

Welsh language services within tackling poverty programmes in Rhondda Cynon Tâf

A research report completed by Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf

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1 Introduction and background

1.1 Aims and objectives of the research

This report presents the findings of research conducted by Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf on behalf of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council between January and March 2016. The aims of the research were:

- To examine existing Welsh language and bilingual services provided by the three tackling poverty programmes: Communities First, Flying Start and Families First;
- To identify opportunities to build on Welsh language and bilingual services through these programmes, taking into account the requirements introduced by the Welsh Language Standards;
- To provide recommendations that can help inform the authority's strategic planning and delivery processes as the Standards are implemented.

It draws on evidence and data gathered through a number of methods, including engagement with officers, delivery partners and through analysis of secondary data on Welsh-speakers at LSOA level. The key audiences for the report are those involved in commissioning and managing the relevant programmes. .

1.2 Background and context

Under the provisions of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Welsh Government has introduced a series of Standards which specify how organisations are expected to use the Welsh language in different situations. The first set of Standards, which apply to local authorities, national park authorities and Welsh Ministers, make requirements in relation to service delivery; policy making; operational activity; and promotion and facilitating the Welsh language.

The Welsh Language Commissioner, which oversees and regulates compliance with the Standards, notes that implementing the Standards will mean that organisations do not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language. The Commissioner states that Standards will:

- provide greater clarity to organisations on their duties on the Welsh language;
- provide greater clarity to Welsh speakers about the services they can expect to receive in Welsh;
- ensure more consistency of Welsh language services and improve their quality.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has identified a need to plan proactively for the implementation of the Welsh language Standards, and to ensure that future plans are strategic and are underpinned by research. This is consistent with the commitment in the authority's Corporate Plan to ensure that:

"...people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are treated equally, fairly, with respect and offered a service in the language of their choice". (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2014-15)

The Council has established a Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group to ensure an authority-wide approach in the delivery of services through the medium of Welsh in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011 Measure, specifically the Statutory Welsh language Standards. At an operational level, the Council has two Welsh Language Working Groups to advise on issues including language training for staff; production of bilingual information; share good practice in relation to bilingual provision and other operational issues.

1.3 Tackling poverty programmes and links to the Welsh language

The three Welsh Government-funded programmes that are the focus of this research have clear links to the Welsh language.

National Flying Start guidance notes that:

"Where possible, children in Flying Start areas must be given the option of attending a childcare setting which offers Welsh language provision."

"Every effort should be made to promote the Welsh Language and families should be actively given the option of receiving early speech, language and communication support through the medium of Welsh."

(excerpts from Flying Start Quality Childcare Guidance and Guidance on Speech, Language and Communication [available here](#))

The Welsh Government's guidance in relation to Communities First specifies that all Clusters are expected to play their part in contributing to the Welsh Government's vision of creating a bilingual Wales, as set out in the Strategy 'A Living Language: A Language for Living'. There is a recognition that, as a result of the different linguistic contexts in different parts of Wales, Clusters will vary in terms of how much programme activity is delivered through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. However the Welsh Government has set out a number of requirements which every Cluster is expected to maintain. These include:

“• All Clusters must consider and develop positive proposals to show how they can contribute to strengthening the position of the Welsh Language in the community.

• All Clusters must consider the Welsh Language within their CIPs.

• All Clusters must have both Welsh and English names, or a name which is acceptable in both languages

• All public notices and adverts, for jobs or events, must be fully bilingual in Welsh and English

• All wording in logos and “strap lines” used by a CF Cluster must be either bilingual or there should be separate Welsh and English versions; where there are separate versions it is not acceptable to use those in one language only in any public notice or advert

• All Cluster communications in general must have and display a bilingual title

• All Clusters should build links with Welsh speaking social clubs and institutions

• All Clusters should engage with the local Menter Iaith (Community language Initiative) for advice and support on how best to develop use of the Welsh language and, where appropriate, how to operate bilingually.”

(Welsh Government, Communities First Programme Guidance [available here](#))

Finally, Families First programme documentation also emphasises that, in developing an integrated approach to family support in Wales, services must have regard to bilingual needs, including in the delivery of Team Around the Family approaches.

1.4 Methodology

Our intention in designing the methodology was to ensure that the research exercise examines issues from both a strategic and operational perspective, and is informed by the experiences of programme managers, staff and contracted organisations. The research involved a combination of methods as follows:

- Desk research to review Welsh language standards and map against each of the three programmes: Flying Start, Communities First and Families First (see Chapter 2 of this report);
- Interviews and group discussions with programme managers, coordinators and staff to discuss the implications of the Welsh language Standards in relation to programme planning and delivery processes (see Chapter 3);

- A survey of existing service providers commissioned under the three programmes: this was done by distributing an electronic questionnaire via programme managers (see findings in Chapter 4);
- Welsh language profiling based on and analysis of data on Welsh speakers in the county at lower layer super output area (LSOA) level (see Chapter 5);
- Collation and analysis of data collected through these methods and presentation of overarching conclusions and recommendations (see Chapter 6).

2 Current Welsh language and bilingual provision

This section draws on information collected through interviews with programme managers and staff and through a survey of organisations providing services as part of Flying Start, Communities First and Families First.

