

Welsh Language Policy

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Wakemans Limited Welsh Language Policy

Introduction

This Policy has been prepared so that Wakemans Limited on a voluntary basis follows good practice under the Welsh Language Act 1993. It was adopted by the Management Board on January 2010.

From now on, when we bring forward new organisational policies, practices or initiatives, we will make sure they facilitate and further what we promise to do in this Policy. Similarly, we will apply this Policy to all our business s activities.

Wakemans Background

Wakemans are construction consultants, offering a wide range of multidisciplinary and consultancy services. Our headquarters is located in Birmingham and we have regional offices in Caernarfon and Bristol.

Our traditional skills focus on Quantity Surveying, Project Management and Building Surveying.

We also have specialist focus which includes taxation, VAT and grants, insurance and insolvency, dispute resolution and litigation, Fund Management, Employers Agent and Tenants Agent, Principal Designer, CDM Advisor and sustainability services including BREEAM / EPC.

Utilising the benefits of our major projects experience, the Directors of the company offer prospective Clients a more flexible, commercial and tailored approach for all their building and engineering services requirements.

The style of Wakemans has evolved over many years in response to the ever changing needs of its Clients and now provides a modern practice with services specifically tailored to each project, which means you do not pay for services you do not need.

Professional services are offered utilising core skills, quantity surveying, project management, building surveying and health/safety and encompass all the activities expected from a modern growing practice.

The UK property market is fully covered by Wakemans and draws on our widespread office network to service specific Client's needs. Wakemans have invested heavily in high technology IT systems and equipment and considers itself to be at the forefront of technology currently available to the modern office/construction industry.

Welsh Language Policy Principles

Wakemans have adopted the Welsh Language Act principle that the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality. This Policy sets out the steps we are taking to implement that principle in our work undertaken from our Caernarfon based office.

In dealing with our Clients and other customers, we endeavour to:

- adopt the same aims and professional standards in providing a service in Welsh and in English,
- enable our customers to use Welsh as freely as English in dealing with us, and ensure that Clients are informed up-front that they have a choice of language when seeking information and advice,
- make our Clients aware of the need to consider the use of Welsh in the businesses they are setting up or developing .

The words convey that we are taking this commitment seriously, and adopting a pro-active approach to language choice in our services, wherever possible. In contact with customers, this means being upfront in offering language choice, and trying our best to deliver it.

This will involve us in consolidating the use of Welsh in our day-to-day work.

Visitors to our Caernarfon Premises

Clients visiting our Caernarfon premises are welcome to address their enquiries through the medium of Welsh or English.

Our staff make it clear to visitors that they can deal with the organisation in either language. We will ask everyone we come into contact with during our daily business activities whether they would like to deal with someone in Welsh.

All of our staff based at our Caernarfon office are bilingual.

Wherever possible we can arrange for printed material to displayed throughout the office to be bilingual.

If others want us to display their material, we will ask them to provide it bilingually.

Telephone Contact

We welcome telephone calls from customers in Welsh or English.

Switchboard calls will be answered with a bilingual greeting and dealt with in the caller's preferred language, either by the office administrator or another member of staff.

In the event that a Welsh-speaking person is not available to take a call, then arrangements will be made for a Welsh speaker to return the call as soon as possible.

We will encourage the rest of our staff to answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting and use bilingual messages on their personal voicemail.

Client Contact and Management

We will always try to provide personal contact in the language preferred by Clients. This will be via a member of staff or a contracted business advisor.

We will establish up-front whether Clients would like to talk in either Welsh or English

Their choice will then be logged on the Clients' details, and taken forward in the arrangements made for initial and subsequent contact.

Information sent to a client in advance of the first meeting will be in both languages, and subsequently provided according to the client's preference.

Should others need to become involved [e.g. a marketing specialist], we will try to provide language continuum, but that may not always be possible. The client's preferred language will be relayed during referral as a matter of course.

We will consider providing translation facilities in a group discussion.

We will try and reflect language preference in any training sessions or other support events we arrange where Clients are brought together.

During our dealings with our Clients, we will make them aware of the need to consider the use of Welsh in their businesses dealings.

Letters, E-Mails and Documents

We welcome letters and other written correspondence such as faxes and e-mail in Welsh and in English.

Correspondence will be replied to in the language used by the customer, in accordance with response targets. All hard-copy letters that we issue will be signed, whichever language is used in the letter.

All correspondence originated by our members of staff, whether in English or in Welsh, will include a bilingual footnote indicating that the recipients may respond in either Welsh or English, according to their preference.

Any subsequent replies to responses received will be in the language of those responses. The response times for letters and e-mails that need to be translated might on occasions be greater than those sent in one language only.

Standard letters and grouped letters will usually be sent out bilingually.

If the chosen language of the recipient is known (e.g. through marketing material, previous meetings or conversations, telephone calls and e-mails) correspondence will be sent out in the recipient's language of choice unless it has been agreed otherwise.

Clients may put applications or submissions in to us in the language they prefer, and we will deal with them in the same timescale.

The customer data base will include an active language preference column. The information will be inputted and updated on an ongoing basis from contact-points intelligence.

The approach above applies to all types of written correspondence. Translation arrangements are in place to assist staff.

