
Student Loans Company Limited

Welsh Language Scheme

<This scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board under Section 14 of the Act. It came into effect on 17th March 2009.>

1. Introduction

Under the Welsh Language Act 1993 every public body providing services to the public in Wales has to prepare a scheme setting out how it will provide those services in Welsh.

The Student Loans Company has adopted the principle that in the provision of public services in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh Languages on the basis of equality.

It describes how we will give effect, so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practical, to the principle established by the Welsh Language Act that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

The scheme covers the services that we provide to the public in Wales.

In this scheme, the term public means individuals, legal persons and corporate bodies. It includes the public as a whole, or a section of the public, as well as individual members of the public. The term includes voluntary organisations and charities. Directors and others representing limited companies are also within the meaning of the term 'public'. It does not, however, include persons who are acting in a capacity which is representative of the Crown, Government or the State. It also does not generally include people in the higher or further education sectors – that is, people with whom we have essentially business relationships, such as local authority staff or administrators at universities, schools and colleges. Consequently, persons who fulfil official functions of a public nature, even though they are legal persons, do not come within the meaning of the word *public* when they are fulfilling those official functions: they are our business partners rather than our end customers.

Further information about the scope and purpose of Welsh language schemes can be found in the Welsh Language Board's guidelines (www.welsh-language-board.org.uk).

2. Background

The Student Loans Company (SLC) is a Non-Departmental Public Body, which carries out administration of student support on behalf of the 4 education departments of the United Kingdom. In Wales, these functions are primarily undertaken on behalf of the Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, (DCELLS) in the Welsh Assembly Government. The exception to this is the Repayment of Fixed-Rate Loans, for which the repayments arrangements are undertaken on behalf of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) in the UK government. The Company has committed to DCELLS to uphold the principles of this scheme in any service developments funded by DCELLS.

- it provides the means whereby students can apply, either on paper or using the Internet, for student finance products in respect of higher and further education courses. These products are provided under the brand of "Student Finance Wales" and are provided on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. The products comprise of loans and grants to assist with HE costs such as living expenses; tuition fees; books and materials and other costs higher education students may incur. There are also grants for students in further education, and an Education Maintenance Allowances for students in sixth-form and similar study;

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- it conducts assessments for further education support products and provides the system which Local Authorities (LAs) use to assess higher education support awards. It communicates the results of all these assessments to students, and provides correspondence with students on behalf of LAs;
 - it provides the Student Finance Wales website, contact centre (“Student Finance Wales Contact Centre” or SFWCC) and some of the public information documentation; and
 - it collects repayments of student loans and provides customer service to people who are repaying loans, on two different statutory bases.

SLC is based in Glasgow, Colwyn Bay, and Darlington. In order to provide customer services through the medium of Welsh, we have established the SFWCC in Colwyn Bay and this became operational for the provision of bilingual telephone services from spring 2006, employing about 30 people. SFWCC will provide service in both English and Welsh for the public in Wales¹.

3. Service Planning and Delivery

Policies, legislation and initiatives

Our policies, initiatives and services will be consistent with this scheme. They will support the use of Welsh and will, whenever possible, help the public in Wales to use Welsh as part of their day to day lives.

When we contribute to the development or delivery of policies, initiatives, services or new legislation led by other organisations, we will do so in a way which is consistent with this scheme.

Delivering services

Our normal practice will be to ensure that our services are available to the public in Welsh. Customers will wherever practicable have the choice of interacting with Student Finance Wales services through either language at each point of contact and to change between Welsh and English language at their convenience.

In this scheme, we describe three different categories of service, and the Welsh language facilities available for each reflect the priority of them from a language point of view which we have agreed with the Welsh Language Board. They are:

- *Student Finance Wales*: application, assessment and payment of grants, loans and bursaries for students who are in or who are going to university, college or school, along with the advice and information we give them and the support we provide for their queries; this is the highest priority service area for bilingual service provision.

¹ Students are entitled to Student Finance Wales products if, before they go to university or college, they were normally living in Wales. Students frequently travel to other parts of the UK to study and indeed some may have to do so to access courses in certain subjects. Students from Wales who leave Wales to study receive the same service as those who do not.

