



Nina Rutter  
Licensing Team  
Postcomm  
Hercules House  
6 Hercules Road  
London  
SE1 7DB

Bwrdd Yr Iaith Gymraeg  
Llawr Cyntaf  
Yr Hen Argraffdy  
Ffordd Santes Helen  
Caernarfon  
Gwynedd  
LL55 2YD

Welsh Language Board  
First Floor  
Yr Hen Argraffdy  
St Helens Road  
Caernarfon  
Gwynedd  
LL55 2YD

Ffôn: 01286 684706

Phone: 01286 684706

Eich cyf:  
Ein cyf:

Your ref:  
Our ref:

17/02/2005

Dear Ms Rutter

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation exercise on the licensing framework in a fully open postal market.

As you may be aware, the Welsh Language Board (the Board) was established as a statutory body under the Welsh Language Act 1993, charged with the responsibility of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh Language. It also has the responsibility of advising on and approving statutory Welsh Language Schemes produced by public bodies, setting out how they will provide services to the public in Welsh as well as English, treating the two languages on a basis of equality. Royal Mail has operated a scheme for several years, and I'm sure you will be aware that Postcomm had it's own scheme approved recently on 14 January, 2005.

Bilingual services are now very much the norm in Wales. They are recognised as a mark of quality service, and contribute to the customer's understanding of what services are available, and on what terms. We believe this is especially true for services provided by the postal industry.

With this mind, we would like to provide the following points for your consideration:

- The Board agrees that there is a need to have sufficient safeguards to protect customers' interests. We believe that these safeguards should include a requirement for new operators, who want to provide services to customers in Wales, to be able to do so in Welsh and in English.
- The Board believes that to offer an English only service would severely restrict competition in the postal market in Wales, which after all is one

of the main aims of this licensing framework. If Royal Mail were the only organisation to offer a bilingual service, there would be no choice to customers in Wales, who wanted to deal with an operator through the medium of Welsh. It should also be stressed that providing a good Welsh language service could be an additional selling point for customers in Wales considering moving to a new operator.

- The consultation document states that *'Postcomm's view is that it is crucial to establish customer confidence in a newly opened market .....*'. The Board believes that to enable Welsh language customers to have confidence in the market, new operators must be able to provide the service in the customer's choice of language, be that Welsh or English, from the outset.
- As mentioned above, Royal Mail has operated a Welsh Language Scheme since 1997. We note that Royal Mail will continue to operate under a different set of licence provisions, but we do feel that their language scheme could be used as a template on how to provide bilingual services in Wales for new operators e.g. dealing with Welsh language telephone calls/ correspondence, Welsh language versions of addresses on the PAF etc. The Board would of course be happy to provide guidance to Postcomm and/or new operators on this matter.
- The Board believes that being able to provide a bilingual service should be one of the minimum standards for applicants looking to provide a service in Wales.
- The Board also believes that licences should include a requirement for operators to provide a bilingual service. This requirement should be included from the opening of the market, to avoid the need for any modifications to the licences at a later date.
- The consultation document mentions a different approach for 'small' operators. The Board believes that all operators in Wales will need to provide some sort of bilingual service, but appreciate that smaller operators may not be able to provide a full bilingual service. We would be happy to discuss with you further our thoughts on this.

I hope that you will find the above comments useful, and we look forward to having the opportunity to provide further comment during your consultation on the Codes of Practice.

In the meantime, I should be grateful if I could meet with yourself, or one of your colleagues, to discuss the issues I've set out above. If this is acceptable, I will contact your office in the near future to make the necessary arrangements.

Thank you, once again, for the opportunity to take part in this consultation exercise.

Yours sincerely

**A L JONES**

**ALUN LLOYD JONES**

*Development Officer*

*Assembly and Central Government Unit*