



Addo

(pronounced 'ah-tho')

the Welsh word for "to promise"

o'r Cymoedd i'r Arfordir
from Valleys to Coast



"We commit to using the Welsh language wherever possible in our interactions with colleagues, customers and stakeholders whilst striving to develop and improve."

**OUR WELSH LANGUAGE
COMMITMENT**

o'r Cymoedd i'r Arfordir
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Our Welsh Language Commitment 2023

"We commit to using the Welsh language wherever possible in our interactions with colleagues, customers and stakeholders whilst striving to develop and improve."

Valleys to Coast is proud of the Welsh language and we want it to thrive. It is part of our shared inheritance and identity as a nation.

We want to support the use of the Welsh language and will take proactive steps to support and increase use of Welsh in our workplace, encouraging our customers and colleagues to use Welsh in their day-to-day business.

By consulting with our customers, our colleagues and by using other public information available to us, we're aware that the demand for Welsh language services is currently very low in the areas where we work (according to the 2011 Census, 9.2% of residents in the Bridgend County and Borough speak Welsh).

So, whilst we have not yet adopted a fully bilingual policy for our work and service delivery, we wish to work towards it. We'll continue to consult with our customers so that we can adapt how we work to meet any changes in demand for Welsh in the future.

In the meantime, we commit to ensuring that our customers get the same high standard of service with Valleys to Coast, whether they choose to deal with us in English or Welsh.

We will also support colleagues to use Welsh at work wherever possible, and develop Welsh language skills across the organisation.

In making this commitment we acknowledge that we are not currently governed by legislation, however we strive to be in the best position possible in case of future changes.

Communicating bilingually

We welcome and respect the right of our colleagues and customers to communicate with us in the language they choose and will do whatever we can to support them.

We will explore means of recording preferred language choice so that we can strive to provide services in accordance with preferences, wherever possible.

Our website

Our website is fully bilingual. Visitors choose whether to interact using the Welsh language version or the English language version by clicking on a simple language toggle. This standard will be upheld.

Our publications

We will make sure that all statutory communications are available bilingually. These include our annual reports, financial statements and regulatory reviews.

Other non-statutory printed materials intended for our customers (for example customer newsletters, information leaflets and promotional literature) will be made available bilingually wherever possible within time and financial constraints.

Our social media

We currently have single feeds for each social media platform, and post mostly in English. We will regularly review our social media presence and consult with our audiences to assess the demand for bilingual social media feeds.

Where we are posting specifically about a Welsh language topic (for example on Dwirnod Shwmae, Mae Gen i Hawl or Dydd Gŵyl Dewi) we will post bilingually.

If we are sharing a post from a bilingual organisation (for example BCBC) we will seek to share both English and Welsh language posts.

Our conversations with customers

We will encourage our colleagues to communicate with customers bilingually to the best of their abilities and confidence. We commit to encouraging our colleagues to start and end every conversation bilingually using simple 'level one' Welsh language phrases (for example saying 'Bore Da/Prynhawn Da' when answering phone calls, welcoming guests by saying 'Croeso', and ending conversations with 'Diolch'). We will provide prompt cards and visual cues to support our colleagues to do this.

Customers have the right to request to deal with us in Welsh, and we commit to enabling this. Where this is the case, we will connect the customer with a Welsh speaking colleague, or translator, as soon as possible. We will do this with as little delay as possible.

We will identify Welsh-speaking colleagues by issuing 'Siarad Gymraeg' (Welsh Speaker) and 'Dwi'n Dysgu Gymraeg' (I'm Learning Welsh) badges to be worn on lanyards or clothing.

Where we are holding engagement events at predominantly bilingual communities or at Welsh language schools, we will always strive to have a fluent Welsh speaking colleague present.

Our written correspondence with customers

Where we are writing to all customers by letter, we will do this bilingually using our standard bilingual letterhead.

