



**cartrefi gwell, dyfodol disglair
better homes, brighter future**

**Tai Ceredigion Cyf
Welsh Language Scheme**

Welsh Language Scheme prepared in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993 (the Act) and the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations in Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, March 2006.

This Scheme received the approval of the Welsh Language Board under section 14(1) of the Act on 15th December 2010

1. Opening Statement

Aim of the Scheme:

Tai Ceredigion has adopted the principle, that in the conduct of public business in Wales, that it will treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality. This scheme notes how we will operate that principle in providing services to the public in Wales.

Objectives:

- to enable everyone who uses a service or is in discussion with the Association to do so through the medium of Welsh or English according to the personal choice of the individual
- to ensure that the services available through the medium of Welsh are high quality services
- to promote the use of the Welsh language in the community
- to encourage others to promote and use the Welsh language
- to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in the workplace

The Association acknowledges that members of the public can express their opinions and needs better in their chosen language. It also acknowledges that enabling the public to use the Welsh language is a matter of good practice rather than a concession, and that denying them the right to use their chosen language could place them in a disadvantaged position. The Association will therefore offer the public the right to choose which language to use when dealing with it, in accordance with the principle above.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background and Corporate Values

Tai Ceredigion is a not-for-profit housing organisation which is registered with the Welsh Assembly Government as a Registered Social Landlord, registration number L151.

2.1.1 Tai Ceredigion is also registered with the Financial Services Authority as an Industrial and Provident Society with charitable objects, with registration number 30701R.

The Company was created on 30th November 2009 specifically to receive the housing stock from Ceredigion County Council

Tai Ceredigion is a new, local, not-for-profit housing organisation. As with all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Wales, it is registered with and regulated by the Welsh Assembly Government.

2.1.2 The Association is formed for the benefit of communities in areas in which the Association owns or manages housing stock and being primarily in Ceredigion.

2.1.3 Tai Ceredigion is registered with the Financial Services Authority (FSA) as an Industrial and Provident Society with charitable objects. The registered office is Unit 4, Pont Steffan Business Park, Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 7HH

2.1.4 It is a body whose primary purpose is to provide affordable rented housing to people in housing need. Tai Ceredigion was established with the help of Ceredigion County Council specifically to supply high quality affordable housing and excellent housing services to the people in Ceredigion and ensure that all the properties improved to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

The Tai Ceredigion has a vision to be:

“A first class bilingual landlord and employer that puts tenants first, provides quality homes and benefits communities and the local economy”.

2.1.5 Tai Ceredigion’s objects are to carry on for the benefit of the community in which the association owns or manages housing and being primarily in Ceredigion;

- the business of providing housing, accommodation, and assistance to help house people and associated facilities and amenities for poor people or for the relief of aged, disabled, handicapped (whether physically or mentally) or chronically sick people,
- any other charitable object that can be carried out by an Industrial and Provident Society registered as a social landlord with WAG.

In furtherance of the charitable objects in rule A2 and in accordance with these rules the association will (without limitation):

- be based in Ceredigion,
- have the Welsh Language at the heart of its business,
- be a good employer with opportunities for career development for employees,
- focus on meeting the housing and employment needs of local people
- strive to improve the local economy,
- have an inclusive board comprised equally of Council nominees, tenants and independent board members,
- encourage its tenants to become shareholding members,
- be a good landlord which attends to repairs promptly and provides accessible services at affordable rents,
- pay attention to the county of Ceredigion's wider regeneration and community development needs,
- value meaningful tenant involvement in policy development, service delivery and forward investment.

2.2 Structure and Area of Operation

- It is Tai Ceredigion's aim to encourage as many tenants as possible to become shareholders, and although it is also the intention to encourage individuals from the wider community to join, the majority of shareholders must be tenants. All tenants are entitled to apply for membership of Tai Ceredigion.
- Tai Ceredigion is managed by a Board of Management (the Board) of 15 people, 5 Council Nominees, 5 Independent Board Members and 5 Tenant Board Members. The Tenant Board members have been directly elected by Tai Ceredigion's tenants. Between them, the Board Members bring different skills and expertise to the Board to make sure that Tai Ceredigion is able to deliver its aims and objectives.