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- *Income-Contingent Repayment*: collection of repayments of Income-Contingent Loans (a student loan scheme introduced by the UK Government in 1999) and provision of customer services and information to people repaying these loans, in most cases through the UK tax system; this is the second priority service area for bilingual service provision.
 - *Fixed Rate Repayments*: collection of repayments and granting of the right of deferment of repayments for customers with Fixed-Rate Loans (a student loan scheme which operated before Income-Contingent Loans were introduced, and for which repayments continue to be collected, in most cases through direct debits; and for which borrowers can apply for deferment of the obligation to repay on grounds of income); this is the lowest priority service area for bilingual service provision.

Within Student Finance Wales, our research and advice tells us that students' and their families' highest priority is to be able to use Welsh when they speak to us on the telephone, as it is when they speak to an LA. For that reason we have established the Customer Support Office with Welsh-speaking staff and Welsh student finance specialist knowledge in Colwyn Bay. This will provide for the first time Welsh-speaking advisers with specialist knowledge of student finance available to students anywhere in Wales, since hitherto this has not been a commitment of every LA in Wales. We will let the public know when services are available in Welsh.

Services Undertaken by Third Parties

Any agreements or arrangements which we make with third parties will be consistent with the relevant parts of this scheme, when those agreements or arrangements relate to the provision of services to the public in Wales. This will include services which are contracted out, granting licences and granting other permissions. LAs will continue to operate under their own Councils' Welsh Language Schemes but will be supported in doing so by SLC's correspondence and forms production and SFWCC facilities.

4. Standards of Quality

Services provided in Welsh and English will be of equal quality and will be provided within the same timescale. In accordance with the agreed priorities for each service area, the approach will be as follows:

- For Student Finance Wales, service will normally be provided in Welsh and in English. The Welsh and English text on the Forms will be side-by-side or tumbletivist so that a customer can choose easily which language to use. We operate telephony systems which allow callers to select their language preferences, such that we allow the customer to access the service through either language on demand and indeed view the same material in both languages at once where this is useful and practical.
- For Income-Contingent Repayment, documentation and service provided by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will be their responsibility and the handling of student loans will in many cases be included in documents and letters which address other areas of tax handling as well. SLC is responsible for communication and service relating to specific advice about a person's student loan account (balance, required repayments, voluntary repayments over and above the statutory minimum, writeoff in certain circumstances prescribed by law, etc). Customers' annual statements and certain other automatically-generated and manual correspondence are not for the present bilingual. A repayment portal to be launched in the summer 2008 is also not

for the present bilingual. This will be addressed when funding is available to effect the necessary technical changes.

- For Fixed Rate Loans, repayments documentation and service is provided by SLC and has not hitherto been provided routinely in Welsh. This service is not devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government and continues to be provided under the auspices of DIUS in Westminster. There is no new lending of these loans, and the number of customers is rapidly reducing, so the benefits of investment in it are very limited. It will continue to be provided according to the Welsh Language policy provided by the DIUS scheme up to now.

5. Dealing with the Welsh-speaking Public

Correspondence

Our normal practice, applicable to e-mail and SMS (Text) correspondence as well as paper correspondence, will be as follows:

When someone writes to us in Welsh we will issue a reply in Welsh (if a reply is required). Our standard response times for replying will be the same as for replying to letters written in English.

When we initiate correspondence with an individual, group or organisation, we will do so bilingually unless we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh or English only and there is a good reason for this, for instance where the letter is of a sensitive nature. Our normal practice will be to provide all correspondence to Student Finance Wales customers in both Welsh and English

When we send standard or circular correspondence which is not account-specific (as for instance annual statements are) to many recipients in Wales at once, it will normally be bilingual.

If the Welsh and English versions of any correspondence have to be published separately, our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time.

Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual. Enclosures sent with Welsh letters will normally be bilingual. All hard-copy Welsh correspondence that we issue will be signed on the same basis as the English equivalent (standard documents with large print runs may bear cyclostyled or imaged signatures).

Decision letters

If a decision letter is intended to convey policy to a much wider audience than those directly involved with the inquiry, or other statutory procedure, we will consider whether it should be treated, under this scheme, as a publication.

SLC may issue four main types of decision letter in respect of Student Finance Wales:

- a letter which notifies a student of an award of loans, grants and/or bursaries;
- a letter which notifies an applicant that he has been found ineligible to receive student finance; and

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- a letter which notifies an applicant that he appears to be ineligible but if certain facts can be demonstrated this decision may be revised; and
 - a letter which tells a student who has been awarded loans, grants and/or bursaries how much money he will receive on what dates. This is not currently available in Welsh but it is our intention to introduce a bilingual replacement of the current letter during the period of this scheme.