2.1 Existing Welsh-medium and bilingual provision through tackling poverty programmes in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Flying Start

Flying Start provides Welsh-medium and bilingual childcare provision in settings across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This includes Cylchoedd Meithrin in Rhondda (Cylch Meithrin Ynyshir & Wattstown), Cynon (Penrhiwceiber) and Taff-Ely (Rhydyfelin, Glyncoch, Church Village, Llanhari). From April 2016 the programme will support 96 Welsh language places out of a total of 716 supported places. This equates to 13.4 per cent of all places.¹ Parents who register for Flying Start childcare provision are given a choice of English-medium, bilingual or Welsh-medium provision. For those parents who choose bilingual or Welsh-medium childcare, the Flying Start team assign places for them in the nearest appropriate setting. During the research it was reported that the supply of Welsh language childcare places through Flying Start has, to date, been sufficient to meet parental demand.

The Flying Start team referred to some of the challenges in sustaining and further **developing** Welsh language provision. The availability of appropriately qualified Welsh speaking staff is a continuing problem and it was noted that a number of settings experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff to be able to deliver bilingual or Welsh language sessions.

Another factor is that parental decisions about accessing childcare are often driven less by language choice than by convenience, location and, specifically, proximity to their homes. This underlines that in order to promote wider access to Welsh-medium provision (in line with the commitments in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan) there is a need to ensure that provision is geographically dispersed and takes into account local area data on Welsh speakers (see chapter 5 of this report).

Flying Start in Rhondda Cynon Taf is opening up a competitive tendering process to establish a list of 'approved suppliers'. Those settings that do not wish to complete the tendering process and become approved suppliers will only be able to take up to a maximum of four Flying Start children. It is hoped that this will encourage more Welsh-medium settings to come on board and deliver Flying Start childcare.

¹ While this percentage is higher than the percentage of the population who can speak Welsh across the local authority, it is lower than the percentage of primary school pupils in RCT who study Welsh as a first language (19.6 per cent in 2015).

Representatives of the Flying Start team in Rhondda Cynon Taf reported low levels of demand for Welsh language services through other programme entitlements, namely advanced health visiting service, parenting support and speech, language and communication.

Communities First

Current Welsh language provision in Communities First Clusters in Rhondda Cynon Taf is inconsistent and sparse. The general consensus was that the restructure in 2012 which saw a change in emphasis and working practice with the creation of Clusters rather than partnerships also resulted in changes to Welsh language delivery. There were a few examples of projects involving Welsh language delivery which existed previously. The activities and projects named included play-schemes, after-school clubs, some youth club provision, coffee mornings, mother and toddler groups, Welsh language classes for the community, a schools transition project supported through the Pupil Deprivation Grant, and individual bilingual projects which existed through creative communities, mainly the multi arts project and the Glyncoch Community engagement and ownership project.

Of the activities and projects named, only a handful remain, and with the exception of the Porth cluster transition project in partnership with Ysgol y Cymer, only a few Community Welsh language classes are still delivered. Some external providers and clusters have Welsh speakers who can communicate and deliver some aspects of the work in Welsh. **To date cluster areas have developed individual delivery plans in line with Welsh Government guidance, this along with varying staffing structures and employing organisation has made it difficult to plan strategically to recruit Welsh speakers in order to deliver services bilingually.** There were examples of good links between Communities First and local Welsh-medium schools, however it was noted that activities delivered as a result of any such partnerships was not necessarily delivered in Welsh, other than activities delivered directly by school staff.

Families First

Families First is a multi-faceted programme that focuses on providing tailored support to families, with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention to avoid statutory intervention. Team Around the Family (TAF) is a key element of the programme. This involves planning and delivering coordinated support through various partner agencies in response to the individual needs of a particular family. This can involve support from schools, youth workers, substance misuse agencies, welfare rights officers, health workers and others. In some parts of the county borough, key worker services – which lead and coordinate support – are available through the medium of Welsh. It has been reported that family information and advice services relating to Families First are available through the medium of Welsh. In addition, a range of support offered through Families First is available through the medium of Welsh to those who request it, including support relating to attendance and behaviour, engagement and wellbeing.

Previous research into the Families First programme at a national level has found evidence of challenges in filling staff vacancies with Welsh speaking staff in order to deliver the

services needed to meet Welsh Language Scheme requirements, and to encourage the use of the Welsh language by families. As the Welsh language Standards come into effect, these challenges are likely to persist, requiring a strategic approach at a local level to plan the workforce in order to be able to offer relevant services bilingually.