- Although the Board of Management of Tai Ceredigion make the strategic and policy decisions, some major decisions, such as a change to the Rules governing how the organisation operates, have to be agreed by the shareholding members of Tai Ceredigion.

Shareholding members are entitled to attend and vote at Tai Ceredigion's Annual General Meeting ("AGM") and at any other convened meeting of the members.

2.2.1 Tai Ceredigion is registered with the Financial Services Authority ("FSA") as a Registered Social Landlord. The rules have been approved by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Rules provide for such matters as:

- Powers to carry out full range of activities normally undertaken by a registered social landlord;
- Full power to the Board to take responsibility for managing the business and supervise the Executive and a requirement that the Board meets at least 3 times per year;
- The ability for the Board to appoint appropriate sub-committees reporting to the Board;
- Membership restricted to individual tenants and residents of Ceredigion and leaseholders of Tai Ceredigion with a requirement that tenants are always in the majority within the membership;
- A requirement to have community involvement and a community development strategy;
- A requirement to have arrangements to enable communities to take on delegated powers if they aspire to do so (with safeguards for lenders' rights);
- Arrangements for the management of members' meetings and expulsion of members and Board members if required;
- A Board consisting of five tenants elected by tenants; 5 persons nominated by Ceredigion County Council and 5 independent Board members co-opted by the Board. The rules make arrangements for annual elections/reappointment in rotation;
- Provisions that Board membership will be unpaid.

2.3 Tai Ceredigion's Offices

- In the short term, Tai Ceredigion has agreed to lease temporary office accommodation in Lampeter, Ceredigion. It also has a base in Aberystwyth. Longer term, Tai Ceredigion is considering its strategy with the potential option for a new build solution.

2.4 The Ceredigion area

- 2.4.1 Ceredigion County Council serves the second largest County (in geographical terms) in Wales. Its boundaries are Pembrokeshire in the south, Carmarthenshire in the South East, Powys to the North and East, and Gwynedd in the North. Appendix iv shows a map of the area. Agriculture has historically been the predominant industry within the county, although there has been increasing development of the seasonal tourism sector. The County has two Universities, a general hospital and several devolved government departments ensuring that the public sector within the county is one of the biggest employers. The Welsh Assembly Government has re-located one of its regional offices to Aberystwyth in 2009.
- 2.4.2 Settlement patterns vary from the more densely populated towns of Aberystwyth, Cardigan, Lampeter, Llandysul, Aberaeron and Tregaron; to outlying villages and hamlets scattered throughout the County which may only have two or three properties. The geography of the County therefore makes consultation more challenging given the rural and often dispersed, nature, of the housing stock. Overall, the population density is 0.42 persons per hectare - the Welsh average being 1.40 persons per hectare.
- 2.4.3 Ceredigion remains one of the most vibrant areas for the use of the Welsh language. A significant dimension in meeting future housing need within sustainable communities will be a requirement for sensitivity to the needs of persons with special requirements and also to those who depend upon the Welsh language as their principal medium of communication.

2.5 Population

- 2.5.1 According to the 2001 Census Ceredigion's population was 74,941. The breakdown of the population by age was as follows:

Age	% of total population in Ceredigion	% of total population in Wales	% of total population in England & Wales
0-15	17.0%	20.2%	20.2%
16-29	20.4%	16.6%	17.5%
30-64	44.1%	45.8%	46.3%
65-99	18.5%	17.4%	16.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

2.5.2 The main difference between the age structure of Ceredigion and England & Wales was in the 0 to 15 year age group which was 3.2% lower in Ceredigion.

2.5.3 The percentage of residents with NVQ Level 4/5 was 21.7%, higher than the Wales figure of 17.4%

2.6 Deprivation

2.6.1 Basic socio-economic information shows that Ceredigion does compare favourably with Wales as a whole. For example:

	Ceredigion	Wales
Households with no car or van	30.5%	26.0%
People 16-74 economically active	56.9%	60.9%
People aged 16 or over on Income support	7%	10.2%
People 16 or over claiming any benefit	15.2%	19.1%
People with good general health	66.96%	65.06%
People with long term illness	20.73%	23.27%
People aged 16-74 with no qualifications	24.99%	33.02%

2.6.2 Two areas within Ceredigion are designated as Communities First areas because of high levels of deprivation, Tregaron & Uplands and Penparcau, Aberystwyth.

