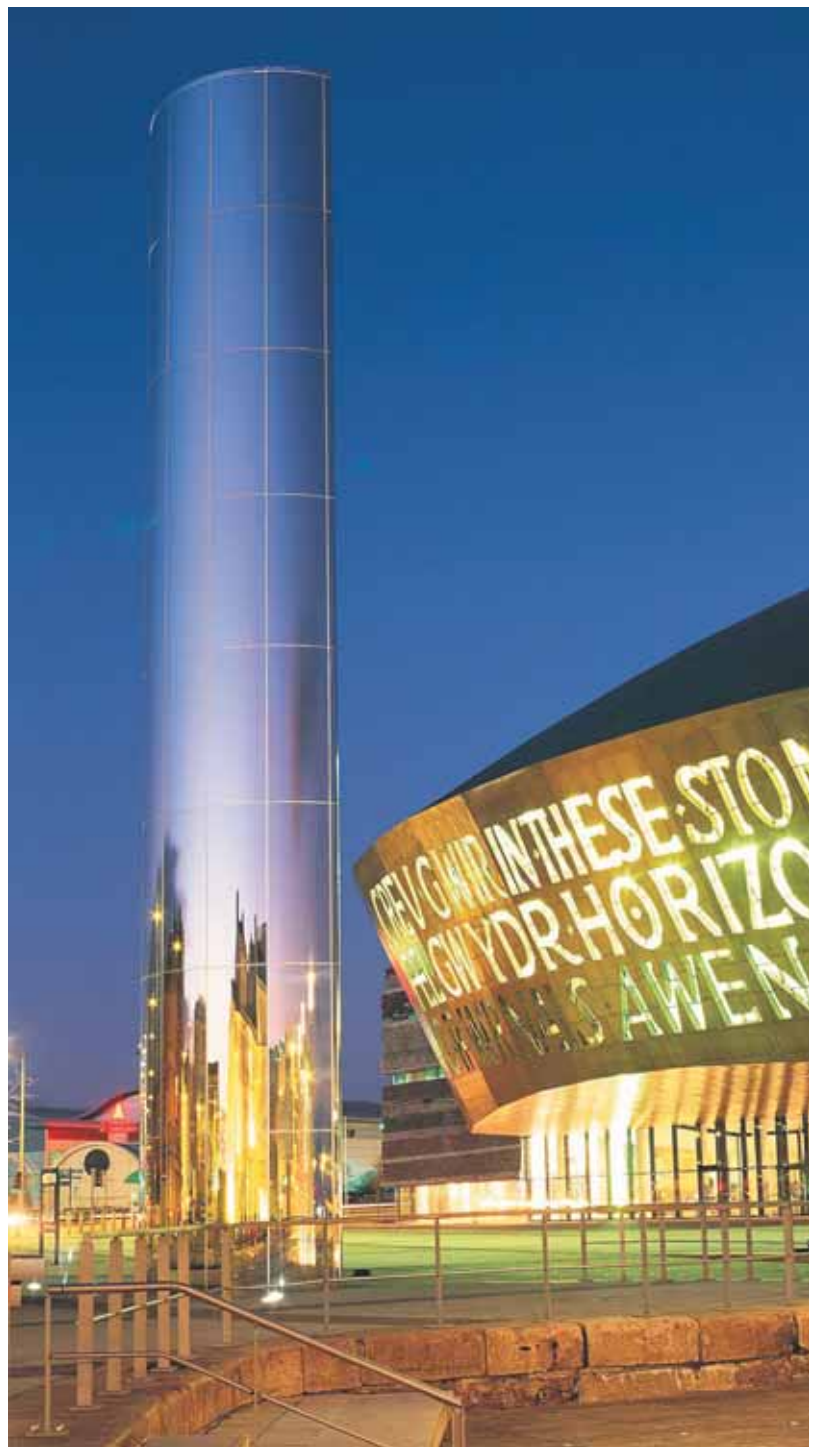


A guide to investing in Wales

Appendix 12 – Business etiquette



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The following will provide some useful 'rules of thumb' to help you work and communicate better in a new environment.

Business relationships

- The most common office working hours are normally 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday; however, this can vary.
- Punctuality is appreciated and expected. If you are going to be late for an appointment, it is courteous to phone and state your expected time of arrival.
- Gifts are not usually part of doing business in the UK. Take advice from colleagues about building business relationships with clients if in doubt.
- Business cards are not generally seen as a sign of 'status' and may or may not be handed out, depending on the circumstances. Do not necessarily anticipate receiving business cards, even from those to whom you have given a card.

Socialising

- Socialising with colleagues after work is very common. This may include group events, team socials, sports activities, going to the pub and client dinners. This allows an opportunity for informal networking, and can be an aid to building strong business relationships and friendships.
- In the UK, lunch often consists of little more than a sandwich. While formal business lunches are common with clients, the British generally do their informal in-company networking after work.
- Lunch is generally taken between noon and 2pm and usually lasts about an hour. Dinner is normally between 7pm and 11pm in most restaurants. Alcohol is occasionally consumed during business lunches, although there is no obligation to do so.

Privacy

- There is a significant overlap between private and business life. However, anticipate some resistance among your colleagues and clients to taking work calls in private time, particularly late in the evening and at weekends. Only call out of hours if you need to do so.

Greetings

- The British are not great fans of the term 'Have a nice day'. The objection lies not in the sentiment itself but in the lack of sincerity that is implied.
- A handshake is standard for business meetings and when visiting a home, although handshakes are rarely used with close colleagues, friends or with individuals you see on a regular basis. The British find the French tendency to shake hands with colleagues every morning quite strange.
- Emails should begin with the first name of the person you are emailing, and end with 'Best regards', 'Kind regards', or simply 'Regards'. Emails without these simple courtesies may come across to some UK people as blunt or overly direct.

Gestures and body language

- Avoid touching clients or colleagues. Gestures such as backslapping and hugging are discouraged and an appropriate distance should be maintained between participants in a conversation.
- The British use closer eye contact than some Asian cultures, but less eye contact than in the US, France or Germany. Maintaining eye contact may be necessary when you are trying to emphasise important points but try to avoid being seen as 'aggressive' through too much close eye contact.
- Talking loudly is unacceptable, as is shouting. This does not apply in the pub.

Business dress

- Conservative dress is the norm for both men and women in British business culture where darker colours (black, dark blue, charcoal grey) and heavier fabrics (wool) predominate.
- Some British firms have introduced the concept of 'dress down' Friday with its code of 'smart casual' but this is not universal.

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