Language Guidelines

The language guidelines below form part of S4C's Compliance Guidance and offer guidance on what S4C expects from producers with regard to the use of the Welsh language, and other languages, in programmes.

1. WELSH ON S4C

1.1 S4C's fundamental objective is to provide a high-quality television and multi-platform service through the medium of the Welsh language.

1.2 S4C's main aim is to provide Welsh language content that will be enjoyed, appreciated, and used by viewers from across Wales and beyond. S4C will be a Welsh language channel for the whole of Wales that will espouse, as one of our fundamental values, that the Welsh language belongs to us all. Our aim will be to expand the reach of the Welsh language so that it appeals to all sections of our society (e.g. all ages, backgrounds, and social classes, among others), and to people of various levels of Welsh language ability, and non-Welsh speakers.

1.3 The service, and everyone who contributes professionally to it, has a basic duty to communicate effectively with this audience as a whole.

1.4 In order to do this, the factors that influence viewers' ability to understand what is being said and thereby fully enjoy a programme must be considered. Linguistic elements include speech, vocabulary, syntax and accent, and technical elements include audio technique and the pictures which are shown. It is the responsibility of programme producers to ensure that all of these elements are adequately addressed.

1.5 The target audience should be carefully defined when considering the appropriate linguistic register for each programme. As a rule, the aim be should to use language that is understandable and suitable for the register, and pronunciation that is clear and natural for the speaker.

1.6 Welsh, like all living languages, is constantly changing and evolving. It is important that there is a place in S4C's service for individuals and communities to use the language creatively and to use new forms. At the same time, a national broadcasting service has the important function of presenting language that is grammatically appropriate to the context and easy to understand. From time to time there may be programmes that have a specific function, and these will adopt a particular linguistic style in order to achieve their goal, but this should always happen following detailed discussion with the relevant Content Commissioner and with their consent.

1.7 There is a difference between the standards that presenters and professional contributors should aspire to and the considerations that apply to other contributors. Additional expectations applicable to professional presenters and contributors are set out below.

Presenters

1.8 S4C expects its presenters to communicate effectively with the targeted audience aiming to use Welsh that is effective, creative, and suitable for the content's audience. Producers have a responsibility to provide guidance and training, where necessary, to this end. The relevant Content Commissioner can provide feedback and support.

1.9 Scripted content. Pre-scripted and pre-recorded content is expected to be written and edited in the most suitable register for the target audience. It should be ensured that scriptwriters and speakers are aware of the need to use spoken forms that suit the speaker.

1.10 Unscripted content. A presenter is expected to interview and discuss in a style that is natural to both the situation and the contributors. This can mean a change of register and style for different types of content and audience on S4C.

Contributors

1.11 S4C is very keen to see as wide a representation as possible of Welsh life and its residents reflected in its programmes. Many Welsh speakers are unsure about their language abilities and often feel that "their Welsh is not good enough"; our producers have a role in explaining to contributors that all kinds of Welsh are important and valuable to us all. Programmes that make use of members of the public as contributors should encourage them to do so in their usual language, including the dialect and/or vocabulary they normally use.

Where help is sought, in relation to vocabulary, that support should be given, but any suggestion of compulsion to use more formal Welsh should be avoided, if that does not feel natural to the contributor.

1.12 S4C believes that the service can help to expand the use of contemporary Welsh vocabulary where that can be done without compromising the understanding and enjoyment of the programme's content. Producers should be aware, however, when using unfamiliar or new technical terms that this can be a barrier to people's understanding the programme and every possible effort should be made to reinforce the understanding of the word or phrase by one or more of the following:

> (i) explaining the meaning of the word;

> (ii) seeking to reinforce the understanding of new words by ensuring that the picture or context helps to explain the meaning;

> (iii) using the English as well as the Welsh term.

2. USE OF ENGLISH WORDS OR PHRASES

2.1 The general guidance above will all apply when considering the use of English words or phrases within Welsh presentations ("code-switching"). This is a very common feature of the spoken language and is an issue that deserves care and attention from producers. It should not be assumed that the use of English words and phrases by presenters is acceptable even if these are commonly heard in the spoken language. The appropriateness of code-switching decreases depending on how formal the programme is; that is, the more formal the programme, the less code-switching is likely to be suitable.