2.7 Service Users

2.7.1 Tenants are at the centre of everything that Tai Ceredigion does and Tai Ceredigion recognises the importance of engaging with its tenants. Tenants are given various opportunities to be involved in decision making within the Association. These include:

- Become a shareholder and legally own part of the company
- Stand for Board membership through an annual election process
- Become a member of the Tenants Monitoring Group and have a direct involvement in the standard of work undertaken by the Association
- Attend Tenant Liaison Forum and local housing surgery meetings
- Estate and area based Tenant and Residents Associations

- Attend the planned annual tenant conference
- Participate in summer fun day activities
- Engage through online forums and communities, currently under development.

2.7.2 In particular Tai Ceredigion will consult with tenants on the improvement programme which will be carried out over the next five years in order to bring properties up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This process has already started and the Tenants Monitoring Group will work alongside the Association's staff team to ensure that the work carried out is of the expected standard.

2.8 The Welsh Language

2.8.1 52.0% of people in Ceredigion speak Welsh, compared to an average of 20.7% for Wales overall (source: 2001 Census). Within Ceredigion, some communities have over 60% Welsh speakers.

2.8.1 Tai Ceredigion is committed to act in accordance with the principles of Iaith Pawb, the Welsh Assembly Government's action plan for a bilingual Wales; and has agreed the support and promotion of the Welsh language as a key strategic objective of the organisation in undertaking its work within local communities.

2.8.2 The main contact point for this Welsh Language Scheme within Tai Ceredigion is the Chief Executive, Mr Steve Jones, who can be contacted at Unit 4, Pont Steffan Business Park, Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 7HH, Telephone number (01570) 424362

3. Planning and Delivering Services

3.1 Policies and Initiatives

- 3.1.1 In formulating new policies and initiatives, or in amending policies, the Association will assess their linguistic impact and make sure they are consistent with this Language Scheme and will ensure that the measures in the Scheme are implemented when new policies and initiatives are implemented.
- 3.1.2 The Association will consult the Board beforehand regarding any proposal which would directly affect this Language Scheme. This Scheme will not be amended without the prior agreement of the Board.
- 3.1.3 We will ensure that whoever is involved in the formulation of policies is aware of the Scheme and of the Association's responsibilities under the Regulatory Code and the Welsh Language Act 1993.
- 3.1.4 Housing Associations can contribute towards the development of the Welsh language on a local or community level and we will aim to ensure that the Association's new policies and initiatives promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language whenever possible.

3.2 Service Provision

3.2.1 It will be our standard practice to ensure that our services are available to the public in Welsh and in English and we will inform the public that those services are available in both languages.

3.2.2 The Association will carry out the commitments noted in the Scheme by implementing the following arrangements:

- organise the service team so that staff who can speak Welsh can deal with the public who speak Welsh;
- enable officers from one office who can speak Welsh to assist another office when the need arises;
- adopt systems or procedures which facilitate the provision of service in the chosen language of the person receiving the service;
- employ professional translators;
- raise awareness among the Association's staff of the Language Scheme;
- consider the need to increase the availability of Welsh language skills by means of training and recruitment.

3.3 Services provided for the public by other organisations

Regulatory functions and third party services

3.3.1 Any contracts or arrangements made with a third party will be consistent with relevant sections of this Scheme.

3.3.2 The Association will encourage others in the community including voluntary bodies and companies to make use of the Welsh language.

Partnerships

3.3.3 The Association works in partnership with public bodies, organisations from the voluntary sector and other agencies. We operate on many levels when working with others:

- when the Association is the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, it will ensure that the public service provision is compliant with the Language Scheme
- when the Association joins a partnership led by another body, the Association's input to the partnership will comply with the Language Scheme and the Association will encourage other parties to comply
- when the Association is a partner in a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt a language policy. When acting publicly in the name of the consortium, the Association will act in accordance with the Language Scheme.

3.3.4 The Association will ensure that officers are aware of the requirements of the Language Scheme when operating in partnership.