Meetings

Those attending meetings held by us will be welcome to contribute through the medium of Welsh or English, and this will be made known in the agenda and at the start of proceedings.

Correspondence issuing an invitation for these meetings will be bilingual. Welsh speaking members of staff will be present on such occasions to welcome attendees and deal with any queries.

Our normal practice will be to provide papers and other information in Welsh and English.

Where we can, we will use Welsh ourselves, and will encourage others to do the same when arrangements are made and via the person chairing the meeting.

Our Corporate Identity

Our corporate identity will be partly bilingual. Our name will be in English only, but our standard information will be bilingual on material that displays our corporate identity. This includes our stationery and material such as business cards, identity badges, publications, advertisements.

Signs

[Either] Our permanent and temporary signs inside and outside our premises will be bilingual. This is existing practice.

[Or] Our permanent and temporary signs inside and outside our premises will be bilingual. This is not the case now, but will be so by [date].

[Or] The permanent and temporary signs we erect or fix on our premises will be bilingual. Other signs, in common areas and outside our premises, belong to the property owner and are beyond our control.

On our bilingual signs, the Welsh and English text will be treated equally with regard to size, legibility and prominence.

If separate Welsh and English signs are provided, they will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence.

The above will apply to all types of signs, including electronic signs.

Our Website

Following its re-design, the web page relating to our Caernarfon office will state that customers are welcome to use Welsh or English in dealing with us.

Publications and Visual Material

Our normal practice will be to publish bilingually the material we make available to the public and Clients, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. This will include tenant newsletters, guidance, forms, reports, and questionnaires. This is current practice and will continue.

If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately (for instance, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), both versions will be of equal size and quality - and our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will note clearly that the material is available in the other language.

The above will also apply to material made available electronically, including static and interactive forms, and material on CD Rom or other form.

When we distribute forms on behalf of other organisations, for instance the Welsh Assembly Government or local authorities, we will ensure that we do so in accordance with their bilingual policy.

Marketing and Publicity Activities

When we organise or attend an event, and display our material, we will display any Welsh versions of our material too. Any display boards or exhibition text will be bilingual.

When we place advertisements in newspapers or magazines or other publications, they will be bilingual [they will carry our bilingual brand and corporate information].

When we undertake public surveys, we will ensure that all aspects of communication with the public will be bilingual [that our questionnaire and explanatory material is bilingual], and that those completing the questionnaire are informed they may complete it in either language.

Public Notices and Advertising

When we place an official notice in the press, and on our premises, such as notice of a public meeting, it will be bilingual.

Our staff recruitment adverts will normally be in English, but will carry our bilingual brand, and our bilingual service footer message.

Managing and Supporting Our Policy

This is a company policy, approved by the Management Board. We will coordinate and review its implementation as part of our ongoing business administration.

Our Associate Director Dylan Morris is tasked with leading and overseeing progress.

We will provide our staff with encouragement, guidance and training on its implementation, so that they know what to do, and are confident in doing it.

Translation arrangements are in place to assist with the delivery.

We will monitor and quality-assure our service through the medium of Welsh as part of our customer care arrangements, applying the same evaluation criteria as we would to other aspects of our service. This includes dealing with customer concerns.

Wakemans does not normally directly employ sub-contractors however should it do so, any sub-contractors working on our behalf will need to apply our Policy. They will be briefed on what we expect, and their delivery monitored.

Any member of staff wishing to learn or improve their Welsh skills for use in the business will be supported.

Staff in based at our Caernarfon office for which Welsh skills would be useful in delivering or furthering this Policy will be encouraged to acquire Welsh language skills as part of their progression.

Where posts for which Welsh language skills would be useful in delivering or furthering this Policy become vacant or are created, we will try and fill them with appropriately skilled bilingual staff.

We benchmarked what we could deliver when we adopted this Policy, and will annually review our compliance and progress with implementation, and assess whether we can develop our Welsh language activity further. Where more can be done, we will review the Policy wording and move forward.

If you wish to contact us regarding our Policy content or implementation, could you please contact the person below in the first instance:

Dylan Morris, Divisional Director

Wakemans Limited

12/14/16 Bridge Street,
Caernarfon
GWYNEDD
LL55 1AB

Tel: 01286 672581

E-mail: d.morris@wakemans.com

Note: This Welsh Language Policy forms part the support pack of the Welsh language strand of the Potentia programme, please see the guidance information given below:-

Welsh Language Policy Template

Business Support Sector

This policy has been devised for use by organisations wishing to formalise their approach to the use of Welsh in their work, and to reflect the good practice being increasingly adopted in services to the public in Wales.

In particular, the policy is offered to assist organisations meet Welsh Assembly Government partnership and contract expectations, and obtain Welsh Language Board endorsement.

The policy offered a menu of statements from which to select the wording that best suits the situation of individual organisations in different parts of Wales. It does not try to offer every possible variant; users will need to adapt some of the wording according to their actual position.

While there is no obligation to take each aspect on board, a minimalist approach is unlikely to be endorsed. You are advised to consider every aspect, and use the timetable to gradually introduce the provision if doing so is not possible at present.

'Bilingual Service Customer Care Guidance' is also available to provide further guidance for managers and staff and business counsellors on implementing the Policy successfully.