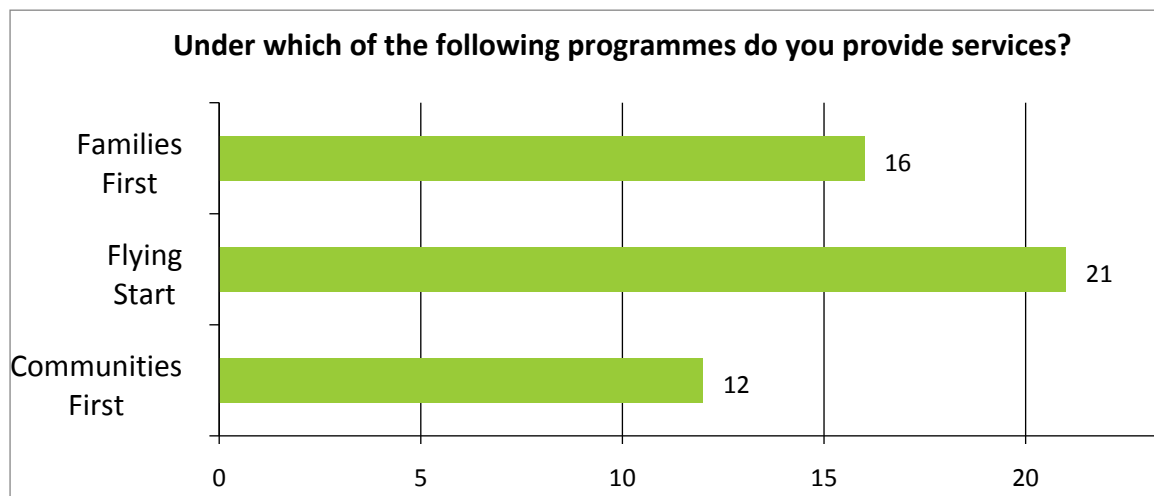
2.2 Survey data

The research involved a survey of Rhondda Cynon Taf's delivery partners to collect information on existing Welsh language provision and to gauge their views on the potential to develop further services through the medium of Welsh across the three programmes.

2.2.1 Profile of survey respondents

Responses were received from 40 organisations, with some of these organisations noting that they provide services across more than one of the programmes in question. They were asked to note the programmes under which they provide services in Rhondda Cynon Taf. As can be seen in Figure 1 below, 21 of the organisations who responded provide services as part of Flying Start, 16 provide services through Families First and 12 respondents deliver services as part of the Communities First programme in the county borough.

Figure 1: Programmes served by respondents

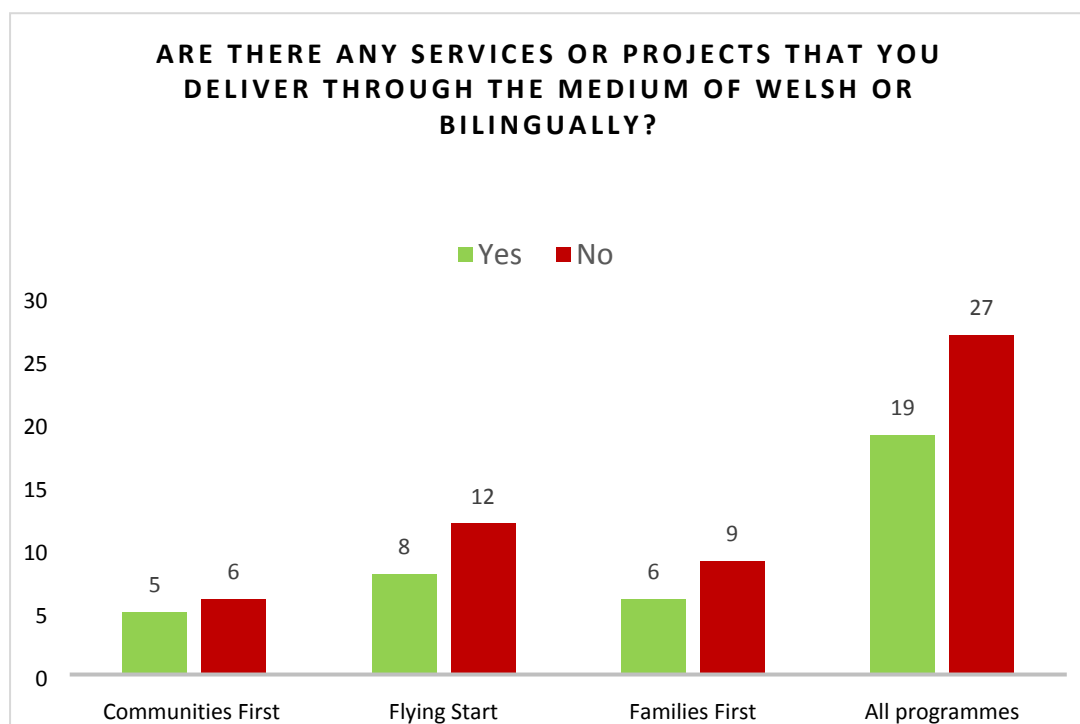


2.2.2 Welsh language and bilingual services currently delivered

Fewer than half of the service providers who completed the questionnaire (19 out of 46) reported that activities are delivered through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. This was the case across all three programmes.

It is, however, worth noting that all Flying Start childcare settings are expected to deliver some Welsh provision and this is monitored annually. The Welsh language is integral to workforce development and training.

Figure 2: Current Welsh language delivery



Respondents were asked to provide examples of Welsh language services and activities. With the exception of Welsh-medium Flying Start childcare provision – which is commissioned to ensure that parents are able to access to Welsh language childcare – much of the activity appears to be *ad hoc*. In some cases providers noted that Welsh language services are available on request (using team members' Welsh language skills).