3.4 Quality Standards

3.4.1 Services provided in Welsh and in English will be equal in quality and they will be provided within the same timetable.

3.4.2 The Association will highlight this central principle in key documents such as corporate plans and annual reports. It should be outlined also in other situations where statements are made regarding equal opportunity and standard of service.

4. Communicating with the Welsh speaking Public

4.1 Correspondence

- 4.1.1 The Association welcomes correspondence in Welsh.
- 4.1.2 All correspondence will be dealt with promptly and correspondence through the medium of Welsh should not in itself lead to delay.
- 4.1.3 When someone writes to us in Welsh, we will provide a reply in Welsh (if a reply is needed).
- 4.1.4 All correspondence following a telephone or face-to-face conversation in Welsh or a meeting where it was established that Welsh is the preferred language of the person will be in Welsh or bilingual.
- 4.1.5 When we commence correspondence with an individual, group or organisation, we will do so bilingually unless we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh or in English only.
- 4.1.6 When we send out standard correspondence or a circular to a wide audience, it will be bilingual unless we know that every recipient would prefer to receive it in Welsh or in English only.
- 4.1.7 If a separate Welsh and English language version of any correspondence must be published, our standard practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time and for the same price (if relevant).
- 4.1.8 We will keep a record of those persons who have expressed their language preference
- 4.1.9 We will agree arrangements for correspondence and for arranging translation.

4.2 Communication over the telephone

- 4.2.1 The Association welcomes telephone calls in Welsh and our standard practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or in English when dealing with us over the telephone.
- 4.2.2 Our switchboard staff will answer telephone calls with a bilingual greeting.
- 4.2.3 In order to achieve the aim of treating the Welsh and English languages on an equal basis, we will take the following steps to enable Welsh speakers to proceed with the Association in Welsh over the telephone:
- ensure that we have bilingual switchboard/reception officers, by means of training/recruitment
 - provide an internal directory of Welsh speakers to whom calls can be transferred
 - provide staff with guidelines on how to deal with telephone calls from Welsh speakers and ensure that they are familiar with the arrangements

4.3 Public Meetings

- 4.3.1 When public meetings are held by the Association, including conferences and other similar events, those present will be welcome to contribute through the medium of Welsh or English. There will be circumstances in which it will be appropriate on the basis of information, to hold all the activities bilingually, in Welsh only or in English only.
- 4.3.2 We will invite attendees to inform the organisers whether they wish to use Welsh or English.
- 4.3.3 The organiser will assess whether translation facilities are needed. As well as considering whether the Association has been informed of the chosen language of the attendees, he/she will consider the location of the event, who is likely to be present, and the subject in question.
- 4.3.4 When there are Welsh speakers among those invited to attend, or if it is known that Welsh speakers intend to be present,, translation facilities will usually be arranged.
- 4.3.5 Based on the requirements of attendees, written materials such as leaflets or other documents used at public meetings, may be provided in bilingual form.

4.3.6 As well as translation equipment, we will assess the need for members of staff who speak Welsh to be present to welcome the public and to deal with their inquiries. Our staff will make their language abilities evident at meetings, for example, by greeting people bilingually and using the Welsh Language Board's "Iaith Gwaith" badges.

4.4 Other Meetings

4.4.1 The Association welcomes meetings with the public in Welsh or in English and makes sure that arrangements are made to enable any member of the public who desires to do so, to discuss matters in Welsh.

4.4.2 When we arrange or attend a face to face meeting with the public, we will find out their chosen language at the first opportunity and, wherever possible, we will ensure that a qualified member of staff who speaks Welsh deals with those who note that their chosen language is Welsh.

4.4.3 If it is obvious that there is a consistent demand for face to face meetings through the medium of Welsh, and that we are failing to meet that demand, we will consider taking action such as training or appointing bilingual staff.

4.4.4 We will aim to provide more face to face services through the medium of Welsh during the lifetime of this Scheme.

4.5 Communicating with the public in other ways

4.5.1 We will consider the best ways of meeting the needs of Welsh speakers in whichever way we communicate with the public.

4.5.2 The Association is committed to enabling the public to deal with us in Welsh through electronic communication, on line or other media.

