Welsh Language Commissioner
Bilingual Design Guide

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Welsh Language Commissioner

September 2014

Background

The principal aim of the Welsh Language Commissioner, an independent body created by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 is to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh. This entails raising awareness of the official status of the Welsh language in Wales and imposing standards on organizations. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers.

Two principles underpin the work:

- In Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language.
- Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose to do so.

Contacting the Welsh Language Commissioner

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Foreword

Ensuring quality is an important part of the Commissioner's work. The aim is to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language so that Welsh speakers gain access to the highest possible quality of service. It is important to define what is meant by quality, be that through regulatory duties or through promoting and facilitating the Welsh language.

The intention of this guideline is to identify the best possible practice when it comes to bilingual design.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 will of course contribute towards ensuring consistency with regards to the quality of Welsh language services in Wales. The aim here is to explain the process of bilingual design in order to produce first rate bilingual material. This guideline is aimed at any organization, even if they aren't under any statutory obligation to operate in Welsh and English.

I am confident that this good practice guideline will provide a useful benchmark for organizations as they design and deliver marketing and publicity campaigns to the public in Wales. I also hope that it will provide a clear sign of my intention to help others to deliver the best possible bilingual services to the public.

Meri Huws
Welsh Language Commissioner

Important note

A number of organizations in Wales will be under a statutory obligation to prepare marketing materials, publications and signage in accordance with the standards that are to be established under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. This guideline is not a statutory code of practice under the Measure on preparing bilingual material.

Background

The aim of the guideline is to establish the best practice in every facet of design through offering practical advice for organizations and designers. Part 1 of the guideline explains the core principles of bilingual design to be considered by project managers and designers. Part 2 gives further advice and examples of good practice.

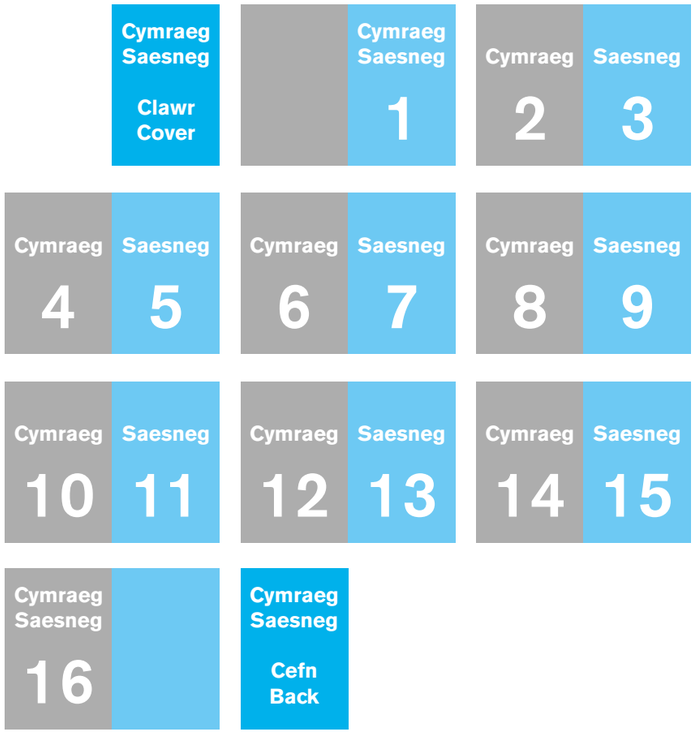
Part 1
Planning

Good planning is essential for good bilingual design. Both the client and designer need to be aware from the outset that the finished product will include both languages. It is particularly important that this fact is clearly set out in the brief so that the designer can allow for two languages in any visuals or mock-ups. The appropriate font, layout, format and so on can then be selected. Ideally, the designer should start with text in both languages; sufficient time needs to be allowed beforehand for translation and proofreading.

Good practice in planning:

- The Welsh language should be considered as part of any new initiative that involves design e.g. rebranding, building a website or changing signage.
- The Welsh language should be included from the outset in any design briefs or specifications.

Format
A4 Size
4pp cover
16pp text



Translation and creating bilingual texts

Translation is a specialist skill, and a qualified and professional translator should be used each time.

Misspellings and mistranslations can prove costly, particularly in the case of signs. Such errors also reflect badly on the organization in question, and can attract negative attention in the press, media and social media. This can be avoided by engaging a professional translator and ensuring that all public facing material such as signs are professionally proofread before they are published.

Bilingual copywriting is not the same as translation, and short, catchy advertising copy is often far more difficult to produce in two languages.

If a professional translator provides this service it is essential to ensure that the translator is experienced in this area, and that they are authorised to draft original copy in Welsh rather than translate directly from English.

It should also be borne in mind that it's possible to commission a bilingual copy-writer to draft the text in both languages. Bilingual drafting often enhances the expression in both languages.

Good practice in translation and creating bilingual texts:

- Guidance should be given to the translator or for those responsible for drafting the bilingual text about style and tone, target audience etc.
- Examples of previous work could be provided in order to provide further guidance.
- A qualified translator should be used. A directory of translators is available at welshtranslators.org.uk
- The text should be interpreted in the original style rather than translating it word for word.
- It should be ensured that the translation conveys the meaning and the message but that it also flows freely and is properly thought-out.

For more information on translation, please refer to our advice document: 'Bilingual Drafting, Translation and Interpretation' which can be found on the Commissioner's website.

Typesetting

Many of the problems and challenges encountered in bilingual design can be avoided by bearing a few basic typesetting rules in mind from the outset. Once again, the key is careful planning and ensuring that everyone involved in the production process is aware from the start that the final material is to be bilingual. The paragraphs which follow offer some specific advice.

Each language has its own characteristics and peculiarities when it appears in print. These include accents and other characters, letter frequencies, letter combinations and word lengths. Different typefaces and fonts have been devised to accommodate the characteristics of specific languages. Many of the typefaces which are now used universally were originally designed for a specific language (particularly English) and may not always be ideal for setting other languages.

Good practice when typesetting:

Fonts with long ascenders and descenders should be avoided as should those that are too round or angular because of the frequency of wide characters such as 'w' and 'y' and digraphs such as 'dd'[1] in Welsh. The font used must cater for the full Welsh alphabet (including diacritic characters)[2]. It should be noted also that the letter 'i' is frequently used by itself in Welsh text and it should never be capitalized unless it is found at the beginning of a sentence. It is important to check that the letters 'l' and 'll' have been used correctly, as the capital letter 'I' ('i' capitalized) is often mistakenly used instead.

Designer fonts that use a non-standard approach for digraph letters and diacritic marks should be avoided as should pseudo-Celtic or calligraphic fonts. Accessibility issues should be considered, particularly for people who are visually impaired, in the context of relevant equality legislation and attendant regulations. Commonly available fonts should be used (i.e. UTF-8 Serif and Sans Serif) to ensure compatibility when transferring text to other applications.

Using different font styles within a given typeface – using a different font for each language – will almost always make one version less legible than the other.

Digraphs should not be separated by a hyphen at the end of a line: these include 'dd', 'ch', 'ff', 'll', 'ng' and 'rh'. The proofreader should check these.

Welsh has many frequently-used short words. Most of them are of one or two letters, often used with an apostrophe. They may appear several times within one sentence, e.g. 'Aeth y dyn o'r tŷ i'r ardd' (the man went from the house into the garden). Close spacing is therefore essential to maintain the overall flow of text, and should be borne in mind when using justification. It is also important to use accents when needed as they often denote a difference in meaning, e.g. gwyn (white) and gŵyn (which is a mutated version of cwyn which means 'complaint').

1 The Welsh alphabet has 29 letters whereas the English has 26. Welsh does not have the letters 'k', 'q', 'v' and 'z' but does have the additional letters 'ch', 'dd', 'ff', 'ng', 'll', 'ph', 'rh' and 'th'. These letters are known as 'digraphs' – individual letters that are made up of more than one character. This means that 'Llandudno' has 8 letters in the Welsh alphabet, and 9 letters in the English alphabet.

2 The most commonly used accent in Welsh is the circumflex. This, and all other accents in Welsh can only appear on vowels. In Welsh, the vowels are A, E, I, O, U, W and Y. For example, 'dŵr' (water) or 'tân' (fire). Acute (á) and grave (à) accents are also used, as is the dieresis (ä).

Language separation

Colours

The best way of using colour to separate languages is to have the text in both languages in black, and placing a colour or tint behind one of the languages. This can be achieved in single, as well as full-colour documents. Colour reversal is also an option, particularly for signage. Alternatively, a different colour can be adopted for the text in each language. This should be limited to titles, subtitles, bullet points and captions, as reading extended text in colour can be tiring and can be difficult for visually impaired people. Also, colour type can put too much emphasis in the wrong places.

Care should be taken when deciding on colour for print, as black is still perceived as the 'normal' colour. Any black print – particularly on a white background – will automatically appear more normal, and will certainly be more legible, than print in another colour.

Typefaces

Where it is appropriate to choose a different typeface for each language, you should not use an unusual or decorative typeface for one language if you want to give equal treatment to both.

Although not strictly a bilingual design issue, font and point size need to be taken into account when preparing materials for people with limited visual ability.

The Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language with regards to font, format, colour, size, clarity, prominence or quality.

> Using **different font styles** within a given typeface – using a different font **for each language** – will almost always make one version less legible than the other.

Layout

There are many ways in which Welsh and English text may be combined. The most common of these are illustrated in the examples. Whatever format is chosen the most important consideration is that both languages should be equally easy to read. Where feasible, both languages should also be accessible in a single eye line.

It is important that the two languages are not mixed in an inconsistent or haphazard way. Ensuring that both languages are separated and easily identified is more critical if the following formats are chosen: block by block, parallel columns, or top and bottom.

There are various standard layouts for bilingual texts. Some formats are more appropriate than others; this will usually depend on circumstances and the nature of the material. Often more than one solution may be appropriate: consultation with your designer will help clarify the options available. Some of the key strengths and weaknesses of each format are noted on the following pages.

> It is important that the two languages are not mixed in an inconsistent or haphazard way. **Ensuring that both languages are separated and easily identified** is more critical if the following formats are chosen: block by block, parallel columns, or top and bottom.

Parallel columns

The two language versions are presented side by side in parallel columns. Choosing this option will obviously depend on the space available. Both versions will need to be of similar length. This is an economical way of using space as illustrations need only be printed once. The spine, cover, title page, contents, references and indices will need to be in both languages.

Block by block

For every block in one language there will be a corresponding block in the other. This is usually only appropriate where the text is composed of small units, such as captions for illustrations, signs or short descriptions.

Parallel pages

The two language versions are presented side by side on parallel pages. Both versions will need to be of similar length, and facing pages may bear the same page number. Illustrations can again be shared between language versions. The spine, cover, title page, contents, references and indices will need to be in both languages.

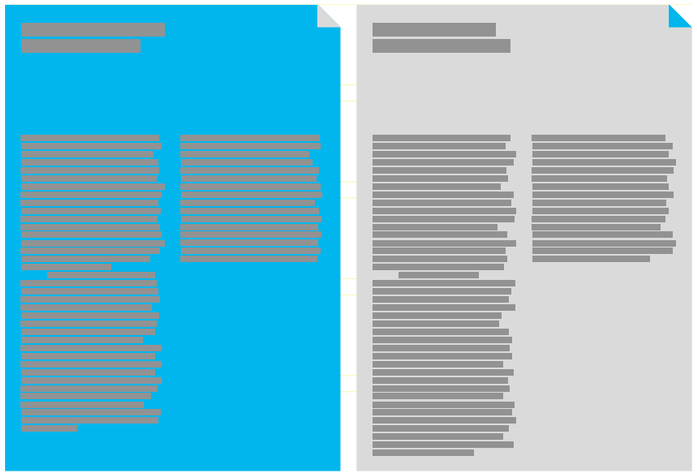
Top and bottom

The page is divided into two halves, usually horizontally. This format is an uncommon option because it inevitably means whichever language is on top appears to have priority.

Back to back

The two languages are printed back to back on the same sheet/s. This is particularly appropriate for letters and shorter documents. It is also favoured by some organizations for longer publications. Pages may bear the same page numbers on both sides.

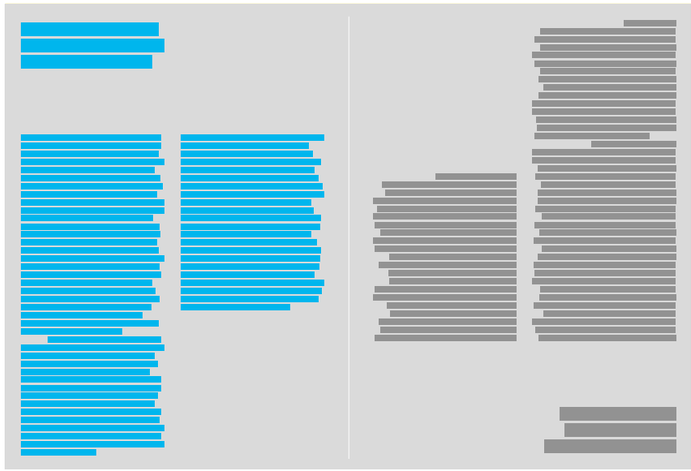
This format is also appropriate for concertina folded leaflets, as the text can be read without interruption in whichever language the reader chooses. Illustrations need to be doubled up in this format.



Tilt and turn

This gives two separate language versions inverted and bound together back to back. If there is a spine both languages need to appear on it. One advantage of this format is that text can be read without interruptions in either version. The same illustrations may be used for both language versions.

This format does not easily lend itself to including pocketed information in the cover. Also, if this publication needs to be put on display it will need to be done in a way that will make it clear that it is a bilingual publication, unless the cover for each version is bilingual.



Cost

Producing something bilingually certainly need not cost twice as much as doing it in one language. It is much more cost effective to opt for the bilingual approach from the outset, rather than replacing at a later stage something which has already been created in just one language. It is unavoidable that some additional costs are incurred when increasing the design space or word count. However, the additional benefits for doing this should outweigh the financial costs.

The importance of careful planning – ensuring that the bilingual issues are addressed from the start – has already been stressed. Remember too that the finished product will generally look less clumsy when it has been designed bilingually from the start, rather than in one language, with the second language added later.

One additional aspect of all bilingual design will be translation. Skimping on translation is nearly always a mistake, which can end up costing the organization far more in the long run if incorrect materials have to be re-produced. In particular, as noted earlier, final versions in any language should be carefully proofread.

Points to remember

- A bilingual sign (or billboard) need not be twice the size of one in just one language.
- The bulk of the production cost for signs will be for the materials or the cost of the space in the case of a poster.
- A bilingual form may have to be made to a standard size, in which case the designer may need to find a solution to the problem of limited space.
- Short bilingual documents, such as letters, may be printed on both sides, saving on paper costs.
- Longer documents will usually be twice the size when produced bilingually, in which case choice of paper, colour, photographs and illustration will help keep costs down.

Part 2
Applications

In this section the specific requirements of different design applications are discussed. Examples of the different approaches towards bilingual design are given.

It is important to note that some organizations will have to use the Welsh language in these applications as part of their statutory duties.

Visual identity and bilingual branding

Branding a business, product or service bilingually gives customers and potential customers a strong message. A brand crystallises an organization's personality, beliefs and values. Strong brands are very visible and can be fundamental to building an organization's reputation, and establishing customer loyalty to favourite products and companies.

