

Dear

## **Request for Information – ATISN 16988**

I wrote to you on 12 January regarding your request for information.

### **Your Request**

You have asked for the following information regarding the annual costs of bilingual road signs:

1. How much it costs to have road signs with Welsh first and then in English?
2. What is the purpose of this?

### **Our response**

For question one, following a search of our records, I have established that the information you require is not held by the Welsh Government. That is, we do not hold any information regarding the costs to have road signs with Welsh first and then in English.

For question two, bilingual road signs have been commonplace in Wales since the 1970's, far before the advent of devolution and the creation of a National Assembly for Wales and Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament.

Since devolution, a law has been passed in Wales (The Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which confirms that the Welsh language has official status in Wales. It also makes provision about promoting the use of the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. As part of this, the Measure introduces a system of duties, known as Welsh Language Standards. A number of bodies in Wales are under duties to provide services to the public in Welsh. These bodies include the Welsh Ministers and local authorities and the standards include duties in relation to signs (including road signs).

The use of bilingual signs in Wales became a requirement under the [Welsh \(Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#) which became effective in April 2012 and a Welsh Language commissioner was created at the same time. Under the [Commissioner's standards](#) in respect to traffic signage they state;

- **61. Service Delivery:** When you erect a new sign or renew a sign (including temporary signs), any text displayed on the sign must be displayed in Welsh (whether on the same sign as you display corresponding English language text or on a separate sign); and if the same text is displayed in Welsh and in English, you must not treat the Welsh language text less favourably than the English language text.

- **62. Service Delivery:** When you erect a new sign or renew a sign (including temporary signs) which conveys the same information in Welsh and in English, the Welsh language text must be positioned so that it is likely to be read first.

The Standards have been drafted in a way to allow just the use of Welsh in some situations, without corresponding English text – in adverts, signage, publications etc. What the Standards direct is that if there is English text there should always be corresponding Welsh text.

Further guidance on the design of Welsh / English bilingual signs can be found in the [Traffic Signs Manual, Chapter 7, Section 16.](#)

### **Next steps**

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely