incorporated within a comprehensive training programme for Control personnel.

7.3 Legislative Fire Safety

Legislative Fire Safety advice is provided by a core of specialist fire safety officers based at the County Commands who provide a comprehensive fire safety advice service, particularly in relation to the Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order 2005.

Legislative Fire Safety Officers will implement the principle of equality by ensuring that:

- Fire Safety Information Sheets will be available and offered to all in Welsh and English as separate documents or bilingually.
- The Fire Safety advice service will be available in Welsh and English.
- Site visits for the purposes of inspection will be available in Welsh or English.

7.4 Community Risk Reduction

Similarly, community safety advice is provided by a core of specialist community safety officers and operational personnel based within the County Commands and Community Risk Reduction HQ who provide a comprehensive community safety service. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote community safety. Community safety officers will implement the principle of equality by ensuring that, for example, all fire safety publicity information and education materials will be produced bilingually or through the medium of Welsh and English.

All services offered to the public, such as Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs), Crucial Crew, FACE scheme, and Young Firefighters will be offered to recipients in their preferred language choice.

8. Linguistic Skills Strategy and Training

8.1 Staffing

In order to provide quality and efficient services to the Welsh speaking public, the Authority will endeavour to ensure a sufficient supply of Welsh speaking staff.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that:

- workplaces which have contact with the public seek access to sufficient and appropriately skilled Welsh speakers to enable those workplaces to deliver a full service through the medium of Welsh. This is to include the linguistic nature of a particular local area.
- members of the public needing to gain access to senior management personnel will be able to conduct business through the medium of Welsh or English.
- workplaces consist of 57 stations, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Swansea County Command and Community Risk Reduction HQ, Ceredigion HQ, Pembrokeshire County Command HQ, Powys County Command HQ, Neath Port Talbot County Command HQ, Carmarthenshire County Command HQ.
- ongoing long term consideration will be given as to how the Fire and Rescue Service will ensure that a full service through the medium of Welsh is to be made available, irrespective of linguistic differences in the various workplaces.
- the Fire and Rescue Service will examine its staffing structures and identify posts where Welsh Language skills are either essential or desirable and will formulate job descriptions and service plans accordingly.
- appropriate team descriptions, job descriptions and person specifications will be drawn up which will reflect the requirements at each workplace as outlined in the "Linguistic Skills Strategy 2010-2013".
- assessing the language needs of posts to ensure that Departments and Commands are able to deliver services in line with this scheme will be the responsibility of the Corporate Directors and Heads of Service together with the Head of Human Resources.
- the language skills audit will be reviewed to establish the number and departmental/station location of Welsh speakers and those learning to

speaking Welsh within the Fire and Rescue Service along with proficiency and confidence levels of staff in speaking and writing in Welsh.

- it will encourage and actively support staff to learn to speak Welsh and will establish those members of staff who are learning Welsh into those posts which are deemed to be Welsh essential, wherever this is practicable.
- all personnel responsible for recruitment will adhere to the requirements of the “Linguistic Skills Strategy 2010-2013”
- action will be taken to remedy any reduction in the number of bilingual staff where this is necessary to ensure continued compliance with the Authority’s language policy.

8.2 Training

The Authority recognises that there are community -wide needs, particularly as the public contact may be by telephone, correspondence or in meetings, and that the demand for services in Welsh is likely to increase as the FRS extends the services available and encourages more of the public to interface with the FRS in Welsh.

The provision of language awareness and language skills training will be prioritised to reflect the level of public contact involved and/or the significance of language choice of service users.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that:

- existing members of staff who wish to learn Welsh will be encouraged and supported to do so with resource priority given to staff who come into frequent contact with the public.
- All applications from staff for individual training and development in order to learn Welsh will be considered sympathetically, within the requirements of the post. This will very much apply to individuals wishing to learn Welsh and applications will be sympathetically considered for release during working hours, subject, as with all other post entry training, to the exigencies of the Service.
- Learning/training programmes that focus on the workplace and individual posts will be arranged for those where it is a requirement that they speak Welsh.
- Welsh speaking staff will be encouraged to speak Welsh with those members of staff who are Welsh speaking and those who are learning Welsh

- All members of staff learning Welsh will have access to the Fire and Rescue Service's Welsh speaking directory which will be updated by the Corporate Communications and Member Support Department.
- Cysill, the Welsh spell check and CysGair will be provided for members of staff who produce Welsh language documents on word processors.
- Consideration will be given to training Welsh speaking staff as mentors for those who are learning Welsh.