Bilingual branding is not inherently more complicated or difficult than monolingual branding, provided proper planning, briefing and good design are employed. The Welsh and English names and any logo or symbol should be treated as a single entity from the outset. Particular consideration should be given to the implications of introducing straplines as part of any brand, since this can fundamentally change the bilingual nature of the brand, unless the straplines are also fully bilingual.

For organizations with an existing strong brand and visual identity which is in use beyond Wales, it may be possible to adapt their wider-used identity to a bilingual format. This is obviously much easier to achieve if the brand is not dependent on text as part of its identity. Brand identity will be applied in several situations, including stationery, name badges, vehicles, signage, advertising, packaging and websites: the visual image therefore needs to be consistently applied across all platforms.

COLEG DYFODOL COLLEGE

Trydanwyr Sbarci Electricians

Signage

The prime considerations regarding signage will be general design matters rather than those specific to bilingual design. It is difficult to set out general rules. Everyone's needs are different, so different considerations will apply in varying degrees. However, language separation is particularly important on signs, and consideration should be given to font, format, colour, size, clarity, prominence and quality.

Certain signs could be designed to share titles which are common to both languages, and pictograms can sometimes be more effective than words, if appropriate.

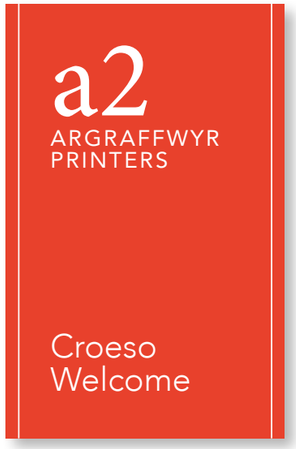
Stationery

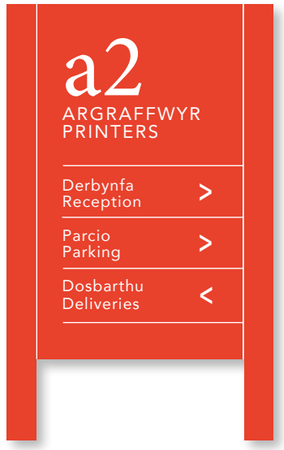
Designing bilingual stationery requires presentation of a number of details in both languages. These may include addresses, which may be completely different in each language, job titles and any straplines the organization may use. There are a number of ways to incorporate these and the logo on stationery, as shown in the examples below.

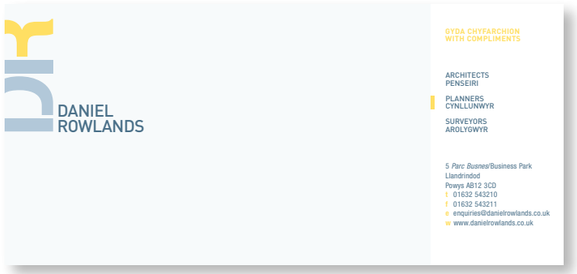
If bilingual letters are sent out regularly it may be worth considering printing the letterhead on both sides, to enable printing letters back to back. Similarly, the limited space available on compliment slips and business cards means that the back to back option is often the least cluttered.

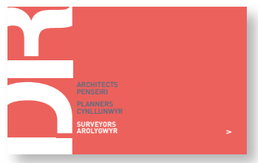
E-mail headers and footers

The design and layout of any corporate headers and footers which may be used in e-mails should be considered. Incorporating two languages requires more space, so a minimum of text should be used; the same is true for standard out-of-office automatic replies.









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abc
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Longer documents

The usual choice of format for booklets or reports is parallel pages or columns, or tilt and turn. Ultimately, the choice of format is a personal one, and there are no set rules as to which format works best for what type of document. How the bilingual content of any document is presented will depend on many factors, such as whether or not it is to be in full colour, whether there are photographs or illustrations, whether or not there needs to be a pocket inside the cover, and how the document is to be displayed.