5. The Public Face of the Association

5.1 Corporate Identity

5.1.1 The Association has adopted and introduced a totally bilingual identity.

5.2 Signs

5.2.1 When we renew or re-erect any signs we will ensure that the new versions are totally bilingual. Signs erected for the first time will be totally bilingual

5.2.2 The size, standard of clarity and prominence of the words on the signs will respect the principle of language equality.

5.2.3 It will be the Association's standard practice to provide bilingual signs, but on occasions when Welsh and English signs are provided separately, they will be equal in terms of form, size, quality, clarity and prominence.

5.2.4 There are processes in place to ensure the accuracy of text, and we will co-ordinate and review this carefully, especially when work is contracted out.

5.2.5 When developing a new housing estate or other accommodation, the Association will suggest a name that is consistent with the heritage and history of the area.

5.3 Publishing and Printing Materials

5.3.1 We will produce our key strategic documents or those aimed at the public in general in a bilingual form.

5.3.2 Our standard practice will be to provide bilingual publications but on some occasions for practical reasons, we will publish separate Welsh and English versions. In such cases, we will distribute the versions at the same time as each other. They will also be equally as readily available and both versions will include a message noting that a version is available in the other language.

5.3.3 When a document is published which has a price, the retail price for the document in either Welsh or English will be the same.

5.3.4 We will ensure that staff and those with responsibility for printing are aware of the policy and procedures for publication.

- 5.3.5 The Association will explore opportunities to co-operate with other bodies in producing work for publication which is similar or the same.
- 5.3.6 We will ensure that our website is bilingual and that material is simultaneously available in both languages
- 5.3.7 We will ensure that Welsh text in our publications is of a high standard and that the tone is appropriate for the target audience.

5.4 Forms and explanatory material

- 5.4.1 All our leaflets will be provided bilingually
- 5.4.2 When we produce bilingual forms, our standard practice will be to produce bilingual forms with both languages appearing together in the same document.
- 5.4.3 In some cases (perhaps due to the complexity of a form) production of a bilingual version will not be practical, and separate Welsh and English versions may be more appropriate. In such cases, the Welsh and English versions should:
- be published at the same time
 - be equally as easy to obtain in offices and other distribution centres
 - be distributed together, and
 - include a message which confirms that the form is also available in the other language.
- 5.4.4 The Association will try to establish the chosen language of members of the public by including a “language choice” question on the first form in a series. Once the chosen language of an individual is known, we will distribute material in Welsh, English, or bilingually from then on, as appropriate.

5.5 Press Releases

- 5.5.1 Press releases are a prominent part of the Association’s public force and they will therefore be published bilingually.

5.6 Marketing and Publicity Campaigns

- 5.6.1 Our marketing campaigns will comply with the relevant sections of this Scheme.

5.7 Official Notifications, Public Notifications and Staff Recruitment Advertisements

- 5.7.1 Our official and public notices will be bilingual. They will be equal as regards form, size, quality, clarity and prominence
- 5.7.2 Our staff recruitment advertisements will be bilingual
- 5.7.3 Information packs, such as job descriptions and person specifications will be prepared in Welsh and in English for all our posts.
- 5.7.4 When we use the Welsh language press to advertise our advertisements in those publications will appear in Welsh only.
- 5.7.5 Advertisements for posts for which Welsh language skills are essential will appear in Welsh in all publications, with an explanatory note in English for English or bilingual publications.