9. Recruitment

The Authority is committed to ensuring that:

Where linguistic ability is considered to be essential or is desirable for any post, this will be specified in the advertisement for the post.

“essential in this context will mean that the ability to speak Welsh is absolutely necessary.

“desirable” – in this context will mean that it would be desirable to appoint a Welsh speaker but not absolutely necessary. In a situation where two candidates are applying for a post for which the ability to speak Welsh would be “desirable”, and have equal qualifications, experience and interview performances, the level of bilingual skills will be considered an additional skill.

All applications from Welsh speakers are welcomed by advertising all job advertisements bilingually in English publications printed in Wales.

When a non-Welsh speaker is appointed to a post where the ability to speak Welsh is considered to be essential, it will be a condition of his/her employment to learn Welsh to the required standard within an agreed timescale, which will be structured and monitored appropriately. In such cases the full support of the Fire and Rescue Service will be given.

10. Administration of the Scheme

The Authority has approved this Scheme and is committed to ensuring that its implementation is successful by taking the following steps:

- The Chief Fire Officer will have overall accountability for the Welsh Language Scheme. Implementation will be co-ordinated by the Director of Risk, the Head of Corporate Communication & Member Support and the

- Welsh Language Officer. Directors, Corporate Heads, Heads of County Command and Heads of Departments will be responsible for complying with the Scheme's requirements and will designate representatives within their departments and commands to monitor and report on the implementation of the scheme.
- All members of staff will be issued with either a copy of the Welsh Language Scheme **or** a summary of the Welsh Language Scheme highlighting its requirements when the Scheme has been approved. The Scheme will also be published on the Fire and Rescue Service's Business Information System and its Website.
 - Prepare an Annual Report to the Authority and Welsh Language Board on compliance against this Scheme.

10.1 Complaints

The Authority is committed to ensuring that any complaints received from the public in relation to this Scheme are dealt with in accordance with the Fire & Rescue Service's Customer Complaints policy.

- All complaints will be acknowledged within 2 days, and a full reply provided within 14 days
- If a member of the public is dissatisfied with the response they may ask for a review of the decision. A request for review should be made within 4 weeks of receiving the response to the complaint.

Written complaints, suggestions or requests for a complaint form or copy of the Complaints procedure should be directed to:

Head of Corporate Communication & Member Support
Corporate Communication & Member Support Department
Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Lime Grove Avenue
Carmarthen
SA31 1SP

Dealing with complaints promptly and specifically is part of the Service's commitment to good customer care.

10.2 Investigation Under Section 17 of the Welsh Language Act 1993

If the Welsh Language Board is required to carry out an Investigation Under Section 17 of the Act, the Authority will be prepared to fully co-operate by providing information, reports, documents or other clarification.

The Authority will be prepared to do this in both written and verbal forms and the Board will be able to have discussions with:

- Elected Members
- FRS employees
- Contracted Service Providers and their Employees
- Any individual that assists the Authority in the delivery of its services

11. Implementation, Monitoring and Compliance

11.1 Monitoring

The monitoring of the Scheme will be overseen by the Welsh Language Officer who will ensure that it is a structured and continuing activity extending to those who provide or administer services on behalf of the Authority. The Scheme will be monitored against the targets set out in the Welsh Language Action Plan Appendix 2.

The Annual Welsh Language Monitoring report to the Welsh Language Board will seek to achieve the following aims:

- To assess whether the Authority is making progress in line with the Scheme and the Welsh Language Action Plan timetable
- To measure the availability of frontline services in Welsh , including data on:
 - The number and % of main reception and Command reception posts that have been denoted as Welsh essential and the number of those filled by bilingual speakers (WLI2)
 - The number and % of staff (Welsh speakers and learners) who have received training in Welsh to a specific competency level (WLI4)
 - The number and % of staff who have received language awareness training (WLI4)
- To provide an update on activities to mainstream the Welsh language, mainstreaming activities, including steps taken to promote access to the FRS's services through the medium of Welsh either corporately or at command level

The Authority will summarise its findings in the form of a brief narrative report accompanied by supporting documentary evidence.