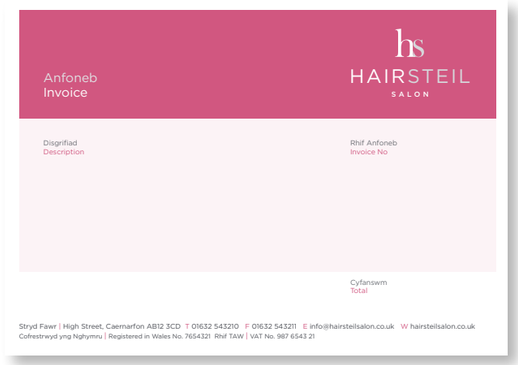
Leaflets

The usual format for leaflets is the concertina format. This works well with the Welsh on one side, and the English on the other, as long as the leaflet has an odd number of panels allowing a separate cover in each language. This layout can also be adapted to include a tear-off form if necessary.

There are, of course, other formats for leaflets, which may allow use of colour and typography to present the bilingual text on the same page, as the examples show.

Invoices, bills and order forms

Designing a pre-printed form that is to be overprinted by computer should not present any difficulties. The same general principles will apply, but it will have to be designed around the space required to print any relevant details in both languages. A bilingual bill need not be any bigger than a monolingual one, and can be produced using just one colour.

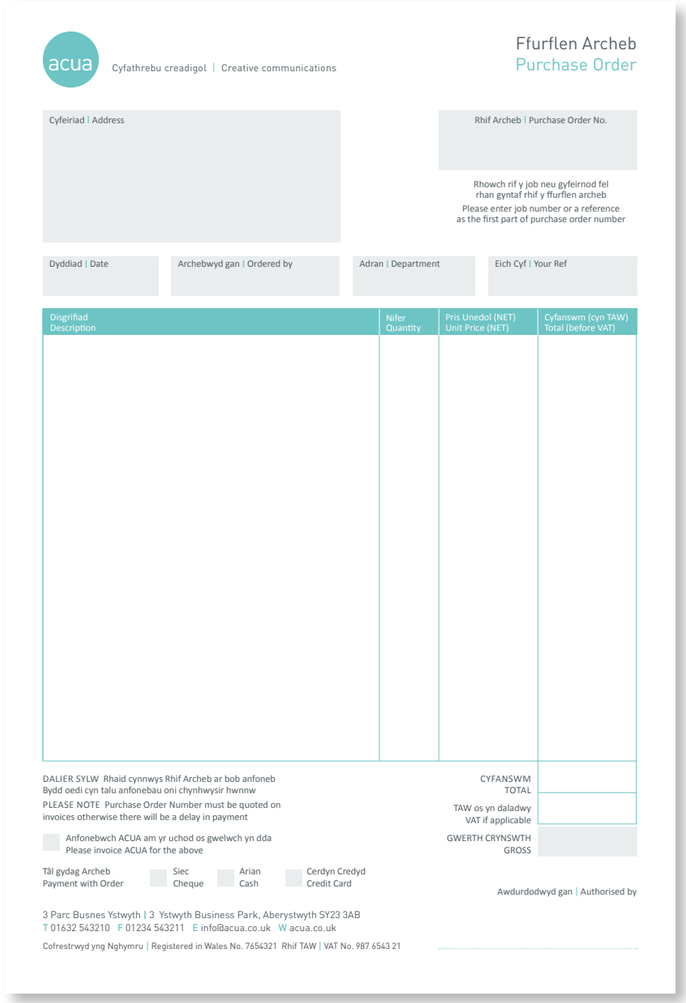


Forms

Forms that have to be filled in by hand or online can demand some creativity on the part of the designer, as the space available is often limited, especially if the form has to be of a standard size. Additionally, there needs to be enough space for the person completing the form to fill in the necessary details in the language of their choice.