2.2 Over the years research has shown that viewers in general:

a) wish S4C to maintain high linguistic standards;

b) believe that the language on some programmes is too difficult for them to understand;

c) welcome programmes that use language similar to their own.

There is not necessarily consistency between these three perceptions but when considering the vocabulary of a programme all three must be kept in mind.

2.3 There are large variations in what is considered acceptable, desirable or common between one section of society and another. There are also variations regarding the understanding of what an "English word" is. It cannot be assumed that the use of an English word that is very common in one social circle or area is equally as acceptable in another area or circle. Similarly, some Welsh words that are familiar and common in some circles will be considered unfamiliar in others.

2.4 Producers should be aware of the need to monitor the use of English words within their programmes to ensure that they are consistent with the register appropriate to the programme, and to ensure that the use of English words and phrases does not increase thoughtlessly.

2.5 Producers should urge professional presenters to expand their knowledge and mastery of the language so that they can contribute creatively to identifying and using the most appropriate vocabulary and idiom at all times. See details of training available in Section 7 of this document; S4C would be happy to consider further training needs.

3. USE OF INTERVIEWS AND ENGLISH CONTRIBUTIONS

3.1 From time to time, a producer will be involved in a situation where it may appear valid, for editorial reasons, to include English-language material. Careful, selective and occasional use of English can strengthen a programme so that it is more comprehensive and interesting than it would otherwise be. When considering the use of English contributions there should be editorial justification for this content.

3.2 All producers should be aware that a fine line exists, which is difficult to define as it is largely subjective, between what is acceptable and what is excessive. This exists within individual programmes and within the service as a whole. Producers should try to recognise and respect this boundary, ensuring that all relevant members of the production team are aware of the guidance given in this document.

3.3 The content ideas proposed to S4C should be able to stand on their own two feet in Welsh. In the first instance, every effort should be made to look for Welsh speakers to discuss the topics in question.

3.4 English should not be used for presenting where there is no strong and exceptional editorial reason for doing so.

3.5 All producers should be aware of the effect of any use of English on the programme's target audience when deciding whether or not the English element under consideration is appropriate. The Content Commissioner should be consulted when there is any uncertainty.

3.6 Specific permission from the Content Commissioner will be required for any extended use of English within a programme or series. When significant use of English is being considered, the producer should make this clear to the Content Commissioner from the outset so that the Content Commissioner can consider its appropriateness within the requirements of the programme itself and within the service as a whole.

3.7 When the Content Commissioner is considering whether English should be used, he or she will take into account editorial validity, programme structure, the average amount of English used in the programme, the length of each individual English contribution, and the relationship between the programme in question and other programmes in the schedule. The supplier will be required to adhere closely to the Content Commissioner's requirements.

3.8 In programmes for adults, S4C generally adopts the attitude that Welsh viewers understand English. As such, when approval is given for the use of English, S4C does not expect these items to be dubbed or subtitled into Welsh. It may, however, be appropriate to consider reducing the effect of the extended use of English by, for example, summarizing what is said through a commentator. This is a matter of editorial judgement, and the Content Commissioner should be consulted.

3.9 S4C does not believe that it is practical to try to anticipate and set a rule in advance for every occasion that may arise where the use of English could be justified. But here are some examples that might offer adequate editorial justification.

i) News, Current Affairs, Documentaries and Magazine Programmes

S4C is keen that our content in these areas is authoritative and reflects the big stories and topics of the day or time. The following cases could possibly present editorial justification for the use of English interviews:

(a) Interviews with prominent individuals who are not Welsh speakers.

(b) When it is necessary to interview a person who is of crucial to a story or who witnesses a particular event but does not speak Welsh.

(c) Where no suitable Welsh speaker is available to comment on a matter of public interest and where there is a need to ensure due balance, accountability and impartiality.

ii) Sport

Commentary on sports programmes will always be in Welsh. Occasionally, when rights permit, there will be justification for offering an additional audio stream with English commentary.