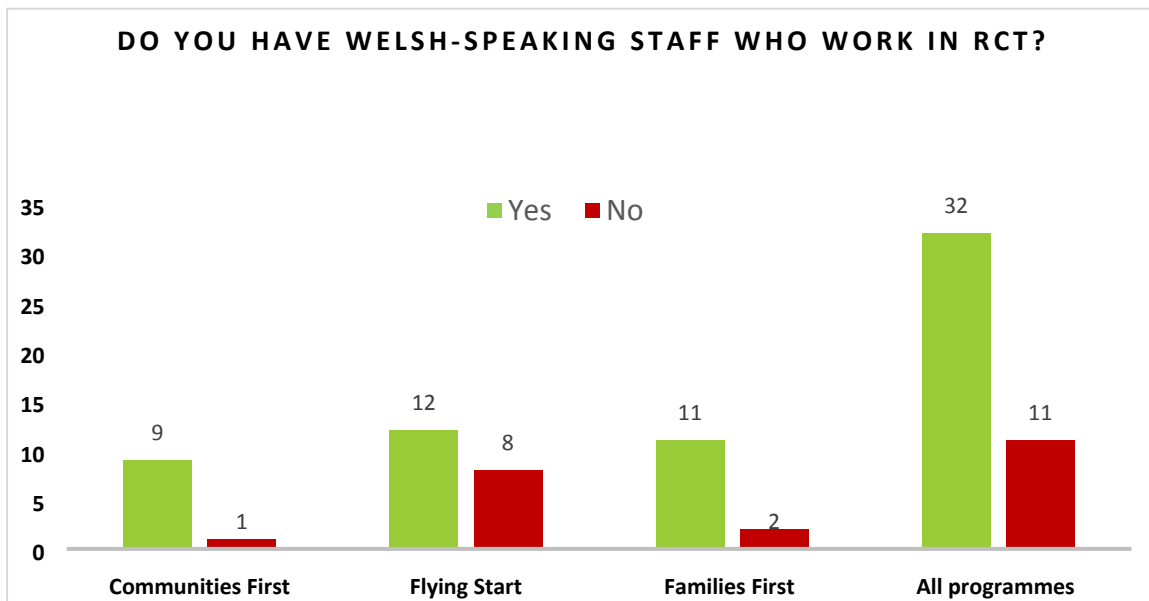
Programme	Examples of Welsh medium or bilingual activities currently delivered
Communities First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Welsh language coffee morning delivered by a member of staff who is a fluent Welsh speaker. • Advice services to families are available through the medium of Welsh if requested. • Arts-related activities can be delivered bilingually, depending on the needs of participants.
Flying Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh-medium and bilingual childcare provision in Flying Start settings, including working in conjunction with Mudiad Meithrin. • In English-medium settings, use of incidental Welsh phrases, commands, songs, counting and bilingual displays.
Families First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh-speaking key worker services as part of Team Around the Family provision is able to offer

	<p>services through the medium of Welsh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of support from Youth Re-engagement Officers is available in Welsh, including: one-to-one support to young people relating to wellbeing; support on attendance and behaviour issues, targeting vulnerable groups.
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2.2.3 Welsh language skills of providers' staff

Most of the survey respondents report that they do hold information about staff members' level of fluency in Welsh and that they have Welsh-speaking staff in their teams who work in Rhondda Cynon Taf. At first sight this is encouraging and suggests that providers have systems in place to enable them to identify opportunities to deliver Welsh language activities. It should be noted that, in the majority of cases, respondents who do have Welsh-speaking staff noted that they had only 1 member of the team who was a Welsh-speaker and that these were, in some cases, part-time workers. Provider organisations appear therefore to be starting from a fairly low baseline of Welsh language skills and are likely to require support and guidance in order to further develop provision.

Figure 3: Welsh-speaking staff within organisations

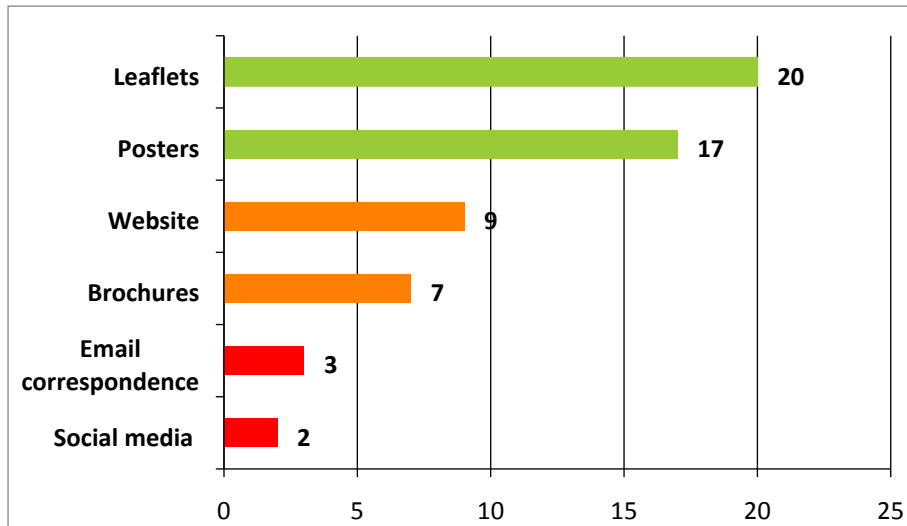


2.2.4 Publicising services, activities or projects bilingually

Service providers were asked whether they currently publicise services or activities bilingually. Of the 37 respondents who answered this question, the majority (21) noted that they do currently provide information on activities bilingually. A further question was asked to understand the methods used to publicise through the medium of Welsh and bilingually.

This revealed that leaflets and posters were the methods used most commonly to communicate information bilingually. Only a small number of respondents noted that they communicate bilingually via social media and email.