Although an eligibility or award decision may or may not be in the gift of SLC (it may be made by an LA or an educational institution using SLC's systems and processes), SLC is generally responsible for the communication of all decisions, regardless of whose function it is to make the decision. As well as the above items of standard correspondence, bespoke letters about decisions may be issued if, for example, there are circumstances with which SLC's systems do not deal automatically. In these cases letters will be translated by SFWCC staff, and the English and Welsh versions issued together. Very sensitive letters may be issued in one language only according to the customer's preference.

SLC only has control over the content of letters generated automatically by its systems, or for whose content it is formally responsible. Where other organisations write to students under the Student Finance Wales branding but using their own text, the content of these letters and the Welsh Language Scheme under which it is prepared are the responsibility of the author. This typically happens where local authorities write to students about their applications for student finance, and about the resulting assessments, using specially drafted letters rather than letters derived from templates stored in our systems, because there are special circumstances in a case which are not easily dealt with otherwise; or when they deal with students face-to-face or on the telephone (again usually for communication about the specific details of a particular case). They and the Welsh Assembly Government may also use the brand when producing their own publicity and informational material, and universities, colleges and schools may show the brand in information they provide to students.

Income-Contingent Repayment

A borrower may apply for a loan obligation to be written off according to statutory provision for people who suffer long-term illness and disability and decisions relating to these are communicated in the language in which the application was received. We will consider making this communication bilingual within the period of this scheme.

Fixed Rate Repayments

A borrower may apply for deferment of the obligation to repay according to statutory provision for people who have incomes below a specified level, and decisions relating to these are communicated in the language in which the application was received.

A borrower may apply for a loan obligation to be written off according to statutory provision for people who suffer long-term illness and disability, and decisions relating to these are communicated in the language in which the application was received.

Telephone communications

Student Finance Wales

Our normal practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or English when dealing with us by telephone. Customers in Wales accessing Student Finance Wales will be invited to contact SFWCC in Colwyn Bay for service in either language. Callers will dial the same number irrespective of language preference.

SFWCC staff will answer according to the language selected on the IVR. The use of bilingual messages on their personal answer-phones will be the choice of the individual. The automated telephone response system will give callers from Wales the choice of conducting their phone calls in Welsh or English. This automated service will be available to customers whose telephones are linked to a digital telephone. Our system will always try to connect a call to someone who speaks English or Welsh according to the caller's preference.

If no Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry is available, the caller will be given the choice, as appropriate, of having a Welsh speaker phone back as soon as possible, continuing the call in English or submitting their query in Welsh, by letter or e-mail.

Income-contingent Repayment

Calls in this service area are handled by our contact centre in Glasgow. If a caller calls this contact centre or one of our direct lines and wishes to speak Welsh, but the person taking the call cannot do so, he or she will try to transfer the call to a Welsh speaking colleague qualified to deal with the enquiry.

If no Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry is available, or if the necessary information or computer system is not available to an SFWCC agent, the caller will be given the choice of having a Welsh speaker phone back as soon as possible, continuing the call in English or submitting the query in Welsh by letter or e-mail.

We will consider enhancing the arrangements for Income-contingent Repayment during the period covered by this scheme.

Fixed-Rate Repayments

This operates in the same way as for Income-contingent Repayments.

Public meetings

We will provide simultaneous translation from Welsh into English at our public meetings unless we have established that all participants are likely to use the same language.

Invitations and advertisements for public meetings will be bilingual and either note that translation facilities will be available or invite the public to let us know in advance in which language they wish to speak.

We will let those attending public meetings know when translation facilities are available – and encourage contributions in Welsh.

Our normal practice will be to provide papers and other information for public meetings in Welsh and English – and for reports or papers produced following public meetings to be published in Welsh and English.

When selecting staff to attend public meetings, our normal practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary, although subject experts based in Glasgow will not normally be Welsh-speaking.

Other meetings with the public in Wales

When we arrange or attend face-to-face meetings with the public, we will establish their language preference at the earliest opportunity and, whenever possible, ensure that a suitably qualified Welsh speaking member of staff deals with those whose preferred language is Welsh.

If no suitably qualified Welsh speaker is available, we will offer the choice of continuing the meeting in English, or dealing with the subject by corresponding in Welsh.

The above will also apply to meetings held using videoconferencing and similar equipment.

