

**Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg**  
**Welsh Language Scheme**

Shared Lives Plus

## 1. Introduction

Shared Lives Plus is the UK network of very small, family and community-based care and support solutions for disabled or older people: it is all about ordinary people and families contributing to the care and support of others, sometimes in extraordinary ways. Our membership includes **Shared Lives** carers and co-ordinators, **Homeshare** and **micro-enterprises**. We help our members to work together to survive and thrive, providing support, training, events, resources, research programmes, access to insurance, and the means to influence policy makers.

Our members build small-scale solutions around individuals and families so that people can:

- take control of their services and of their lives
- pursue ordinary lives within their chosen households – arrangement and relationships
- contribute to and be valued by their communities.

In 2012, Shared Lives Plus received a funding grant from the Welsh Government for the post of a Wales Development Worker. The purpose of the role is to promote the Shared Lives model of care across Wales and to work with Shared Lives Cymru – the Welsh Committee - to give a national voice to Shared Lives schemes.

According to information provided by 10 schemes in 2012, 87 (16.4%) Shared Lives/ Adult Placement carers are Welsh speakers. Most schemes only included first language speakers but some were able to separate these into first language speakers (33) and people who have learnt Welsh (54). Appropriate cultural and linguistic matching is really important in Shared Lives arrangements. As one scheme pointed out, when Welsh speaking service users were matched with English speaking carers, the service users were unable to communicate their needs and their behaviour was unfairly labelled as challenging. Shared Lives Plus has committed to the development of a recruitment strategy for Welsh speaking Shared Lives carers.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 (“The Measure”) sets a new legal context for the Welsh language. After the Measure received Royal Assent in February 2011, official status was established for the Welsh language in Wales, as well as the general principle that the Welsh language should be no less favourably treated than the English language in Wales. The Measure creates a new legislative framework for enforcing duties on persons operating in Wales with regard to the Welsh language, and in due course, will replace many of the provisions of the Welsh Language Act 1993 (“WLA 1993”).

Shared Lives Plus is not a public body as defined by the WLA 1993. However, the Welsh Language Scheme fits in with the organisation’s implementation of equal opportunities and diversity policies. Shared Lives Plus has committed itself to working to ensure language choice and has stated the following aim:

“Shared Lives Plus Cymru undertakes to ensure that users, staff and volunteers have the right to receive our services in Welsh in Wales when that is their chosen

language.”

The Welsh Language Scheme outlines how the organisation will ensure the provision of bilingual services and operations in a context where the Welsh language has official status in Wales.

This Scheme notes those services which are already provided in Welsh and which will provide a basis for future developments. It outlines those developments and provides a timetable for implementation. The monitoring arrangements are outlined in terms of individual elements and in terms of the Scheme as a whole. A complete action plan including target dates is included at the back of the document (Appendix 1).

This language Scheme and its implementation are the corporate responsibility of Shared Lives Plus as well as being the responsibility of its members and staff in Wales.

## 2. Statement

Shared Lives has adopted the principles that in carrying its work in Wales it will treat the English and Welsh language on the basis of equality so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practical.

Although there is no statutory requirement for Shared Lives Plus to prepare a Welsh Language Scheme under the WLA 1993, we feel strongly that bilingual services should be provided for the public in order to uphold the following principles:

- that members of the public can express their opinions and convey their needs better in their preferred language
- the importance of providing services in the preferred language of the service user
- that enabling the public to use their preferred language is an important part of good practice
- that denying them the right to use their preferred language could put members of the public at a disadvantage

In addition, our work in Wales is publically funded and we therefore have a duty to make bilingual provision for the public in accordance with our funding guidelines.

The Scheme explains how Shared Lives Plus will put into effect these principles in the provision of services for the public in Wales, wherever practical and appropriate. Although the Scheme will be implemented in Wales primarily, it will be approved at a UK level. All members of staff will be aware of their duty to operate the Scheme where relevant. If we are unable to provide the required service initially we will work towards providing it in future.

Shared Lives Plus will promote the use of the Welsh language through its activities and services and we will encourage Welsh speakers to use more Welsh in their everyday lives.

Shared Lives Plus will promote the Welsh Language Scheme to its membership in Wales and it will seek the membership's commitment and support to deliver the scheme.

### 3. Planning and delivering services

#### 3.1 New policies and initiatives

By considering the Welsh language and the needs of individuals when developing new and revised policies and initiatives, Shared Lives Plus, can move towards achieving the objectives of this Scheme. We will endeavour to make the most of such opportunities in order to move closer to the principle of equality between the English and Welsh languages.

