



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe

Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Corporate Signage Guidance - May 2020

Introduction

Signage is generally defined as any graphic or text display intended to convey some kind of information to patients, staff and visitors.

For the purposes of this guidance document, they have been classed as the following general types: identity, direction, general information and safety. There is also a section on what should be done in terms of temporary signage and 3rd party contractor signs.

Swansea Bay UHB, like many organisations in Wales must comply with a wide range of legislation, far more than people may realise, when it comes to both internal and external signage, and regardless of whether it is permanent or temporary.

Signage provides everything from our business branding and logos to vital information and directions for patients, visitors, staff and deliveries of all kinds of supplies, therefore in addition to any legal compliance, Swansea Bay UHB is firmly committed to doing all we can to respect the diverse need for information of those who work at our sites and those who visit in whatever capacity.

This guidance document covers a range of issues that you must take into consideration when designing, printing and installing signage, together with references to relevant legislation. It should be referred to in conjunction with Swansea Bay UHB's **Translation Guidance** Document: that document lists **what** has to be done in both languages. This **Signage Guidance** gives some basic rules to follow about **how** signs should be done.

It contains information that can be useful for general staff, graphic designers and contractors who may need to arrange, design and erect signage at Health Board sites.

1. Legislation

- a) The Welsh Language Standards
- b) The Equality Act 2010
- c) Building Regulations

2. Types of Signage

- a) Identity Signs
- b) Direction Signs
- c) General Information
- d) Safety

3. Temporary Signs

4. Useful Documents and Contacts

1) Legislation

There are three important legal aspects to signage, around their design and content that are listed below. Though falling under different parts of UK and Wales-specific legislation, they all have to be considered equally and sometimes getting the balance right between them can be tricky.

This section covers the legislation and offers some practical advice on putting them all into practice.

a) The Welsh Language Standards

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 is the main legislation around Welsh language rights and duties in Wales. For Health boards and other health organisation, the Welsh Language Standards (No. 7) Regulations 2018 set out the requirement for compliance and Swansea Bay UHB received its compliance notice in November 2018.

Standards 47, 48, 111 and 112 specifically refer to signage (permanent or temporary) and the order in which the languages are displayed. Designing and displaying bilingual signage are therefore legal duties with which the Health Board must comply.

b) The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010, and the specific Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 requires public bodies to work to eliminate discrimination.

Good, clear, understandable signage (especially with the use of symbols) helps people with a variety of visual disabilities and learning difficulties to find their way around a hospital site for instance, as independently as possible. It can also help hearing-impaired people as well as they may find it difficult to understand verbal directions in a noisy reception environment.

Detailed Equalities guidance is beyond the scope of this document however some common methods of combining Welsh Language and Equalities requirements often mean that an organisation doesn't quite comply with either or both sets of legislation.

Balancing a readable font size and the need to have bilingual signage can often cause problems but this can be overcome, or at least helped, by changing the font rather than the size of the current font.

The Health Board's corporate colours would be used on most signage in any case, and symbols more often than not have good contrast and strong colours, but it's easy to overlook these issues when producing local and/or temporary signs. Avoid red and green, especially pale colours, because of red/green colour blindness which is the most common type of colour blindness.

Colour difference is often used to distinguish between English and Welsh, and this is fine to do as long as the contrast issues are kept in mind. It is not acceptable to have either language so pale that it cannot be read against the background, as this goes against the principle in law that the two languages are equal and should be equally prominent. And this links to the third piece of legislation that is relevant to signage.

c) Building Regulations

Contrast in terms of signage colours is governed by Building Regulations, linking to Part M which covers Disability issues, and the current guidance can be found in the relevant Codes of Practice (BS 8300:2018).

It is important to remember this as well as the Welsh Language and Equalities legislation, as signage must take into account what is called the Light Reflectance Values (LRV) of the text and background colours.

In simple terms, compare the following examples.



The lack of contrast makes this virtually unreadable, but changing the lightness of colour of the background a little and making the font darker (as shown below), immediately makes a big difference to its clarity and readability.



By taking all three pieces of legislation into account, the Health Board will ensure that all its signage can be read and understood by everyone visiting our sites, regardless of whether they are patients, staff or visitors and more importantly, regardless of their individual characteristics and language needs.