Other dealings with the public in Wales

When we undertake surveys involving the public in Wales, our normal practice will be to ensure that all aspects of communication with the public will be bilingual. Whenever practicable, respondents will be asked if they wish to respond to the survey in Welsh or English. This will apply equally to surveys conducted via the Internet, if they relate to services provided to the public in Wales.

When we arrange seminars, training courses or similar events for the public, we will assess the need to provide them in Welsh. Where they are not provided in Welsh we will nevertheless consider providing the facility for participants who speak at them to do so in Welsh.

Our normal practice will be to ensure that announcements made over public address systems are made in Welsh and English.

Any audio-visual displays, audio tours or interactive media that we prepare will be bilingual.

6. Our Public Face

Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising

All of the publicity, public information, exhibition and advertising material we use in Wales will normally be produced bilingually, and where that is not practicable, as separate Welsh and English versions. If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately, both versions will be equal with regard to size, prominence and quality - and both versions will be available simultaneously and will be equally accessible.

Any advertisements placed in English language newspapers (or similar material) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual, or will appear as separate Welsh and English versions (with both versions appearing simultaneously, and being equal with regard to size, prominence and quality).

In Welsh language publications advertisements will be in Welsh only.

Television, cinema and radio advertising will be conducted in Welsh and English. Television campaigns which appear on S4C during Welsh programming hours will be in Welsh. Radio campaigns broadcast during Welsh language programmes on commercial radio stations will be in Welsh.

Our normal practice will be to avoid using Welsh language subtitles, or dubbing adverts into Welsh.

Telephone response lines and other ways of responding to campaigns in Wales will be bilingual or will include a separate Welsh response service.

When staffing exhibitions stands and displays, our normal practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary, although subject experts based in Glasgow will not normally be Welsh-speaking.

Publications

Our normal practice will be to publish material made available to the public bilingually, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document.

If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately (for instance, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), both versions will be of equal size and quality - and our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. The SLC will ensure that our end customers, are informed that the material is available in the other language.

We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Board, to identify objectively when material should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents.

If not available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be greater than that of a single language publication - and the price of separate, Welsh and English versions will be the same.

The above will also apply to material made available electronically on our website, on CD-Rom or otherwise.

We will prepare a programme, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, setting out how we will increase the availability of bilingual publications, over time.

Websites

Our websites will include pages in both Welsh and English.

Our normal practice will be to provide Welsh versions of the interactive pages on our websites. Student Finance Wales customers will be able to access application processes, support forecasting tools and any other interactive material we provide in both languages and will be able to change language without having to restart their interaction.

When designing new websites, or redeveloping our existing websites, we will take into account the Welsh Language Board's *Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards*, and any other guidelines issued by the Board with regard to developing websites.

Whenever we post English language publications on our websites, the Welsh versions will be posted at the same time, if available.

Forms and associated explanatory material

Our normal practice will be to ensure that all forms and associated explanatory material for use by the public in Wales will be fully bilingual, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. This will include interactive forms published on our websites.

If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately (for instance, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), both versions will be of equal size and quality - and we will ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. The SLC will ensure that our end customers, eligible for the Welsh language services described in this scheme, are informed that the material is available in the other language.

We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Board, to identify objectively when forms should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents.

When we enter information on bilingual forms that are sent to the public for the purposes of Student Finance Wales, we will do so in both languages. However, if we enter information that customers have provided previously and which has been stored in our databases, that information will appear in the language and format in which it was captured.

When other organisations distribute forms on our behalf, we will ensure that they do so in accordance with the above.

We will prepare a programme, to be agreed with the Welsh Language Board, to make material available bilingually where it is currently provided in separate languages – for example, requiring someone who has received a document in English to subsequently request a Welsh version – or where there are differences in scope between the English and Welsh versions of a document (this scenario is confined to temporary situations).

Corporate identity

Student Finance Wales will adopt a bilingual corporate identity in Wales. Its name, contact details, logo, slogans and other standard information will appear in Welsh and English on all material which displays its corporate identity. This includes Student Finance Wales stationery used at public events. During the course of this scheme we will consider extending this presentation to Income Contingent Repayment customers, so that students currently in higher education do not notice a change in corporate identity quality between study and repayment.