When we are writing directly to a customer about an individual matter, we will check the customer's language preference and correspond in their language of choice. If we do not have a language preference recorded, we will write in English but offer to provide a Welsh language version on request.

Should we receive correspondence in Welsh, we will always reply in Welsh, and will strive to limit any delays in providing a translation. Where a colleague dealing with this communication is not a fluent Welsh speaker, we will seek a fluent colleague, or a translator, to provide support.

Our communication with stakeholders

Most of our stakeholder partners are in the public sector and therefore operate bilingually. In our written communication with bilingual stakeholders, we will always seek to correspond in English and Welsh. When we are communicating directly with an individual stakeholder we will seek their preference for correspondence.

At in-person functions and events, we will encourage colleagues to participate fully using simultaneous translation facilities if they are available, and will encourage them to use as much Welsh language as their ability and confidence allows.

Our public meetings

As part of our promotion and invitation to public meetings (for example our annual general meeting) we will ask attendees whether they wish to participate and contribute in Welsh. Should this be the case we will provide simultaneous translation.

We commit to incorporating as much Welsh language as possible, for example on welcome signage, or in opening and closing remarks.

Our media relations

We already translate all news articles for publication on our bilingual website. Our assessment of the current media landscape is such that the majority of media would prefer to receive English language media releases (if providing a fully bilingual version would delay its release). That said, if the media release is not time sensitive, we will always seek to issue both languages together. The exception will be if the release is time sensitive, for example in response to an emergency or timely topic of relevance. We will regularly review our media contact database to ensure that Welsh language media outlets are included.

Should we receive a Welsh language media enquiry, we will seek to respond in Welsh (unless waiting for translation would significantly delay our response, in which case we would discuss with the media outlet concerned).

At this time, we will politely decline any Welsh language interview requests due to lack of Welsh language skills in the current Executive team.

Our colleague communications

At present we are not in a position to commit to communicating with our colleagues fully bilingually - however, we will ensure certain internal communications (for example regarding events related to Dwirnod

Shwmae, Mae Gen i Hawl and Dydd Gŵyl Dewi) are available in English and Welsh.

We will also seek to regularly review Welsh language preferences and skills across the organisation and will review our position if there is demand.

Welsh language development

We will seek all opportunities to develop Welsh language skills across the organisation, and will support and enable Welsh speaking colleagues to use their preferred language wherever possible.

We will ensure all colleagues are aware of our Welsh language commitment and encourage them to use Welsh at their own level of ability or confidence. [We already ask colleagues to assess their own language skill levels](#) (from level one basic proficiency to level five full proficiency).

We will provide resources to support colleagues to use Welsh language phrases with each other and with customers, and we will support continued learning and development by facilitating lessons and encouraging Welsh language 'buddies'. We already have a Siarad Cymraeg chat space where colleagues can interact and learn together in Welsh.

Through our recruitment process, we will seek to increase our Welsh speaking workforce by considering the need for written or spoken capabilities in key roles, and will note this as either a desirable or essential criteria in relevant job advertisements.

Implementation and monitoring

We will promote the use of Welsh in the organisation and expect every colleague to support our commitment to the Welsh Language, making sure that our other policies, activities and services are consistent with it.

Our Executive team will ensure that our commitment is regularly communicated and reiterated. Introduction to our commitment will be part of our new colleague induction process.

The Executive team will review the commitment regularly, having noted it as an emerging risk on our Risk Register, and taking new information (such as Census information and customer survey data) into account to assess demand, alongside guidance from regulatory bodies and the Welsh Language Commissioner. Any changes or updates will be communicated to colleagues, customers and stakeholders, as well as our Board.

We will take into account additional resources required to implement our commitment, for example additional costs and time required to provide translations. Translations will need to be provided by a competent third party supplier procured through a framework agreement - colleagues will be advised not to use automated translation facilities (for example Google Translate) to ensure accuracy.

Comments, suggestions, or feedback on our Addo commitment is welcomed and should be sent to comms@v2c.org.uk.