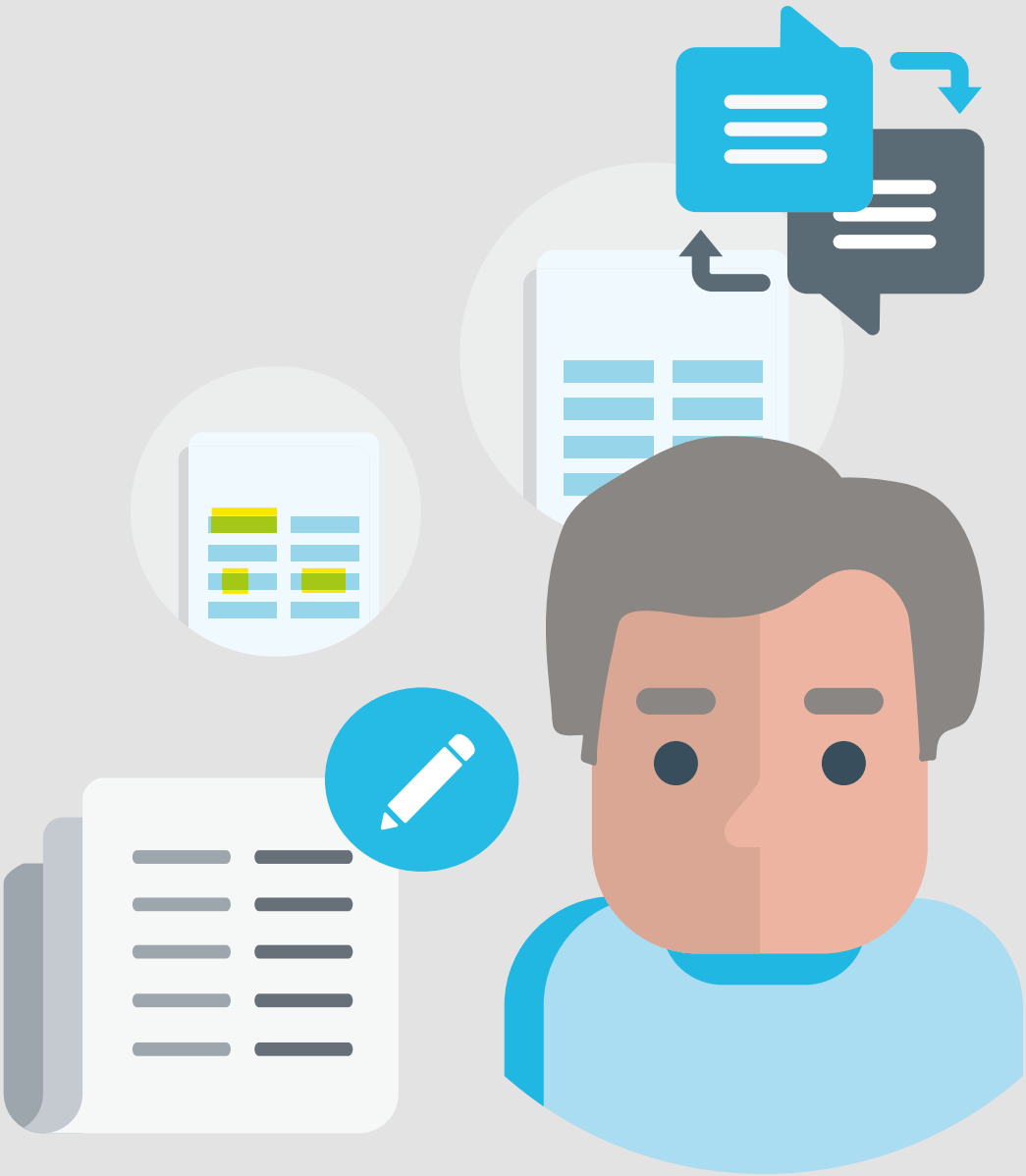
Part 1:
Bilingual drafting



3 The advantages of bilingual drafting

3.1 Usually, the easiest way of providing bilingual texts for the public is to encourage officers to draft text bilingually from the very beginning. This is certainly the best way of ensuring that the organisation does not need to depend on translating everything in order to provide bilingual services, and that the organisation makes the most of the language skills of officers.