SLC trades under a number of brands, serving different customer groups and UK territories. Members of the public in Wales are likely to encounter the following brands:

- **Student Finance Wales**, which is the brand under which new loans and grants are delivered to students from Wales, wherever they may study. This brand is promoted on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government and is used by SLC, local authorities in Wales and by the Welsh Assembly Government; it is also seen at educational institutions (in both higher and further education) which operate courses for which student finance is available. This brand is fully bilingual.
- **Student Loans Company**, which is the Company's own brand operated throughout the UK and abroad wherever Mortgage-Style Loans are being collected from borrowers who have them. It is also used for the payment of student loans for students from Scotland. This brand is promoted only by SLC in its own right and relates only to products and processes whose policy has not been devolved to Wales. This brand is not bilingual.

In addition customers who normally live outside Wales may receive student finance under the brands **Student Finance Direct** (students from England and from EU / EEA Member States other than the UK) and **Student Finance Northern Ireland** (Northern Ireland) where they are funded by those administrations. These brands are outwith the scope of the Welsh Language Act and their customers will not need to access our services through the medium of Welsh. They are therefore not bilingual and are not covered by this Scheme.

Signs in Wales

Our normal practice will be to ensure that all of our permanent and temporary signs, which give information to the public, will be bilingual with the Welsh and English text being treated equally with regard to size, legibility and prominence.

We will adhere to this practice whenever signs are being installed for the first time, or whenever we are replacing signs.

If separate Welsh and English signs are provided, they will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence.

The above will apply to all types of signs, including electronic signs.

Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices

Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices placed in English language newspapers (or similar media) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual, or appear as separate Welsh and English versions. Notices will be in Welsh in Welsh language publications.

The Welsh and English versions will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence – whether produced as a single bilingual version, or as separate Welsh and English notices.

In the English language media, posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential may be advertised in Welsh, with a brief description in English.

Recruitment notices placed in English language journals (and other publications) with a UK-wide distribution may be in English, unless the post is one where the ability to speak Welsh is essential, in which case the notice may be fully bilingual, or in Welsh with a brief explanation in English.

Any official notices, public notices or staff recruitment notices placed elsewhere in Wales will be bilingual.

Press releases and contact with the media

Press releases to the press and broadcasting media in Wales will be issued in Welsh and English where deadlines permit - or according to the language preference of the recipient media organisation or publication. Where possible, we will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.

7. Implementing the scheme

Staffing

SFWCC was established in Colwyn Bay because it requires access to sufficient and appropriately skilled Welsh speaking staff to enable it to deliver a full service in Welsh. Accordingly, with a few exceptions in technical and facilities support, jobs in SFWCC are defined on the basis that Welsh language is an essential requirement. We will provide support for Welsh language learning for staff where this is needed and appropriate.

We will respond to any shortages through our recruitment and training activities.

Recruitment

When recruiting staff for SFWCC we will be guided by the information gathered by following the procedures described under *Staffing* above. Skills in Welsh will be stated in job competencies and advertisements and addressed in the personal training and development plans for individual members of staff. For a post where Welsh is not essential, the person appointed will be encouraged to learn Welsh.

When no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for a post where Welsh is essential we will make temporary arrangements under which the Welsh language service can be provided (by using, for example, Welsh speaking staff from elsewhere in our organisation to deliver parts of the service).

Our recruitment process is managed through a centralised system called iRecruitment and as such is in English only.

Should any posts arise outwith SFWCC having extensive and regular contact with the public in Wales we will consider whether fluency in Welsh should be a desirable or essential skill – and this will be stated in job competencies and advertisements. Currently such functions are based in SFWCC as a matter of course because this is the only location SLC has with access to a strong market for the recruitment of Welsh-speaking staff.

Tendering and contracting

When tendering for services involving communication with the public in Wales (outsourced telephone call handling, for example) we will require contractors to deliver service in both English and Welsh according to the principles set out in this scheme. SFWCC will monitor this provision to ensure that it complies with the commitments made in this scheme.

Language training

SFWCC staff will be encouraged to learn or improve their Welsh – and we will support those who wish to do so.

We will fund this training and allow staff to attend courses during work.

We will allow staff to attend courses during work.

Vocational training

We will develop the ability of our Welsh speaking staff to operate in Welsh by providing vocational training in Welsh, whenever practicable.

Information and Communications Technology

The need to provide information and services in Welsh, and operate in accordance with this scheme, will be catered for as we develop, design and purchase information and communications technology products and services.