Creative use of colour and typefaces can make it possible to design a fully bilingual form or questionnaire, and this is by far the preferred option. It is easy to read in both languages, and can be completed in either language. Parallel columns can be appropriate for forms which require just a short reply, or a tick. Space or boxes can be left in the centre of the page, in between the columns. If there is a large amount of explanatory text, or more space has to be allowed to fill in, then separate versions may need to be prepared for each language. In this case, the page layout should be identical in order to facilitate processing, and so that the Welsh text is treated no less favourably than the English. Depending on the length of the form, the two versions may be printed back to back, or attached side by side.

Forms, such as parking tickets, which are filled in by hand and then presented to the public, should ideally have both languages on the same face. This means that they need only be filled in once, and that neither version will be left blank, as generally happens when the languages appear separately.



acua Cyfathrebu creadigol | Creative communications

Ffurflen Archeb
Purchase Order

Cyfeiriad | Address

Rhif Archeb | Purchase Order No.

Rhowch rif y job neu gyfeirnod fel rhan gyntaf rhif y ffurflen archeb
Please enter job number or a reference as the first part of purchase order number

Dyddiad | Date | Archebwyd gan | Ordered by | Adran | Department | Eich Cyf | Your Ref

Disgrifiad Description	Nifer Quantity	Pris Unedol (NET) Unit Price (NET)	Cyfanswm (cyn TAW) Total (before VAT)

DALIER SYLW Rhaid cynnwys Rhif Archeb ar bob anfoneb Bydd oedi cyn talu anfonebau oni chynhwysir hwnnw
PLEASE NOTE Purchase Order Number must be quoted on invoices otherwise there will be a delay in payment

CYFANSWM TOTAL
TAW os yn daladwy VAT if applicable
GWERTH CRYNSWTH GROSS

Anfonebwch ACUA am yr uchod os gwelwch yn dda
Please invoice ACUA for the above

Tâl gydag Archeb Payment with Order | Siec Cheque | Arian Cash | Cerdyn Credyd Credit Card

Awdurdodwyd gan | Authorised by

3 Parc Busnes Ystwyth | 3 Ystwyth Business Park, Aberystwyth SY23 3AB
T 01632 543210 F 01234 543211 E info@acua.co.uk W acua.co.uk
Cofrestrwyd yng Nghymru | Registered in Wales No. 7654321 Rhif TAW | VAT No. 987 6543 21

Meithrinfa Honey Bears Nursery

Honey Bears
MEITHRINFA | NURSERY

Hoffem glywed eich barn...
We'd like to hear your views...

☐ Copi Cymraeg sydd i'w mewnosod yn y gofod hwn.
English copy to be inserted into this space.
☐ Copi Cymraeg sydd i'w mewnosod yn y gofod hwn.
English copy to be inserted into this space.
☐ Copi Cymraeg sydd i'w mewnosod yn y gofod hwn.
English copy to be inserted into this space.

Enw Name
Cyfeiriad Address
Cod Post Post Code
Ffôn Phone

2

Freepost ABCD-EFGH-IJKL
Meithrinfa Honey Bears Nursery
PO Box 01
Cardiff
AB01 3CD

Advertising

Every advertisement presents an opportunity to promote the organization, and to project its bilingual image. The design and format of the advertisement will depend on its purpose and its content. The general rules outlined earlier about the use of colour, typefaces and so on will all apply, but the space confines will demand some artistic creativity.

Print advertisements

It may not be necessary to book a larger space than for an advertisement in one language only. If it is necessary, it will probably still work out cheaper to design and place one bilingual advert than to place two separate ones for each language.

Outdoor advertising

The use of large posters on billboards or other outdoor sites is impactful and eye-catching, offering any organization a very quick fix for demonstrating a real commitment to bilingualism. It is usually possible to introduce a second language on a poster ad campaign for no extra cost. Good bilingual copywriting is essential however, as direct translations of short, catchy advertising copy or straplines rarely work well.