3.2 Bilingual drafting can be less costly in some circumstances than commissioning translation, and it would benefit organisations to consider how best to use the skills of officers. For example, it may be more convenient and cost-effective for officers to draft short texts such as leaflets, e-mails or web page text bilingually themselves. On the other hand, using a translator to provide a translation of a long or technical document would free up an officer to undertake other duties.

3.3 The advantages of bilingual drafting for organisations of all kinds cannot be overstated. There are clear advantages to this approach in terms of:

- having better control over the timeline for producing bilingual text
- ensuring that the author has overall control over the way messages are conveyed and the quality of the writing in both languages
- ensuring that the correct and appropriate terminology is used and that the text in both languages follows the organisation's house style
- enabling officers to maintain and develop their language skills in both languages.

3.4 There are of course further advantages to drafting messages bilingually for social media, bearing in mind the responsive and changing nature of those media. Having officers to hand who are confident drafting bilingually means it is possible to:

- respond quickly to any relevant news stories, comments or questions received and engage with followers 'there and then'
- make the most of the short and snappy nature of social media and experiment with the use of idioms, cultural references and perhaps more regional or informal language depending on the target audience
- adapt text for various audiences rather than translate directly.

3.5 As well as these practical advantages, bilingual drafting can strengthen the text in both languages, ultimately raising the standard of publications generally. Considering how to convey the same information in the other language can be a great way of:

- revealing weaknesses in the original
- forcing the author to look again at any vague aspects in either language
- ensuring that terms, names and quotes are accurate and consistent in both languages
- ensuring originality in the wording of advertisements, slogans and initiative or project names.

4 How should we support officers to give it a go?

4.1 There are several practical steps you can take to encourage and support officers to start drafting text bilingually. The most important, without a doubt, is to establish an ethos in which bilingual drafting is a natural part of an organisation's activity. **To this end, make sure that you communicate clearly to officers that this is an approach that you favour and that officers will be given every support to try drafting bilingual documents.**

It can also be useful for you to:

- Encourage officers to draft shorter pieces to begin with.
- Recognise the bilingual drafting process as a formal part of the timetable for preparing a document or publication.
- Arrange appropriate training and support for officers to make the most of their language skills and further develop them.
- Invest in developing officers' Welsh language drafting skills by providing or drawing attention to basic language resources referred to in section five below or by providing appropriate language improvement training (*gloywi iaith*).
- Ensure that a proofreading service is in place to support officers to write text that is appropriate for publication.
- Encourage officers and translators to work together to draw up terminology lists for specific subject areas.
- Encourage and facilitate opportunities for officers to read quality Welsh language texts written in all language registers (literature, magazines, news articles) in order to strengthen their language skills and capabilities generally.

4.2 If you are an organisation with an internal translation unit, you could consider developing your translators' skills so they can support officers to draft bilingual documents. They could provide training or a mentoring service for officers who wish to draft texts bilingually as well as a proofreading service that provides feedback on their efforts. This would be a means of developing the skills and career opportunities of translators if they so wish, and would bring variety to their daily duties.

4.3 If you do not have an internal translation unit in your organisation, you could consider establishing a contract with external translators, editors or language experts to provide the service outlined above to officers who wish to start drafting texts bilingually. You could also establish a pattern of having one translator 'on-call' to proofread short texts there and then for immediate publication; such a system could be very useful in the context of social media messages.

4.4 Bilingual texts being drafted by officers will need to be proofread carefully before they are published or printed, as would also be the case with bilingual texts provided by professional translators.[2]

Please note that good language skills in both English and Welsh are needed for officers to be able to undertake bilingual drafting for public purposes. Being able to speak Welsh does not necessarily mean that officers' written work will be of sufficient standard for publication immediately.

On the other hand, messages, minutes and internal reports are a different matter, and officers should be given every encouragement to use their Welsh language skills in these contexts. By practising their use of the Welsh language internally, officers can develop the confidence and skills to move on to drafting public texts in due course. There are practical suggestions for supporting officers who wish to draft bilingually in section five below.