In planning new policies and initiatives which affect the provision of the public services in Wales, Shared Lives Plus, will ensure that all developments comply with the commitments made in this Scheme. Shared Lives Plus will assess the language needs of the target audience in order to offer the most effective service and make the best use of resources.

As an organisation with a head office outside Wales we will ensure that all departments within or outside Wales, are aware of the requirements of the Scheme. Shared Lives Plus' directors will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Scheme. A check list will be available to staff identifying matters to be considered when developing new policies and initiatives. A Welsh language commitment will monitor the compliance of new policies and initiatives with this Scheme.

This Welsh Language Scheme will not be altered without the agreement of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

#### 3.2 Delivery of services

The aim is to provide a high standard of service in accordance with our commitment in this Scheme. The standard of this bilingual service will be regularly reviewed, with the aim of continuously improving the standard.

As set out in the timescales, Shared Lives Plus will work towards the provision of a comprehensive service of the same high standard in English and Welsh by:

- ensuring all staff/ volunteers are aware of the implications of this Welsh Language Scheme
- providing training and guidance for staff/ volunteers to facilitate the implementation of the Scheme. Shared Lives Plus will source Welsh language awareness training provided to third sector organisations. encouraging service users to feel comfortable using Welsh by use of the available resources, for example Working Welsh badges and posters
- finding reliable translation services of a high standard to ensure that all relevant material is translated quickly and reliably. The Commissioner recommends using professional translators.

- Shared Lives Plus will promote the use of Welsh in its communication with its membership in Wales. This may include opening *Shared Lives Cymru* Committee meetings in Welsh and including the use of Welsh on the agenda.

## 4. Communicating with the Welsh-speaking public

### 4.1 Written communication

Shared Lives Plus welcomes correspondence to the Wales Development Worker in English and Welsh.

- Correspondence through the medium of Welsh in itself will not lead to delay
- All letters received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh.
- Any correspondence from the public and service users in Welsh will receive a reply in Welsh.
- The timescale for responding to correspondence in Welsh will be the same as in English.
- Communication by the Wales Development Worker will be available in Welsh should this be requested. Once it is known that a member of the public prefers to use Welsh, that person will receive all future correspondence in Welsh.
- The Wales Development Worker will maintain a database of customers who prefer to receive correspondence in Welsh, in English or bilingually.
- When Shared Lives Plus has no staff available to answer correspondence in Welsh to a sufficiently high standard, we will use a professional translation agency.
- English and Welsh will have equal prominence in headed stationary, including e-mail signature.

### 4.2 Telephone communications

All phone calls to the Wales Development Worker will be answered with a standard bilingual greeting:

*'Bore da Shared Lives Plus' or 'Prynhawn da Shared Lives Plus'*

As the current Wales Development Worker is unable to provide a bilingual service, she will explain the situation to the individual and offer the caller the option of continuing the conversation in English or the option to conduct the conversation in Welsh at a later date with the support of an interpreter/ translator.

The answer phone message will be bilingual in the Wales office.

### 4.3 Face-to-face

Shared Lives Plus has undertaken to ensure that those accessing services from the organisation in Wales and who wish to have face-to-face contact in Welsh will be

able to do so. This may not be possible at all times, but we will endeavour to have an interpreter available when required.

#### **4.4 Public meetings and events**

When Shared Lives Plus arranges large public meetings in Wales, we will establish standard practices for bilingual provision.

Notices of all public meetings, events and conferences will be bilingual, and will include a statement that the right of those attending to speak English or Welsh will be respected.

Translation/interpreting needs will be assessed before holding any public meeting or conference. The appropriate translation facilities will be provided on the basis of this assessment. If interpreting facilities are provided, prior notice will be given that anyone will be welcome to speak Welsh. If, on the basis of the assessment, it is considered that interpreting facilities are not necessary or practical, this will be made clear beforehand. The assessment will be made on the basis of the purpose or subject matter of the meeting, its location, those likely to attend and any prior information regarding language choice. Equally, an assessment will be made of the requirement for Welsh-speaking staff members to receive and welcome the public at meetings.

Working Welsh badges denoting Welsh speakers will be worn to show which members of staff or volunteers speak Welsh.

## **5. Corporate image**

### **5.1 Corporate identity**

Shared Lives Plus and its main contractors will adopt a completely bilingual corporate image in Wales. Written material, logos and slogans will be bilingual. Headed paper, compliment slips and appointment cards will all be bilingual with both languages equal in terms of format size, clarity and prominence.