11.2 Welsh Language Board Approved Inspections and Surveys

The Authority will comply with any inspections or requests for surveys commissioned by the Welsh Language Board and implement recommendations where relevant

11.3 Publicising the Scheme

The Authority is committed to informing the public about the services available to them through the medium of Welsh and where and when they can be accessed.

The following methods will be used to inform the public of the Scheme and to promote its Welsh language services:

- Placing notices in FRS offices, fire stations, intranet and website advertising the scheme;
- Providing information leaflets for public distribution outlining the Authority's commitments to the Welsh language and services available;
- Issuing press releases as and when necessary;
- Including Welsh Language specific information in Authority publications;
- Ensuring that staff are familiar with the measures included in the Scheme by providing a summary to each member of staff along with guidelines on implementation and by placing a copy of the scheme at each station and within every department, in addition to its publication on the computerised Business Information System;
- Ensuring that agents and contractors, interested organisations and individuals have access to copies of the approved Scheme;
- Displaying signs at all Headquarters reception points that members of the public are welcome to deal with the Fire and Rescue Service through the medium of Welsh or English.
- Undertaking joint marketing and promotional campaigns with the Welsh Language Board and other external agencies to promote bilingual services.

11.4 Implementation

The implementation of the Scheme will be measured against target dates. Full implementation of the Scheme will be in line with the resources available and service delivery priorities.

A three year timetable will be set for implementation covering 2010-2013. This will be reviewed annually to allow the Authority to assess and review the budget and resources needed to implement and sustain the scheme. A comprehensive review of the Scheme will be undertaken when it has been in full operation for three years.

The Welsh Language Action Plan – appendix 1 outlines key milestones and objectives to be delivered to support the requirements of our Welsh Language Scheme.

Welsh Language Action Plan 2010-2013

Advice & Guidance		
Senior Sponsor: Head of Corporate Communication & Member Support		
Activity	Person responsible	Target Date
Develop advice and guidance for staff on the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme and for dealing with the public through the medium of Welsh	Welsh Language Officer	Dec 2010
Develop advice and guidance for managers on the implementation of the Welsh Language scheme and linguistic skills strategy	Welsh Language Officer	Dec 2010
Develop advice and guidance for third parties on the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme	Welsh Language Officer Support: Head of Procurement	April 2011
Develop advice and guidance for new recruits to the Service relating to the Welsh Language scheme	Welsh Language Officer	Dec 2010
Set up an internal "Grwp Iaith" consisting of key members of staff that are representative of the Service as a whole. The aim of the group is to meet, discuss and champion Welsh Language issues	Welsh Language Officer	Dec 2010
Ensure the database of Welsh speaking staff is updated regularly and publicised on the intranet	Welsh Language Officer	Ongoing

Customer Service – Frontline Services		
Senior Sponsor: Director of Service Delivery		
Activity	Person responsible	Target Date
Ensure a positive bilingual image at reception points including HQ and the Commands	Welsh Language Officer	Dec 2010
Monitor and record the number of requests for Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) in Welsh via the CFRMIS database	Head of Community Fire Safety	Sep 2010
Monitor and record the number of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) undertaken in Welsh via the CFRMIS database		Sep 2010
Monitor that marketing literature issued by the Community Fire Safety department is issued bilingually	Head of Community Fire Safety	Ongoing
Introduce a mystery customer exercise to measure customer service standards and compliance with Welsh language service provision	Welsh Language Officer	April 2011
Circulate a reminder to all staff reminding them of the list of staff that can speak Welsh	Welsh Language Officer	Ongoing
Make sure that all staff use a bilingual e-signature in line with this scheme and hold informal monitoring to test compliance	Welsh Language Officer	September 2010
Number and % of emergency calls that were successfully dealt with in Welsh	Welsh Language Officer and Head of Control	April 2011
The number of complaints from sources not including staff or their representatives about the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme and the % of complaints that were dealt with, in accordance with the standards set by the Authority	Welsh Language Officer	April 2011
Monitor % of telephone calls received in Welsh	Office Manager	April 2011
Ensure that 90% of calls received are dealt with in the language choice of the caller	Office Manager	April 2011
Ensure that 90% of answer phone messages are bilingual	Welsh Language Officer	June 2012
Update the database of stakeholder language preference as required and disseminate to all staff.	Welsh Language Officer	Ongoing

