

A guide for DWP contractors when delivering services to DWP customers in Wales

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Department
for Work &
Pensions

Overview

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. In compliance with this requirement, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has implemented the [DWP Welsh language scheme](#).

The scheme describes DWP controls and recommended practices to meet the principles 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. “Public business” within the Department for Work and Pensions includes all services provided to individual members of the public in Wales by, or on behalf of, the Department.

All services performed by contractors on behalf of the Department must comply with DWP Welsh Language Scheme and contractual requirements. The lead contractor is responsible for ensuring that all services delivered in Wales by sub-contractors meet the requirements of the DWP Welsh Language Scheme.

Dealing with the Welsh speaking public – good practice

Contractors must consider the following areas of good practice when delivering DWP services to members of the public in Wales.

Language choice

All customers should be offered the choice to conduct their business in either Welsh or English. Where DWP has notified the contractor or the customer has identified that Welsh is their preferred language this should be recorded; enabling any future dealings to be conducted in Welsh.

Phone service

Contractors should ensure that DWP customers are able to speak in Welsh or English when calling contractors. When the customer calls they should be given the option, via an automated message, of talking to either an English or a Welsh speaking member of staff. If no Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry is available, customers should be given a choice of having a Welsh speaker phone back as soon as possible, continuing the call in English or submitting their query in Welsh, by letter or e-mail.

Documentation

If the customer’s preferred language is Welsh, any documents which include a signed statement from the customer must have that part of the document completed in Welsh.

Any documents which do not include a customer’s statement can be completed in English.

Correspondence

If a customer writes to contractors in English, contractors can assume that their preferred language is English and vice versa if in Welsh. Target times for replying in Welsh should be the same as for replying to letters in English.

Service delivery premises

Where the contractor delivers the services face to face, customers wishing to be dealt with through the medium of Welsh should be able to do so. If it is not possible for a Welsh speaking staff member to deal with the customer, arrangements should be made for an appointment within two working days or at the customer's earliest convenience if later.

Although it is not necessary for all members of staff in Wales to be bilingual, it is however imperative that all staff are aware of the procedures that apply to Welsh speaking customers.

Signs

When delivering from sites in Wales, signs should be fully bilingual in English and Welsh.

Complaints

Contractors should have a process to record any complaints relating to the use of the Welsh language. Contractors will be required to submit returns to DWP as detailed within their contract.

Recruitment adverts for contactor staff delivering DWP services

Contractors should ensure that when placing adverts for the recruitment of staff they should be in Welsh in Welsh-only media, bilingual in other Welsh based media. However, there is no requirement for bilingual adverts in national publications ('national' here in this context means England, Scotland and Wales).

Mystery shopping

Compliance monitoring may be undertaken by mystery shopping on behalf of DWP. This will inform DWP to what degree the DWP Welsh Language Scheme requirements are being met.