All general public notices and job advertisements issued to the media in Wales will be bilingual. Display material and information used in exhibitions and events in Wales will be bilingual.

### **5.2 Signage**

In Wales, when replacing signage, all external and internal signage in public places at the premises of Shared Lives Plus will be bilingual and equal in terms of form, size, quality and prominence. The Welsh version will be placed above or in front of the English version. Where it is necessary to use separate English and Welsh signage, they will be equal.

## 6. Publications

### 6.1 Documents

Shared Lives Plus aims to publish all its relevant campaigning material in Wales bilingually in one document. If it is necessary for whatever reason e.g. the size of the document, for Shared Lives Plus to publish English and Welsh versions separately, we will publish them at the same time.

Bilingual documents will include those distributed to or provided for the public in general, and which:

- provide information on the services of Shared Lives Plus
- explain and advise on Shared Lives Plus' new policies, initiatives and services
- seek the views of the public by consulting them

We will ensure that the Welsh text is of a high standard and in the correct register and is mindful of the target audience.

Campaign information material and external policy reports produced by Shared Lives Plus for distribution across the UK will be assessed to see whether bilingual versions are necessary.

Policy and technical research documents produced by Shared Lives Plus for UK use will rarely be translated as this material is often expensive and will have limited distribution in Wales. The internal planning team will receive information on the Scheme and a process for producing bilingual materials will be established. A matrix of criteria for deciding whether materials should be produced bilingually will be used (Appendix 2).

## 7. Press releases

We are committed to issuing bilingual statements and notices to the press and the media in Wales whenever possible.

- Press releases for the press and media in Wales will be issued bilingually. It is understood that occasionally, in an emergency, it will be necessary to issue press releases in English only, but in all other circumstances the translation process will be incorporated into the planning timescales.
- All press releases will include contact details of a Welsh-speaking representative of Shared Lives Plus. This person will be authorised to fully represent Shared Lives Plus within the boundaries of their knowledge. We will keep a list of suitable contact names.

## 8. Websites and Information Technology

Sections or webpages on the external website of Shared Lives Plus which relate specifically to activities in Wales will appear bilingually. The Wales regional pages on the main website will be fully bilingual. All English pages in the Welsh section will have a corresponding page in Welsh. The languages will appear separately and it will be possible for the user to move from one language to the other at any time by using a prominent language switch.

## **8.1 Discussion Forums and Electronic Networks**

English text which has been placed on the website by an external party will not be translated, for example organisations which have registered an institution or project. When uploading information, the website will indicate to the user that the Welsh section has not been completed, and that they will be responsible for undertaking this.

When planning or redeveloping websites or any other Information Technology service, we will consider the Welsh Language Commissioner's guidelines: 'Technology, websites and software: Welsh language considerations'.

## **9. Implementing the Scheme**

### **9.1 Staffing**

Shared Lives Plus will endeavour to ensure that the Wales Development Worker can provide a service for Welsh speakers who contact her.

Shared Lives Plus will assess what language skills are necessary in each workplace and for each core activity in order to implement this Scheme. Shared Lives Plus will assess whether Welsh language skills are essential or desirable for each new vacancy – whether that be a for paid staff, volunteers or trustees – in order to ensure that it can fulfil its obligations in relation to this scheme.

If Welsh language skills are deemed essential or desirable for a role the job description and person specification will specify the exact linguistic skills needed – be that listening, reading, oral or written – and in which context each skill will be required.

Each vacancy in Wales will be advertised in bilingually, taking advantage of any opportunities to advertise in Welsh and English language publications. The job advertisement will clearly note whether Welsh is an essential or desirable skill for the post.

### **9.2 Training**

Welsh language awareness training is offered to all staff working in Wales. Use of DVDs and/or other language awareness training packs is made when face-to-face training is not possible or practical.

Each member of staff is given training on implementing this scheme. Members of staff who do not speak Welsh will be given specific training to enable them to greet

and/or answer the phone bilingually, including training on how to pronounce Welsh names and places. Training will be provided to enable staff to direct inquiries received in Welsh to Welsh speaking members of staff when needed.

Support will be provided to staff and volunteers in the use of Welsh so that they may gain new skills and improve current skills. Shared Lives Plus' resources (ie direct funding and time during working hours) will be allocated depending on the training needs assessment and priorities regarding the benefit to service provision.

Approaches to monitoring the service, identifying defects and determining what to do will be established.

## 9.2 Learning Welsh

Shared Lives encourages and supports staff who wish to learn and improve their Welsh and encourage Welsh speakers to use the language whenever practical.