Figure 4: Methods of communicating bilingually



2.2.5 Existing links with Welsh language organisations and/or Welsh-medium schools

Respondents were asked whether they have links with Welsh language organisations or Welsh-medium schools in their area. Of the 37 individuals who provided an answer to this question, the clear majority – 24 respondents – noted that they did have such links. The examples provided included:

- Links between Flying Start childcare settings and Welsh-medium primary schools which they feed (multiple providers through Flying Start);
- Provided work experience for young people from Welsh-medium schools (Communities First)
- Links with Welsh-medium secondary schools through Youth Re-engagement Officers who work with school Senior Management Teams and attend meetings to discuss and support the wellbeing of young people (Families First);
- Provide marketing information about services to Welsh schools through the medium of Welsh (Families First);
- In the early stages of planning sessions in partnership with the Urdd (Families First);
- Work with Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf who have been advising on Welsh language music projects (Families First).

- Engagement with Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf who supported the process of reviewing our Welsh language policies and processes in response to the Welsh Language Measure (Communities First);
- Welsh speaking team member is attached to Welsh-medium schools to provide post 16 transitional support (Families First);
- The central Early Years team commission Mudiad Meithrin to provide support to childcare settings including Flying Start settings.

In addition to the examples provided above, a number of respondents noted that they were in the process of developing Stakeholder Engagement Plans and that this would involve exploring opportunities to work in partnership with Welsh language organisations and schools.

3 Mapping the Welsh language Standards

3.1 Objective of the exercise

The objective of the mapping exercise was to identify the range of Welsh language standards that are relevant to each programme area. The following sections outline the Standards that relate to the three programmes and identify a number of questions to be considered as heads of service plan for the implementation of the Standards.

3.2 Overview

There are several principles that are central to the Welsh language Standards that are being implemented. These include ensuring rights for the public to access Welsh language services across all aspects of the Council's work and that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language in the provision of services.

Complying with the Standards will require a range of approaches from managers and staff involved in service delivery. In many cases – perhaps even in the majority of cases – it will be possible for programme teams to comply with Standards by accessing the support available through existing central council services (e.g. translation, communications teams). In some cases, however, it will be difficult or impractical to comply with Standards without having Welsh-speaking frontline delivery staff (including staff in public-facing roles). Thirdly, programme teams may be able to ensure compliance with Standards by placing requirements on external providers through service level agreements or commissioning arrangements.

3.3 Service delivery

[Standards 1–87] Standards under this heading deal with all aspects of contact and communication with the public. They include:

Correspondence	Websites and pages
Telephone contact	Social media and apps
Meetings	Signage
Public events	Reception areas
Publicity	Procurement
Public paperwork	Education courses

[Standards 155–160] These Standards feed into Council wide compliance in relation to the public display and availability of an implementation plan, annual report, complaints procedure with regard to the Welsh language.

Questions and challenges relating to ‘Service Delivery’ Standards:

The implementation of ‘Service Delivery’ standards has clear implications for teams working across each of the tackling poverty programmes that are the focus of this research. This will require managers to ensure they hold current and detailed information about the Welsh language skills of their staff in order plan services and internal operations ensure compliance with the Standards. Where there is a clear shortage of Welsh language skills in programme teams it may be necessary to address this through targeted training and/or recruitment.

There are specific questions relating to these Standards. How will programme teams ensure that telephone, face-to-face and social media requirements are implemented in Welsh? To what extent can these be dealt with through central Council services and what additional procedures will need to be put in place to ensure that issues are managed effectively?

Is there sufficient clarity regarding what constitutes a ‘reception area’? How does this apply to public areas in venues served by Communities First, Flying Start and Families First? Is there a need for additional guidance from the Welsh Language Commissioner?

Without Welsh speaking personnel in place how can the implementation of a Welsh language services be ensured?

3.4 Policy making

[Standards 88–97] These Standards relate to the formulation and revision of policies in consideration of their effect on the Welsh language. This includes:

Opportunities to use the Welsh language	Public announcements
Equality of language offer and facilitation	Public consultations and collation of
Procurement procedures and awarding grants and contracts	public views with regard to the Welsh language
Education courses offered and delivered	Research

[Standards 161–166] These Standards feed into Council wide compliance in relation to the public display and availability of policies with regard the Welsh language.

Questions and challenges relating to ‘Policy making’ Standards:

How should / could programme managers and staff respond to the Standards in terms of policy making?

Who advises the individual services on their policies in relation to the Welsh language? Are heads of service able to draw on expertise in terms of ensuring that relevant policies comply with the requirements of the Standards?

Is further research required with regard to procedures and the implementation of individual services? Are there good practice examples that would be of use in supporting compliance with the Standards?

3.5 Operational

[Standards 98–144] These Standards relate to internal operational procedures that give the equal rights for employees to request and to have all or any employment issues dealt with through the medium of Welsh. All rights must be published on the intranet. The Standards specifically state that the following should be made available.

Intranet pages	Language skills and awareness training
Procedures	during working hours
Meetings	Standards understanding and implementation
Computer software	Vacant posts linguistic requirements
Information to support implementation of Welsh language procedures	assessments
Language assessments of employees	Internal signage

[Standards 167–172] These Standards relate to Council-wide compliance in relation to the public display and availability of an Operational Standards implementation plan, annual report, internal complaints procedure, promotion of the Welsh language.