2) Types of Signage

a) Identity Signs

These are the main signs telling our patients, staff and visitors where they are, in other words the name of the UHB site, building or department/unit. They are more often than not permanent signs, and have had to be designed and manufactured professionally, so there is usually a significant cost to them.

External identity signage can be mounted on the sides of buildings or on poles at car park entrances for example.

They must be bilingual, with the Welsh text above or to the left of the English text, and any additional text or logos must also be bilingual and in a clear, simple font that contrasts strongly with the background colour in order for both languages to be read easily by everyone.

If a particular logo has to be used, any belonging to the UHB will be available as a bilingual one, but for any not belonging to the UHB (such as from a partner organisation) you may need to use both language versions, or an English only one if that is all that exists. You must check this out first however with the relevant organisation or by searching online, and not assume the logo is monolingual.

Some examples of Swansea Bay UHB's identity signage are shown below.



b) Direction Signs

These are the signs that help patients, staff and visitors guide themselves around our sites and buildings, both outside and once they are inside, and help with deliveries to various departments as well. They play a vital role in helping people get to the required location in what sometimes can be stressful and worrying times. They often carry several destinations in a bank of signs, together with directional arrows and care has to be taken with the design to avoid confusion.

They must be bilingual, with the Welsh text above or to the left of the English text, and any additional text or logos must also be bilingual and in a clear, simple font that contrasts strongly with the background colour in order for both languages to be read easily by everyone.

As with previous signage types, they are more often than not permanent signs, have had to be designed and manufactured professionally, with an associated cost to them.

Below is an example of a Swansea Bay UHB direction sign, from Morriston Hospital.



Use of symbols wherever possible can mean that you convey the message without having to worry about font size and displaying the information bilingually - for example this on-road painted direction sign.



If an old, on-road painted sign/text is being re-done and is currently in English only, it has to be replaced bilingually, with no exceptions. If it is an older bilingual sign, it will need to be re-done with the languages in the order specified by the Standards.

c) General Information

These signs would cover almost everything else and could include for example Ward opening times, entry / exit signs, reception desk signage, individual office door plaques (not just the department or unit names but a specific person's job title, regardless of whether this was medical, administrative, maintenance or another role) and even things like the push/pull signs on doors.

As with previous signage types, they are more often than not permanent signs, have had to be designed and manufactured professionally, with an associated cost to them.

They must be bilingual, with the Welsh text above or to the left of the English text, and any additional text or logos must also be bilingual and in a clear, simple font that contrasts strongly with the background colour in order for both languages to be read easily by everyone.

d) Safety

These signs are essential for the safety of patients, visitors and staff and can be either warning or prohibition signs.

They will be positioned at strategic points to give warning of a hazard. They include exit signs, fire exit signs, fire safety signs and details about fire equipment. In hospitals they can also warn about x-rays, oxygen or chemicals and radiation. Outside they can refer to construction matters.

This category also includes mandatory signs, which are usually characterised by a special colour and shape.



This is a category of signage that can and does benefit from the use of symbols and many common symbols will be familiar to everyone.

3) Temporary Signage

The health and safety of every individual on the Health Board's various sites comes first in an emergency, that is not in question, however sometimes there will be a need to print off a sign to show people that for example, a lift is out of order or that they must use a different entrance.

These things usually happen due to a situation suddenly developing that needs to be dealt with swiftly, but this is often where the bilingual requirements get overlooked.

For locally produced signs, by which we mean ones you may need to print off one morning to put on a lift, door, notice board etc, the Health Board's intranet will be building up a stock of standard bilingual signs for you to print whenever the need arises. If the sign you want is not there, contact the Translation Team noting the reasons for the urgent sign, and that can be added to the intranet site as well.

Where temporary signs are needed for maintenance work, either internally or externally, and a third-party contractor may be on site undertaking that work, the contract with that third-party must state that their signage is bilingual.

4) Useful Documents and Contacts

- Welsh Language Officer - **(to be confirmed when in post)**
- Translation Team - phone: 44331/43329 email: ABM.WelshTranslation@wales.nhs.uk
- Swansea Bay UHB Translation Guidance (within Welsh Language Support page on intranet) <http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=743&pid=77542>
- Medical Illustration Team
- Accessibility Guidance for Signage (within general document library on intranet) <http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=743&pid=39045>
- Bilingual Signage Templates (within Welsh Language Support page on intranet) <http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=743&pid=77542>