We will assess the needs of employees working in Wales in order to identify staff who may benefit from training programmes, reasonable financial support or dedicated working hours by Shared Lives Plus to:

- assist Welsh-speaking employees who need to develop their language skills in order to fulfil their duties
- provide Welsh-speaking staff members with the appropriate administrative, technical or operational skills to provide a Welsh language service to customers
- provide specific information on aspects of the services
- develop the Welsh language skills of non-Welsh speaking members of staff.

Regular audits of the language profile of service users, staff and volunteers will be held to ensure that the Welsh language needs of the organisation continue to be met by our language Scheme and training programme. The audit will identify those posts where Welsh speaking skills are essential and the precise level of skills required.

The organisation's approach to allocating spending and resources will be adapted to reflect this. The aim is to normalise spending and use of resources on Welsh language services such that is entirely natural for services to be provided in the two official languages of Wales and to organise resources to meet that objective.

## 10. Implementation and monitoring

### 10.1 Monitoring

The Wales Development Worker will produce a monitoring and evaluation report to the Chief Executive of Shared Lives Plus, and a copy will be sent to the Welsh Language Commissioner for feedback on an annual basis.

Based on the Welsh Language Commissioner's reporting template the following points will be monitored and will form part of the report:

- Implementing the Scheme
- Forward planning
- Awareness
- Bilingual Skills
- Putting the User First
- Complaints
- Data Collections
- Reporting
- Timescales for Implementation

Shared Lives Plus will review and revises the Scheme every three years in consultation with the Welsh Language Commissioner.

## 10.2 Complaints and feedback

All complaints regarding the implementation of the Scheme will be submitted locally and monitored by the Head of Shared Lives.

Shared Lives Plus welcomes suggestions from the public, its staff and members for improving its Welsh Language Scheme and service. All suggestions should be sent to the Wales Development Worker, c/o Carers Trust, Third Floor, 33-35 Cathedral Road, CF11 9HB

## 11. Advertising the Scheme and raising public awareness

Shared Lives Plus will refer to the Scheme in its annual report, business plan and general material for customers and will make it clear that customers are welcome to use Welsh when dealing with the company and its employees.

Shared Lives Plus will provide copies of the Scheme for customers on demand. Shared Lives Plus welcomes suggestions to improve the Scheme by customers and employees. Any suggestions should be sent to the Wales Development Worker.

## Appendix 1 - Timescales and Implementation Plan

AREA OF ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTATION	BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
<b>3.1 New policies and initiatives</b>			
<b>3.2 Delivery of services</b>			
<b>4. Communicating with the Welsh-speaking public</b>			
<b>4.1 Written communication</b>	Include Welsh Language category in carer database Translate headed paper and signature	Wales Development Worker	Oct 2013
<b>4.2 Telephone communications</b>	Start using bilingual greeting Include bilingual message on answering machine.	Wales Development Worker	Aug 2013 Oct 2013
<b>4.3 Face-to-face communications</b>			
<b>4.4 Public meetings and events</b>			
<b>5. Corporate Image</b>			
<b>5.1 Corporate Identity</b>	Translate and print off cards	Wales Development Worker	Jan2014
<b>5.2 Signage</b>			
<b>6. Publications</b>			
<b>7. Press releases</b>	Identify a Welsh-speaking representative to be included in all press releases.	Wales Development Worker/ Cysylltu Bywydau Cymru	Oct 2013

<b>8. Website and Information Technology</b>	Ensure that the Wales regional pages on the Shared Lives Plus website are bilingual and appropriate links are in place	Wales Development Worker/ Communication and Engagement Officer	May 2014
<b>9. Implementation of the Scheme</b>			
<b>9.1 Staffing</b>			
<b>9.2 Learning Welsh</b>	Attend free training provided by Welsh Language Commissioner's Office	Wales Development Worker	Dec2013
<b>10. Implementation and monitoring</b>			
<b>10.1 Monitoring and review</b>			
<b>10.2 Complaints and feedback</b>			
<b>11. Advertising the Scheme</b>			

## Appendix 2 –

Audience	Shared Lives membership (carers & schemes)	Shared Lives carers	Shared Lives schemes	External audience
Distribution	Wales only	UK wide	Other regions	
Size	0 – 1,000 words	1,000 – 5,000 words	Over 5,000 – 10,000 words	Over 10,000 words*

All greens – translate material

Combination of green and amber – consider translating material

Combination including red – do not translate material

\* For documents over 10,000, if possible, produce a summary in Welsh