6. Implementation and Review of the Scheme

6.1 Staffing

- 6.1.1 The Association will make arrangements to ensure, to the extent that it is reasonably practical, that workplaces which have contact with the public have access to staff with appropriate Welsh language skills to enable those workplaces to provide a service in Welsh. The degree to which this is necessary or possible will vary, depending on the service and on the area.
- 6.1.2 We will respond to any lack of skills by means of our recruitment and training, or by considering the possibility of relocating staff internally.
- 6.1.3 We will set Welsh language requirements (desirable or essential) on some posts, by considering the following factors:
- The amount and frequency of contact with the public
 - The current ability of the section or office to deliver a face to face service though the medium of Welsh
 - The expertise of the post, i.e. skills in the Welsh language could be vital in some specific fields
 - If it is a post in a specific area, then an assessment of the number/percentage of Welsh speakers in the area.
- 6.1.4 In assessing our staffing needs, we will provide for a possible increase in the demand for services through the medium of Welsh as schemes are implemented and as Welsh speakers respond to the offer of service in Welsh.
- 6.1.5 Our standard practice will be to ensure that our reception areas and main switchboard can offer service in Welsh at all times.
- 6.1.6 We will increase resources for implementing the Language Scheme in a sensitive way by encouraging and supporting all staff members to take part. We will develop skills in the language as well as a supportive attitude towards providing bilingual services. Non-Welsh speaking staff should not feel under threat, and those wishing to learn Welsh should not be prevented from practising it. We will treat language skills in a similar way to any other skills which need to be developed in the workplace.

6.2 Recruitment

- 6.2.1 When it is desirable or essential that an applicant should possess skills in the Welsh language, this will be noted clearly in the qualifications section of the post and in advertisements. We will also note the level of competence necessary for the post, for example “to be a fluent Welsh speaker”.

6.2.2 If an applicant who cannot speak Welsh is appointed to a post where the ability to speak Welsh is considered essential then the ability to learn the language up to a specific level of skill, within a reasonable period of time to be agreed, will be one of the conditions of appointment. Progress towards the target will be monitored regularly.

6.3 Welsh language Training

6.3.1 We will support this Language Scheme by encouraging and supporting members of staff to learn Welsh or to improve their skills in Welsh.

6.3.2 We will plan our training programme carefully and concentrate resources on those parts of our service where there is frequent communication with Welsh speakers, or where there are linguistic requirements to the post.

6.3.3 It is useful that learners know of colleagues who can speak Welsh and we will encourage staff to try to help those who are learning.

6.3.4 Dictionaries and electronic material will be available to help members of staff who are learning Welsh.

6.3.5 The Association will also provide awareness training for staff with regard to the requirements of this Scheme. Our standard practice will be to include such training in the induction of new staff.

6.4 Vocational Training

6.4.1 Managers and staff who have responsibility for training will assess the need for specific Welsh language vocational training for staff.

6.5 Administrative Arrangements

6.5.1 This Scheme has the full authority, support and approval of the Association. The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Language Scheme and all the Association's members of staff have a responsibility to know how to implement the Scheme effectively.

6.5.2 The relevant director will be responsible for implementing the clauses of the Language Scheme within their department.

6.5.3 In order to promote the use of Welsh in the workplace we will provide resources such as dictionaries, Welsh terminology software and other Welsh medium software for staff.

6.6 Reviewing the Implementation of the Scheme

- 6.6.1 The following senior officer has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this Scheme: *Deputy Chief Executive/Company Secretary*
- 6.6.2 Monitoring this Scheme will be a continuous and structured activity. This will include monitoring the following fields:
- compliance with the Scheme
 - quality of service – to look at complaints and at the front line service
 - management and administration
 - adequacy of linguistic skills – based on commitments 6.1-6.4
 - mainstreaming
- 6.6.3 We will use the Association’s standard complaints procedure to record and deal with complaints about this Scheme and will ensure that it will be possible to monitor specific complaints about the Scheme. All complaints should be addressed to the Chief Executive, at the address given above.
- 6.6.4 The Chief Executive will report to the Management Board annually and will send a copy of the report to the Welsh Language Board. The report will follow a format agreed with the Board and will include information about the nature of any complaints and improvement suggestions received from the public in respect of the Scheme.

6.7 Publication of Information

- 6.7.1 We will include a statement in our annual report noting where members of the public can obtain a copy of our annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Board.

6.8 Publicity

- 6.8.1 We will ensure that members of the public who deal with the Association know about this Scheme and its contents, and how they can conduct their dealings with the Association in Welsh.
- 6.8.2 Our methods of publicising the Scheme and its contents will follow our usual corporate publicity arrangements, and will include ensuring that the Scheme is published in a prominent location on our website.
- 6.8.3 We will ensure that the Association’s staff and agencies are familiar with the measures included in the Scheme in order to ensure that attention is paid to the measures whenever appropriate.