Questions and challenges relating to ‘Operational’ Standards:

How should / could programme managers and staff respond to the Standards in terms of operational compliance?

To what extent can Operational Standards be implemented using the language skills of existing programme staff?

Is there a need to conduct a training needs analysis to determine what training is required by programme teams? Are there adequate resources available for the level and amount of training needed?

Will adequate time and support be given to staff members who need to improve their Welsh language skills or learn the language?

Is there a need for clear guidelines which protect staff at all levels from being expected to implement tasks which are beyond their roles and capacity?

3.6 Record Keeping

[Standards 147–154] These Standards outline requirements to keep records in relation to the following

Complaints	Quantitative assessments of linguistic needs
Procedures	and the creation of new posts
Employee language skills assessments	

[Standards 175–176] These feed into Council-wide compliance in relation to the public display and availability of all record keeping Standards.

Questions and challenges in relation to ‘Record keeping’ Standards

Will there be a central database for record keeping?

How should / could programme managers and staff respond to the standards in terms of record keeping?

3.7 Promotion

[Standards 145, 146, 173, 174] These Standards link to and can support the Council’s 5-year strategic plan for promoting the Welsh language.

Questions and challenges relating to the promotion and facilitation of the Welsh language:

What opportunities are there for programme managers and staff to respond to the Standards relating to the promotion of the Welsh language?

Without Welsh speaking personnel in teams, how will it be possible to ensure the promotion of the Welsh language in public events and activities?

How dependent on external providers will services be in order to ensure compliance with the promotion standards?

Is it possible to identify categories or group the standards noting how they will potentially impact on the future delivery of the three programmes: Flying Start, Communities First and Families First.

3.8 Conclusions in relation to the mapping exercise

The majority of the Standards can be supported (in an advisory capacity) by the Council’s central Welsh Language and Translation Unit. The Unit has produced guidelines entitled *Welsh: What’s Changed?* These guidelines can answer the questions or requirements raised by many Standards if fully implemented within individual services. Training sessions on how to implement the guidelines would help disseminate best practice across service areas.

The translation unit can be used for an extensive list of services that will help ensure compliance with Standards. This includes (but is not restricted to) the translation of policies, procedures, promotion and marking materials, audio messages, simultaneous translation, tenders, advertising, public consultations and interviews.

The Welsh Language Unit or an external partner can advise on or signpost advice on policies, procedures, and all aspects of the Welsh language standards.

Welsh language awareness courses for all staff would increase understanding of the reasons for the Standards and therefore support their positive implementation at all levels.

Language skills training would increase the number of staff able to deal with some aspects of their work in Welsh and could offer a positive up-skilling exercise for the workforce. In the

longer term, supplementing the Welsh language skills of programme teams will increase the capacity to deliver a wider range of services and activities through the medium of Welsh.

Confidence building courses would increase the number of staff able to speak Welsh to use their skill with confidence, enable Welsh learners to practice their Welsh and increase use and service delivery in Welsh within the workplace.

Internal / operational procedures, policies and documentation all need to be revised in order to ensure full implementation of the Standards.

There is a need to assess the standard of written, and spoken Welsh required for particular staffing requirements and to train and recruit accordingly.

There is a need for heads of service to be mindful of some of the potential risks associated with the implementation of the Standards. Specifically, there is a need to ensure that Welsh speaking staff are not expected to carry out functions that are beyond their remit or roles as a result of complying with Standards.

Clear procedures, guidelines and training need to be created and implemented for ensuring compliance with all Standards, especially those that will be difficult to implement without fluent Welsh language personnel in place. These include Standards relating to:

- direct correspondence, social media understanding and responses, telephone conversations and understanding of messages left on answering machines, face to face promotion and availability of the language in reception areas, public spaces and events, educational courses, services / activities in Welsh.
(Standards: 9,11,16,19,20,36,58,59,64,84,144,145,146)

There is a need for clarity and a consistent interpretation of what constitutes a 'reception area'.

We return to these issues in Chapter 6, Conclusions and Recommendations, suggesting actions that can be taken to address the questions raised in previous sections.

4 Developing further Welsh language services: opportunities and support needs

4.1 Opportunities to promote the Welsh language through administrative arrangements or project activity

Below is a summary of the opportunities identified through the research to promote the Welsh language across the three tackling poverty programmes.