Recruitment and Linguistic skills		
Senior Sponsor: Head of Human Resources		
Activity	Person responsible	Target Date
% of recruitment adverts Welsh only, Bilingual, English only.	Head of Human Resources	April 2011
% of Welsh interviews offered and undertaken	Head of Human Resources	April 2011
Number and % of staff that have bilingual skills	Head of Human Resources Support: Welsh Language Officer	Jun 2010
Ensure that 10% of staff (Welsh speakers and learners) enrol on training programme to learn or improve Welsh Language Skills	Welsh Language Officer	April 2013
Ensure that 70% of staff receive Welsh Language Awareness training	Welsh Language Officer	April 2013
Assess the current linguistic profile of our staff via bi-annual Welsh Language skills audit	Head of Human Resources	Jun 2010
The Assessment Development Centre (ADC) is a process designed to help assess the potential of a person to perform in a future role and is used within the Service as a basis for promotion. In recognition of the fact that most people feel more comfortable speaking their mother tongue the Service will ensure that all candidates have the option of undertaking ADCs through the medium of Welsh.	Head of Development / ADC Centre Manager	Dec 2010
Review workforce structure and undertake a gap analysis to establish Welsh essential and Welsh desirable posts	Head of Human Resources / Heads of Command / Department	April 2011
Update database of stakeholder language preference. Disseminate to all staff and ensure it is kept updated	Welsh Language Officer	Ongoing
% and number of main reception roles that are designated	Head of Human	April 2011

Welsh essential and were filled by bilingual staff	Resources	
% and number of staff within the service that can speak Welsh – by department, job grade and workplace location	Head of Human Resources	April 2011
% and number of jobs where Welsh desirable posts are filled by staff with bilingual skills	Head of Human Resources	April 2011

Training		
Senior Sponsor: Head of Human Resources		
Activity	Person responsible	Target Date
Ensure all new recruits who join the Service receive Welsh Language Awareness training	Welsh Language Officer	April 2013
Introduce skills specific Welsh classes for staff to include Mynediad, Canolradd & Hyfedredd	Welsh Language Officer	April 2011
Extend Welsh Language classes to other geographical sites in line with learning requirements	Welsh Language Officer	April 2011
Monitor and report on the progress of all staff receiving WL training	Welsh Language Officer	Ongoing
Undertake Welsh Press & Media training for relevant Officers	Media & Communications Manager	April 2011
Obtain individual progress reports for all Welsh learners	Welsh Language Officer	Ongoing
Establish a Welsh Learner of the Year Award	Welsh Language Officer	April 2010

Commissioning & Procurement		
Senior Sponsor: Head of Finance		
Activity	Person responsible	Target Date
Review of status of the Welsh Language in commissioning and procurement processes	Head of Procurement Support: Welsh Language Officer	April 2011
Advice and guidance on language equality in commissioning and procurement	Head of Procurement Support: Welsh Language Officer	April 2011
Incorporation of the Welsh language into tendering documents, contracts, agreements and conditions	Head of Procurement Support: Welsh Language Officer	In line with Value Wales Procurement timescales
A rolling programme of sample reviews for third party contractors to monitor compliance with the scheme	Head of Procurement / respective Heads of Department Support: Welsh Language Officer	April 2011

Performance Monitoring		
Senior Sponsor: Head of Corporate Communication & Member Support		
Activity	Person responsible	Target Date
Monitor provision of training services quarterly	Welsh Language Officer	Ongoing
Monitor provision of translation services quarterly, including simultaneous translation	Welsh Language Officer	Ongoing
Submit annual performance report to the Welsh Language Board	Welsh Language Officer	July 2010
Quarterly monitoring reports to be provided to the Service Improvement Forum	Head of CCMS	Ongoing

	Support: Welsh Language Officer	
Annual reports to be submitted to People and Organisational Development Committee	Head of CCMS Support: Welsh Language Officer	July 2010