

Welsh Language Scheme

Information for the public

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is part of the NHS. It is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on treatment and care for people using the NHS in England and Wales. Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them make decisions about treatment and healthcare.

Under the terms of the Welsh Language Act (1993) NICE is committed to treating the English and Welsh languages equally.

New policies and procedures

When NICE develops new policies it will take account of the needs of the Welsh-speaking public to ensure the policies are consistent with the Welsh Language Scheme.

Planning and providing health services

Language can play an important part in people's health care.

Each item of NICE guidance will remind the NHS that recognising the culture and needs of Welsh-speaking people is important and that local NHS organisations must consider whether the needs of Welsh-speaking people need to be taken into account when they are putting NICE guidance into action.

The Institute's commitment to the public

When NICE publishes versions of its guidance for the public it will do so in English and in Welsh. It wants to provide an equally high standard of service in both languages. It will make this clear not only in its annual report but also on its website.

Writing to and phoning NICE

NICE welcomes letters in English or Welsh. If you write to NICE in Welsh you will get a reply in Welsh as quickly as if you had written in English.

NICE regrets that it is unable to take phone calls in Welsh. If you are a Welsh speaker, you will be asked whether you would rather speak with the help of an on-line translator or write to NICE in Welsh.

Public meetings

When NICE holds public meetings of its management board in Wales, it will advertise these bi-lingually in Welsh newspapers. The adverts will state that people are welcome to speak Welsh at the meetings. All papers for the meetings will be available in Welsh and English, and will be on the NICE website in both languages.

Meetings held in Wales will be opened in Welsh. There will also be Welsh translation services available.

The NICE website

The main way in which NICE keeps the public informed is through its website, where people can choose English or Welsh. All NICE information aimed at the public is available on the website in Welsh.

NICE publications

NICE publishes technical papers that provide guidance for health professionals working in the NHS. Because these papers often contain medical words, they will not be translated.

Often NICE prepares leaflets for the public explaining its technical guidance. It will translate these and will distribute them in English and in English/Welsh.

Other leaflets for the public, the Institute's annual report, and any other material aimed at the public, for example 'The Guide to NICE', will have a bi-lingual version.

Bi-lingual patient leaflets will tell people, in English and in Welsh, how they can get further copies. Most NICE publications are free, but when there is a charge the bi-lingual version will cost the same as the English one.

NICE publicity

When NICE prepares information for the press about an activity it is undertaking in Wales, it will produce this in English and Welsh. It will also advertise meetings for the public in both languages. Most of its publicity material, however, is about technical matters and NICE will not normally translate it.

When NICE carries out public surveys in Wales, these will be conducted bi-lingually.

When NICE writes letters in Welsh it will use paper with its name printed in Welsh, and this will also be shown on documents in Welsh.

Recruiting staff to NICE and other matters

Staff with responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act will have their job descriptions amended and the board will make sure that it includes a member with a specific remit for Wales. NICE will tell new staff about NICE's commitments. Because NICE is a small organisation, it cannot normally make the ability to speak Welsh a condition of recruitment.

If NICE contracts out work to other organisations, it will make sure the contractor is aware of its Welsh language commitments.

Keeping an eye on progress

NICE will appoint a member of staff to make sure that its commitments to the Welsh language are put into action. Each year it will tell the Welsh Language Board about progress in all aspects of its work related to the Welsh Language Scheme.

Comments and complaints

NICE welcomes suggestions from the public for improvement of its service to Welsh speakers. It will respond to complaints in keeping with its existing policies for handling complaints.

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