[2] The Welsh Language Commissioner provides a free proofreading service for businesses and some third sector organisations, up to 1,000 words. See the Hybu microsite for businesses and third sector organisations for more information: http://www.welshlanguagecommissioner.wales/hybu.

5 How can information technology support this work?

5.1 All manner of aids are available to support people to write Welsh correctly and to draft bilingual documents. Some organisations will be under a statutory duty to provide some of the resources described below, but in order to support bilingual drafting, it may be helpful for all organisations to ensure that officers:

- Use Welsh language interfaces for software where this is available.
- Know how to tag a document's language correctly, e.g. to identify Welsh language text as such when using Microsoft Word. Microsoft Office programmes, when used with a Welsh Language Interface Pack, provides a Welsh language spellchecker if the text is identified as Welsh language text (more information about this is available on the Commissioner's website, and the Welsh Government's website includes some practical videos showing how to install some of this software How to ... use Welsh language technology).
- Use spellchecking and grammar checking software such as Cysill, which is part of the Cysgliad package. See the Cysgliad website for more information about buying this software package which also includes the Cysgeir dictionary: Cysgliad. A version of Cysill is also available free of charge on-line for checking short translations: Cysill Online and a Mac version of Cysill is also available for free.
- Know about the dictionaries and reference books (printed and electronic) available to them and have easy access to them. A number of standard dictionary and terminology resources are available free of charge online. A useful list of these is available on the Terminology and dictionaries page on the Commissioner's website: Terminology and dictionaries.
- Know about the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names on the Commissioner's website in order to check the standard spelling of place-names and check if there are different forms in Welsh and English.
- Receive training on how to search for information in these reference books and how to use the information appropriately.
- Receive training on which machine translation services are available to them and how to use them responsibly and effectively.

5.2 Some types of translation software can facilitate the work of officers drafting bilingual documents too, by providing either components of previous translations or machine translations for them to use, adapt or edit. These technologies and their advantages are discussed in more detail in section seven below, but their use would save time and effort for officers and ensure consistency with previous texts.

5.3 The user would need to understand the limitations of the software, and edit and adapt the translations as needed to bring them up to the expected standard. The organisation would also need to ensure that it has appropriate internal procedures in place before using the software in this way, including providing guidance on matters of confidentiality etc.

Machine translation in the bilingual workplace

5.4 Organisations could also consider the extent to which automatic or machine translation software could facilitate bilingual communication in a bilingual workplace. For example, machine translation software can assist people who do not understand Welsh to gain a general idea of the contents of a document or e-mail written in Welsh. This would be very useful in a bilingual workplace where individuals wish to work through the medium of Welsh in a work setting where their colleagues do not understand the language. For example, an employee who does not speak Welsh could acquire a general understanding of the content of a document or e-mail written by another colleague in Welsh, without the need for the person drafting to translate everything. However, please note that machine translation cannot be completely relied upon to answer messages.

5.5 The National Assembly for Wales has innovated in this field by working with Microsoft to ensure that Welsh is one of the languages offered by Microsoft Translator. This means that machine translations can be viewed in Microsoft packages, including Word and Outlook, without the user needing to employ an external machine translation service.

5.6 Before adopting this practice, detailed guidance should be prepared for officers on how best to use this software, drawing specific attention to both the advantages and risks.

5.7 For one thing, it is important to emphasise that the translation provided would be a rough translation, and it may be that a specific emphasis or detail would be lost in such a translation. The accuracy of text produced by machine cannot be wholly relied upon, even if, at first glance, the translation appears to be neat and accurate. Although the outcome from using this type of software is generally very good – and is improving constantly as the technology evolves – they are not always reliable, even in providing a rough translation for the purposes of internal discussion. For example, the software does not always identify the negative in Welsh, which can produce a translation with the exact opposite meaning of the original!

5.8 Such software can not be completely relied upon even to provide quick and easy translations, and a translation produced by machine should certainly not be published without it being edited thoroughly by a human translator. Machine translation can also not be relied upon to provide the most succinct translation, a relevant consideration when it comes to the character limits in a Twitter message, for example.

Machine translation software should not be relied upon at the expense of developing the language skills of officers and increasing their confidence to read and understand written Welsh for themselves. However, using this software can contribute towards developing skills and confidence.