Whenever possible, we will modify our existing information and communications technology systems to ensure that they enable us to provide information and services in Welsh - and operate in accordance with this scheme. We will do this according to the priorities we have set out in this scheme, and will look for solutions which support Welsh language when purchasing new packages and selecting vendors.

As we develop or procure ICT systems we will take into account the Board's *Bilingual Software Guidelines and Standards*.

Partnership working

When we are the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, we will ensure that any public service aspects comply with this scheme.

When we join a partnership which another organisation is leading, our input to the partnership will comply with this scheme and we will encourage the other partners to comply.

When we are a partner in a consortium, we will encourage the consortium to comply with this scheme. When acting in the name of the consortium, we will operate in accordance with this scheme.

The above refers only to partnerships dealing with services available to the public in Wales.

Internal arrangements

The measures in this scheme carry the full **authority**, support and approval of our organisation.

Operating in accordance with the scheme will be a **compliance** issue.

Managers will have the **responsibility** of implementing those aspects of the scheme relevant to their work.

We will appoint a senior member of staff to **coordinate** the work required to deliver, monitor and review this scheme.

We will prepare, and continuously update, a detailed **action plan** to be agreed with the Board, setting out how we will ensure that we will operate in accordance with this scheme. The action plan will come into effect on the date on which the scheme comes into effect. The plan will include targets, deadlines and a report on progress against each target.

The scheme will be **publicised** to our staff, and to the public in Wales. It will be published on the Student Finance Wales website in a prominent place.

Existing desk instructions, or similar guidance used by our staff, will be amended to reflect the measures contained in this scheme.

We will arrange **briefing and training** sessions for our staff to increase awareness of this scheme - and to explain how it will affect their day to day work.

We will ensure that we use only qualified **translators** or interpreters for translation of electronic and printed material – and for simultaneous translation. We will expect those translators to be members of the Association of Welsh Translators or a similar organisation.

Any form of contact with the public in Wales which is not specifically dealt with by this scheme will be undertaken in a manner which is consistent with the general principles enshrined in this scheme.

Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations

We will operate in accordance with the Board's advice on the *Welsh Language Act the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations*.

When we release information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, we will translate it into the applicant's preferred language provided that the number of words to be translated is less than 100.

Monitoring

We will monitor our progress in delivering this scheme against the targets set out in its accompanying action plan. We will report to our senior management on that progress.

Our existing monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this scheme, as appropriate.

We will report to the Welsh Language Board on our progress in delivering this scheme, when requested by them.

Our target is to ensure that we act in accordance with the aims and objectives of this scheme within four years of its coming into effect. We will use a self-assessment procedure, to be agreed with Board, in order to monitor progress against this target.

We will agree with the Welsh Language Board a mechanism to monitor our progress in delivering this scheme. Our existing monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this scheme, as appropriate. We will send monitoring reports to the Welsh Language Board, according to our agreement, outlining progress in delivering this scheme.

Reviewing and amending the scheme

We will review this scheme within four years of its coming into effect.

Also, from time to time, we may need to review this scheme, or propose amendments to this scheme, because of changes to our functions, or to the circumstances in which we undertake those functions, or for any other reason.

No changes will be made to this scheme without the Welsh Language Board's approval.

Complaints and suggestions for improvement

Complaints related to this scheme, or suggestions for improvement, should be directed to the senior member of staff with responsibility for the scheme, who is:

Andrew Day
Business Product Manager
Student Loans Company Ltd
100 Bothwell St
Glasgow
G7 2JD

Tel. 0141 243 3375

Or by e-mail to: andrew_day@slc.co.uk.

We will cooperate with the Board in order to resolve complaints – and during any investigations held under Section 17 of the Welsh Language Act.

Student Finance Wales draft timetable

Action	Completion Date
1. Telephone communication Establish a Wales based call centre for SFW customers	Scheme launch
2. Staff guidance Inform staff about the Welsh language scheme and its implications for their work	Scheme launch
3. Welsh language scheme review Conduct a review of the services covered by the Welsh language scheme, including repayment elements and customers' language choice	To commence in 2009
4. Publications & Forms Conduct a review of publications and forms to ensure that all public facing documents are produced in Welsh and English	Within 3 months of the scheme's launch Repayment elements to follow suit as a result of the Welsh language scheme review (see above)
5. Responsibility for the scheme Appoint a senior member of staff to take responsibility for the scheme	Scheme launch
6. Publicity for the scheme Publicise the scheme on the SFW website and any relevant publicity material	Within 2 months of the scheme's launch