

Welsh Language Policy

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AVANTI
WEST COAST



Introduction

West Coast Partnership (WCP) operates intercity services between London and Scotland, as well as regular services between London and North Wales, including the important port of Holyhead with its onward ferry connections to Ireland.

In the future we will also operate new high-speed rail services between London, Birmingham and northern England to which customers from North Wales will be able to connect.

Our commitment to Welsh language provision on our network

WCP has adopted a clear and practical Welsh Language Policy for its services and business dealings in Wales. We are implementing the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which safeguards and protects the future of the language and are working with the Welsh Language Commissioner to offer our Welsh customers options for conducting at least some of their dealings with us in Welsh.

Key objectives

We will:

- Provide a high-quality rail service to/from and within North Wales;
- Adopt a sensible, practical and realistic approach to Welsh language use and provision in our operations in Wales;
- Ensure the Welsh language is included in our customer experience plans for WCP;
- Conform with the guidelines of the Welsh Language Commissioner;
- Regularly review and monitor the operation and implementation of the policy.

Our commitment

We commit to provide rail information and journey planning in Welsh in a number of ways:

Railway information:

We will produce key documents in Welsh as well as English, including the timetable between London and Wales, our Passenger's Charter and our Accessible Travel Policy. These documents are available in both hard copy and online formats.

More helpful staff:

Any Welsh-speaking colleagues at stations or on board our trains will be encouraged to wear the Welsh flag on their name badge to help identify them as Welsh speakers more clearly. They will be encouraged to speak in Welsh wherever appropriate.

Contacting us in Welsh:

Customers, stakeholders and partners are welcome to call, write, email or otherwise correspond with WCP in Welsh. Any written correspondence received in Welsh will receive a response prepared in Welsh within a reasonable timescale.

Journey planning via National Rail Enquiries:

National Rail Enquiries (NRE) provide timetable, ticketing and pricing information about all train operators in the UK both online and via their telephone service. NRE operate a dedicated Welsh language telephone service (0345 60 40 500) from 0700-2000hrs every day except Christmas Day.

Public policy documents:

Public policy documents, such as the Disabled Persons Protection Policy (DPPP) and environmental policies will be made available in Welsh. Brochures, factsheets and other information documents that relate specifically to rail services in Wales may also be made available in Welsh.

Train announcements:

Ad-hoc bilingual on-board train announcements in Wales are currently made by trained staff. However we may not be able to provide bilingual colleagues on all services. However by June 2020 we will introduce automated Welsh language routine announcements on all our train services operating between Wales and England.

Advertising:

TV, radio and print media advertising in Wales will be undertaken in English only since it normally forms part of a WCP or FirstGroup plc national campaign programme. However, consideration will be given to including Welsh text in local advertising or events wherever possible.

Customer enquiries:

If a WCP employee takes a call from a Welsh speaker and is unable to speak Welsh, they will offer the choice of discussing the matter in English or have the call returned by a Welsh speaker when available. Following a telephone conversation in Welsh, any subsequent written correspondence with that customer will also be in Welsh (unless a request is made for written correspondence to be in English).

Where a quick response is required to a letter, or time or other circumstances do not permit a Welsh version, the correspondence will include a sentence indicating the recipient is welcome to reply in either language.

Communications with stakeholders

All press releases and statements distributed in Wales will be drafted in English but with Welsh-language versions provided on topics that concern Wales-only topics. WCP will aim to provide a Welsh-speaking spokesperson for media interviews in Wales whenever possible.

All political and public affairs bulletins, publications and briefings aimed at Welsh MPs/AMs will be offered in Welsh where requested.

Limitations

The majority of our services operate within England or between England and Scotland. We will not provide Welsh translations of documents/website content relating to these services.

Our website is available nationally and thus will be in English. However it will include a Welsh language section where a range of documents in Welsh are available, which sets out our Welsh Language Policy, and advises customers how to approach us for translations of other documents.

Future Initiatives

Wherever possible, we will incorporate technology advances into our communications strategy and, where possible will use these to facilitate Welsh language provision.

Reviewing our performance

Our Welsh language policy will be dynamic and will continue to develop over the next few years so that we to maintain our promise to make proper Welsh language provision.

We will measure the success of our policy by monitoring and recording the development and implementation of the policy through:

- the amount of correspondence and enquiries received in Welsh
- response times and procedures followed
- requests for documents to be provided in Welsh
- monitor customer feedback - positive or negative.

We will also consult regularly with Wales-based stakeholders to seek their views.

In conclusion

We will embrace the use of the Welsh language for customers using our rail services in Wales. Wherever possible we will offer our customers and partners the opportunity to deal with us effectively in Welsh. We will continue to work closely with the Welsh Language Commissioner, Transport for Wales, other rail and transport operators and Network Rail to ensure that our Welsh language policy offers the best possible level of support to our customers. We will embed this policy in our culture, ensuring that all our colleagues are aware so that we continue to provide the best possible service to our customers.