Viral marketing and banner ads for websites

This is a growing aspect of the marketing world. In preparing material for these applications, it should be borne in mind that these also need to be bilingual. It should be ensured that any typesets used support unique Welsh characters.

Limited space items

Various smaller items such as tickets, credit cards and invitations all have limited space.

With most printed documents the overall size or number of pages is dictated by the number of words and images one has to display. With tickets and cards it is preferable to keep the size of the item as small as possible, in order to fit into a wallet or a pocket. Size also has a bearing on cost: in general, the smaller the item, the more that can be produced from a standard size sheet of paper or board, thus making the end product more economical.

In order for smaller-sized applications to work, text must be kept to the absolute minimum, so that the wording is legible, and the languages can be easily distinguished. The examples illustrate some possible solutions for smaller applications.

Packaging

Many organizations recognise the advantages of bilingual packaging for their products, particularly for enhancing the perceptions of quality, providence and uniqueness. Among the things to consider include the product name – which may or may not be the same in both languages – descriptions of the product, and any small print, all of which need to be displayed in a limited space. Clear, concise text plays a crucial role in ensuring that the end product appears clean and uncluttered.

Point of sale materials

Point of sale material will usually have a minimal amount of text. How this is presented will depend on the nature and format of the product in question, which in turn will affect the nature and format of the display. Language separation by the careful and considered use of colour will help legibility, as well as being an extra design feature.

Electronic publications

Many organizations now publish reports and documents mainly online as PDF files. If materials are designed for online publishing, it should be ensured that separate language versions have a title in the appropriate language. In separate language versions, it should be ensured that the front page contains a cross-reference to the version in the other language.

PowerPoint presentations

Including both languages in a single slide is good practice, as it offers the audience a language choice. If a bilingual presentation is required, it's important to keep the wording on each slide to a minimum and ensure that both languages appear together. It is good practice to design a bilingual corporate template for presentations.

Display and exhibition materials

Display material will often make more use of images than text. Limited space will generally mean that text has to be kept to a minimum, in order to obtain an attractive and eye-catching display. Separate panels for text and images may be produced, and the language versions can be separated by being on different panels. This makes the display flexible, particularly if it is to be used outside Wales. Colour coding is an effective way of presenting the language versions within one panel, either with coloured text or with colour blocks. Care should be taken to ensure that the chosen colours do not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English.

Websites and software

The internet is all important to businesses and organizations, and developing websites is a key part of a designer's work. It is easy to offer a language choice on any website, and the Commissioner has published guidelines: 'Technology, Websites and Software: Welsh Language Considerations' to offer guidance to designers and software developers.

As with all bilingual design, the principles are straightforward: bilingualism should be planned for from the outset; the user should be offered a proactive language choice; and good practice guidelines should be adhered to. The following points should be considered when designing a bilingual website:

- The website front page should be bilingual, with a clear language choice option. The best way to do this is with a 'splash' page.
- It should always be possible and easy to switch from one language to the other on every page, going straight to the same page in the other language.
- The language switch toggle should ideally be placed in the top right hand corner of the screen.
- Organizations can register in both Welsh and English, for example welshlanguagecommissioner.org and comisiynyddygymraeg.org
- E-mail addresses should be either language neutral or bilingual, e.g. post@cyg-wlc.org or separate Welsh and English versions should be available which will reach the same mailbox.

There is no reason why a bilingual website can not be totally compatible with internet accessibility standards. There are now screen readers available which read Welsh and English text. This is the main reason why it is not recommended that Welsh and English should be mixed on the same web pages. You can get further information on good practice in developing bilingual websites and software from the Commissioner's guidelines.

I am confident that this good practice guideline will provide a useful benchmark for organizations as they design and deliver marketing and publicity campaigns to the public in Wales.

Meri Huws

Welsh Language Commissioner

All of the images of companies and organizations on pages 16-31 are fictional. Any similarity to real companies or organizations are unintentional and coincidental.

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Welsh Language Commissioner

welshlanguagecommissioner.org