Producers are expected to secure interviews with players/coaches in Welsh whenever it is possible to do so. But when Welsh-speaking players/coaches are not available, or an interview is available with a well-known or key non-Welsh speaking figure, interviewing contributors in English will be justified.

iii) Drama and Comedy Programmes

S4C is keen to promote creative and vibrant use of the Welsh language in these contexts but also recognises that there may be instances where the use of English can contribute in a particular and different way to the aims of the programme. Generally, S4C will not consider the objective of reflecting the world as it is to be a sufficient reason to use English in a drama, but there are contexts in which the use of English or other languages may be essential. Before approving any script, the Content Commissioner will be required to determine whether or not the proposed use of English is acceptable.

iv) Children's Programmes

(a) **Nursery**
Welsh is the only language that should be used in programmes for this age group, other than supportive use of sign language.

(b) **Children 5-10 years old**

Generally, Welsh (and supportive use of sign language) is the only language that should be used in programmes for children other than in certain special circumstances. The use of English would have to be justified for editorial reasons to the relevant Content Commissioner. This would include the use of any relevant people for editorial reasons e.g. famous pop stars launching a campaign, an awards ceremony, an important quote in the news, music videos etc.

Section 7 of this document contains information about sources to support the language of the curriculum, which will be familiar to children who attend Welsh-medium education.

(c) **Children and young people aged 10-15**

Generally, with the exception of sign language, Welsh is the only language that should be used in programmes for children except under certain special circumstances. It is very important that the language used in this part of the service is contemporary and understandable and reflects the viewers' way of life. As with the 5-10 age group, the use of English would have to be justified for editorial reasons to the relevant Content Commissioner. This would include the use of relevant people for editorial reasons, e.g. famous pop stars launching a campaign, an awards ceremony, an important quote in the news, music videos etc. When assessing how appropriate it is to use English, the production company must be aware of S4C's strategic commitment to nurturing and developing creative talent through the medium of Welsh.

Section 7 of this document contains information on sources to support the language of the curriculum, which will be familiar to children attending Welsh-medium education.

v) Content for Welsh Learners

S4C has a role to play in supporting those learning the language. There is a desire for learners to be seen and represented in our content as a whole, and the channel will create specific content for this audience group. It is very important that producers who provide such content receive advice from experts in this field of learning to ensure that the language used is appropriate to the level of learning and presented in a way that is easier to understand (slower and clear). S4C can facilitate contact with experts who can support producers.

There may be a little more English in the programmes aimed at learners at basic levels. However, slow, very simple Welsh is more useful than English for someone learning the language; again, experts in the field can offer advice. There needs to be a balance between using very simple and repetitive Welsh on the one hand, and creating enjoyable content that is engaging to the audience on the other.

As well as hearing "classroom language", and the patterns taught to adults, it is important that learners hear a wide variety of spoken language, in order to facilitate their access to being part of our communities.

4. NON-WELSH-SPEAKING VIEWERS

4.1 S4C's service and the Welsh language belong to the whole of Wales, and also to Welsh speakers and communities outside Wales. The channel is keen to be seen as attractive and valuable to people of all language abilities, including those learning Welsh. In addition, the channel would like to welcome those who do not speak Welsh in order to increase awareness of and respect for the language. There are two main methods of achieving this:

(a) by providing subtitles in English as well as Welsh;

(b) by ensuring that the programmes themselves are attractive and relevant to this wide audience.

From time to time an English voiceover is offered on a separate button on some individual programmes, to offer a service that is as attractive as possible to non-Welsh-speaking viewers.

5. USE OF OTHER LANGUAGES IN WELSH PROGRAMMES

5.1 The inclusion of any language other than Welsh or English in programmes is an editorial matter to be discussed between the supplier and the Content Commissioner.

5.2 When it is intended to include material in a language other than Welsh or English in a programme, the Content Commissioner will decide whether the contribution should be subtitled or dubbed. Usually, and when time allows, it will be desirable to hear the original language with Welsh subtitles on the screen, but it will also be necessary to ensure access for those who are visually impaired. The supplier should contact S4C for guidance as soon as possible. Whichever method is used, it should be ensured that the translation reflects the true meaning of the original language.

5.3 S4C welcomes the use of sign language, such as BSL and Makaton, as part of our content, as part of our aim to be a channel that reflects the whole of Wales. If the use of sign language is envisaged, this should be discussed with the Content Commissioner as soon as possible and any sign language should be supported by spoken language, be that as part of the on-screen conversation or within a voiceover.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA

6.1 S4C uses social media as a publishing platform. This ranges from short-form content, to live streams and entire programmes. There are accounts hosted by S4C and others are programme brands run by production companies. There is S4C content on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (X) and YouTube platforms. The use of language on these platforms depends on the purpose.