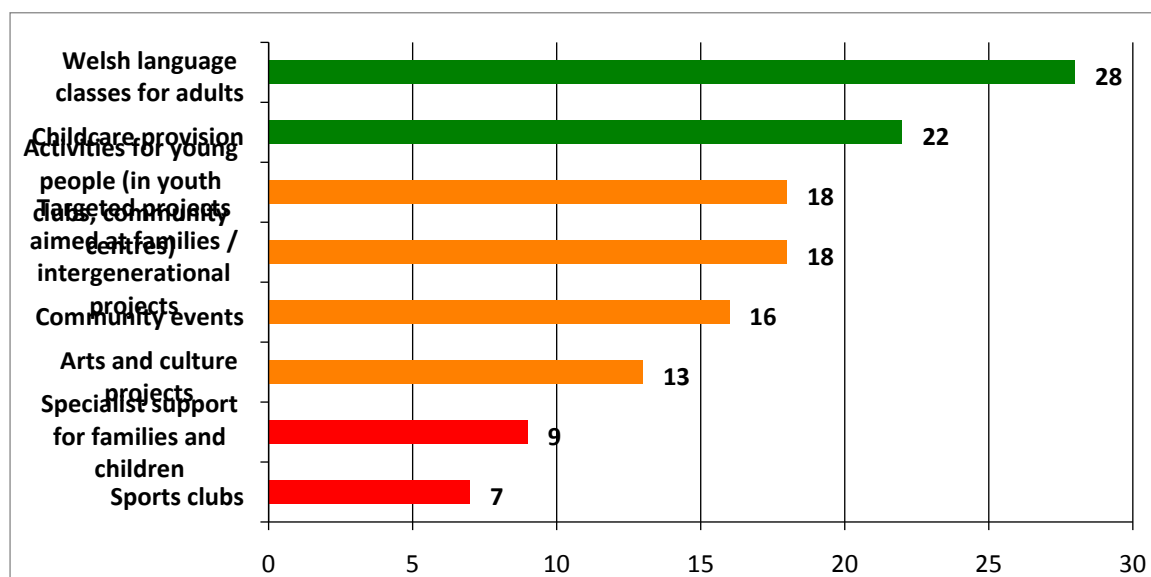
Programme	Opportunities to promote the Welsh language
Communities First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activities in the community that involves the Welsh language. • More staff encouraged to use basic Welsh, where they have the skills. • More basic correspondence and publicity in Welsh. One respondent noted that while some posters and materials are done bilingually, this “should arguably become the norm”. • Welsh language youth provision is one possibility that offers potential however this would need to be promoted effectively to ensure uptake. • Welsh language children and family activities and services were noted as key areas to develop • Welsh language / bilingual arts and heritage projects offer scope for promoting the Welsh language • More targeted conversational Welsh language classes in the community.
Flying Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settings reported that although childcare staff promote the language on a daily basis (through signage and through incidental use of Welsh) there is scope for those who work in the community to use similar practices. • The incidental use of Welsh that is used could be extended. This could also be shared with parents to encourage them (particularly those with some Welsh skills) to use Welsh phrases or songs with their children. • A number of settings reported that they could ensure that telephone greetings are bilingual. • There may be opportunities to include more Welsh

	<p>language or bilingual content in newsletters that they send out to parents in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising and publicity materials could be produced bilingually. • One respondent noted that they could include some Welsh in email correspondence. • Another stated that there may be opportunities to use Welsh through their social media platforms. <p><i>“For sure we should have bilingual telephone greetings and we could use some Welsh when we welcome the public. For example a simple ‘bore da’.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among those who noted that there were no opportunities to promote the Welsh language, some cited a lack of Welsh-speaking staff as a barrier. <p><i>“All projects and services could do more to promote the Welsh language if staff had the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver.”</i></p>
Families First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone greetings (although some noted that they do already provide bilingual greetings). • Do more to inform the public that Welsh language services are available on request. • More use of the Welsh language in our correspondence and publicity materials. • A number of respondents underlined the need to promote the availability of Welsh language services in order to generate interest: <p><i>“More advertising of our ability to deliver services in Welsh may lead to increased take up.”</i></p> <p><i>“Prompts by email/letter to remind people that Welsh language communications and support are available.”</i></p>

4.2 Areas that offer the best opportunities to promote the Welsh language

Survey respondents were asked to note the areas that offer the most potential to promote the Welsh language. Service providers who completed the questionnaire were invited to select all areas that they considered appropriate.

Figure 5: Areas offering the best opportunities to promote the Welsh language



4.3 Future support needs of provider organisations

Under future commissioning arrangements, those providing services on behalf of all local authorities will need to ‘promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language’. Service providers were asked in the survey about the type of support they would need to be able to do this. The answers reveal a clear demand for support:

- **30 out of 36 respondents** stated that they need further Welsh language skills training for staff to enable them to effectively promote and facilitate the use of Welsh.
- **27 out of 36 respondents** stated that they would wish to receive guidance or good practice examples of how service providers can promote and facilitate the Welsh language.
- Finally, **21 out of 36 respondents** said that they need language awareness training for staff.

A smaller number of respondents noted that they would wish to be able to access a translation service to enable them to promote the language in their work.

“Additional support would be much appreciated – particularly any examples of successful community projects that have been delivered elsewhere. We would be keen to learn from others working in authorities or communities with a similar language profile.”

5 Analysis of Welsh language skills at LSOA level

5.1 Welsh speakers in Rhondda Cynon Taf over time

In order to set the analysis in this chapter in context, it is worth considering trends in the numbers and percentages of Welsh speakers in Rhondda Cynon Taf in recent times. The summary of Census data between 1981 and 2011, below, shows that the percentage and number of Welsh speakers in the county borough has increased notably since 1981. The proportion of Welsh speakers increased from 8.4 per cent to 12.3 per cent between 1981 and 2011. It is worth noting that the data presented below refers to Welsh speakers. Elsewhere in this Chapter we also refer to the data on the number of people who can understand Welsh or have some Welsh language skills. There is the potential for growth in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers, not least because 19.6 per cent of pupils in primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf study Welsh as a first language (2015 data). It will be interesting to see how this impacts on the findings of the 2021 Census.