6.2 YouTube

Welsh will be S4C's main language when publishing content on YouTube. When producers create content for any S4C YouTube account, generally we expect the producers to follow the above guidelines. We will from time to time publish English content when there is a specific justification or purpose for that piece of content.

Examples of that are:

    i)   An interview with leading and popular figures which will appeal to and reach a wide audience and attract people to S4C's other content in Welsh.

ii)   Content produced in Welsh and English that teaches people about Wales and the Welsh language.
iii) Content clipped from S4C's main content, which is likely to reach a wider audience on YouTube bringing viewers to S4C's Welsh-language content.
iv)   Sports or events with a choice of Welsh or English commentary (where rights permit).

We will ensure that the balance of content across the service is predominantly in Welsh.

7. RESOURCES

There are a number of openly available resources to help ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of linguistic forms, phrases and specific words.

7.1 Dictionaries and terminology

- **Geiriadur yr Academi** – English to Welsh dictionary only: https://geiriaduracademi.org
- **Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru** – includes historical as well as contemporary Welsh forms: www.geiriadur.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html
- **Gweiadur** – a Welsh–English dictionary and online thesaurus, which also contains idiomatic phrases and verb conjugations. You will need to create an account to use this website: www.gweiadur.com
- **BydTermCymru** – a database of official Welsh Government terminology, standard source for new terminology: https://www.llyw.cymru/bydtermcymru/search
- **List of Standardised Welsh Place Names** – a list created and maintained by the Welsh Language Commissioner: www.commissionerygymraeg.wales/policy-and-research/place-names. The Commissioner can be contacted directly for advice on how to use place names using this email address post@cyg-wlc.cymru
- **International Place Names** – a list which is the result of joint standardization work between the Welsh Government's Translation Service and the Welsh Language Commissioner's Place Name Standardisation Panel: www.gov.wales/bydtermcymru/international-place-names
- **Wales National Terminology Portal** – specialist glossaries of terminology by Bangor University: https://termau.cymru
- **Y Termiadur Addysg** – a list of standard terms used in the national curriculum, and education: www.termiaduraddysg.cymru
- **Termau'r Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol** – glossaries of higher education specialist terminology from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol https://colegcymraeg.ac.uk/termau

7.2 Grammatical and editorial support

- **Cysgeir and Cysill** – spelling and grammar support for creating Welsh documents, by Bangor University – there is a free online version and it can also be added to Word in Microsoft Windows: www.cysgliad.com
- **Yr Arddulliadur (Welsh Language Style Guide)** – guidance on style and grammar from the Welsh Government Translation Service: www.llyw.cymru/bydtermcymru/style-guide
- **Cymraeg Clir** – guidance on writing from Canolfan Bedwyr at Bangor University: www.bangor.ac.uk/canolfanbedwyr/cymraeg_clir.php.en

7.3 Other resources

- **National Corpus of Contemporary Welsh** – it is possible to browse the Corpus to see how specific Welsh words are used in different contexts: https://corcencc.cymru//
- **Microsoft language pack** – it is possible to install a Welsh language package in Windows, and then install Welsh as a document language in Word, Outlook and other programmes – this can avoid autocorrect problems during the script writing and editing process: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/add-an-editing-or-authoring-language-or-set-language-preferences-in-office-663d9d94-ca99-4a0d-973e-7c4a6b8a827d
- **To Bach** – this plugin can be added to Word for Windows and allows the user to create Welsh accents more easily: www.interceptorsolutions.com/tobach

7.4 Training

- **Work Welsh** – the National Centre for Learning Welsh offers courses, including language refreshers (written and spoken), free of charge to all employers in Wales: https://learnwelsh.cymru/work-welsh/work-welsh-services-2023
- **Iaith** – this independent company offers language refresher courses, as well as other linguistic courses: www.iaith.cymru/en/training/ein-training
- **Canolfan Bedwyr** – the Centre offers Welsh-language professional development courses, and can also create bespoke courses according to specific needs: www.bangor.ac.uk/canolfanbedwyr/cyrsiau/index.php.en
- S4C will work with TAC to make training on registers and language use available to producers.

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