Table 1. Number and percentage of Welsh speakers (all ages) in Rhondda Cynon Taf and Wales, 1981-2011

	1981		1991		2001		2011	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	20,485	9.1	20,035	8.4	27,946	12.5	27,779	12.3
Wales	503,549	19.0	508,098	18.7	582,368	20.8	562,016	19.0

Source: NOMIS, National Statistics

5.2 Welsh speakers in LSOAs served by Communities First and Flying Start

The focus of this element of the research is on the Welsh language skills of people living in LSOAs served by the two tackling poverty programmes Communities First and Flying Start. The proportions of Welsh speakers in areas served by these programmes was slightly lower than across the local authority as a whole. In LSOAs in Communities First clusters Census data for 2011 showed that 10.6 per cent of the population spoke Welsh. The corresponding figure for LSOAs in Flying Start areas was 10.2 per cent.

Table 2. Number and percentage of population who can speak Welsh, 2011

	Number of people who can speak Welsh	Percentage of people who can speak Welsh (%)
Rhondda Cynon Taf	27,779	12.3
RCT Communities First LSOAs	9,624	10.6
RCT Flying Start LSOAs	5,215	10.2

Source: 2011 Census, Arad Research

In total, 10,415 Welsh speakers live in LSOAs served by Communities First and Flying Start, which equates to 37.5 per cent of all Welsh speakers in the county borough.

An analysis of Census data also enables us to calculate the number of people with some Welsh language skills. This has been derived by subtracting those with no skills in Welsh from the total population in each LSOA. The numbers and percentages are higher, as this includes people who may not classify themselves as Welsh speakers but are able to understand or read Welsh. This data may be of interest in the context of planning services through tackling poverty programmes which may seek to target or work with families with some level of Welsh or who may be interested in improving their Welsh language skills.

Table 3. Number and percentage of population with some skills in Welsh

	Number of people with some skills in Welsh	Percentage of people with some skills in Welsh (%)
Rhondda Cynon Taf	44,320	19.6
RCT Communities First LSOAs	15,535	17.0
RCT Flying Start LSOAs	8,485	16.6

Source: 2011 Census, Arad Research

5.3 Communities First: ranking LSOAs by number and percentage of Welsh speakers

There are variations in total numbers and percentages of Welsh speakers across the 64 LSOAs within Communities First clusters in Rhondda Cynon Taf. As part of the analysis of Census data we have ranked the top 20 LSOAs according to the population of Welsh speakers, both by number and as a percentage of the local population. The rationale for this exercise is that it may help inform programme managers and commissioners (and indeed delivery partners) as they plan and prioritise communities in which to target Welsh language provision and activities.

Treherbert 1 is the Communities First LSOA with the highest number and percentage of Welsh speakers. The percentage of Welsh speakers stands at 17.8 per cent, which is significantly higher than the percentage across the local authority as a whole (12.3 per cent). Indeed, the data shows that there are 14 LSOAs in Communities First clusters where the percentage of Welsh speakers is higher than the authority-wide figure. A proportion of these are in the Rhondda Fawr (including LSOAs in Ystrad, Treorchy, as well as in Treherbert).

We have shaded **green** in Table 4 the LSOAs which feature in the top 10 by in terms of numbers of Welsh speakers and as a percentage of the local population. The LSOAs which feature in the top 20 of both lists are depicted in **amber**. The LSOAs which are ranked in only one of the lists are left unshaded.

There are significantly fewer Welsh speakers in the lowest ranked LSOAs. The bottom three are included in Table 4 in order to illustrate the range across Communities First areas. The data shows that there are fewer than 100 Welsh speakers in 7 LSOAs, including in Penygraig 3, Llwynypia 1 and Trealaw 2. A little over 7 per cent of the population are Welsh speakers in the areas with the lowest concentration.

Table 4. Welsh speakers in Communities First LSOAs, 2011

Highest ranking (numbers) per Community First LSOA		Highest ranking (percentage) per Community First LSOA	
1. W01001265 Treherbert 1	262	1. W01001265 Treherbert 1	17.8%
2. W01001282 Ynysybwl 1	243	2. W01001268 Treherbert 4	16.1%
3. W01001238 Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 2	223	3. W01001267 Treherbert 3	15.1%
4. W01001268 Treherbert 4	221	4. W01001238 Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 2	14.0%
5. W01001281 Ynyshir 2	213	5. W01001234 Rhondda 1	14.0%
6. W01001267 Treherbert 3	206	6. W01001287 Ystrad 3	13.8%
7. W01001137 Aberaman North 1	205	7. W01001281 Ynyshir 2	13.2%
8. W01001271 Treorchy 3	198	8. W01001181 Glyncoch 2	13.2%
9. W01001234 Rhondda 1	197	9. W01001175 Ferndale 1	13.0%
10. W01001287 Ystrad 3	195	10. W01001266 Treherbert 2	13.0%
11. W01001185 Hawthorn 2	194	11. W01001239 Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 3	12.7%
12. W01001275 Tylorstown 2	193	12. W01001282 Ynysybwl 1	12.6%
13. W01001175 Ferndale 1	182	13. W01001271 Treorchy 3	12.6%
14. W01001181 Glyncoch 2	179	14. W01001185 Hawthorn 2	12.5%
15. W01001202 Maerdy 1	172	15. W01001188 Hirwaun 3	12.2%
16. W01001250 Tonyrefail East 2	172	16. W01001250 Tonyrefail East 2	12.1%
17. W01001239 Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 3	168	17. W01001207 Mountain Ash West 2	11.8%
18. W01001266 Treherbert 2	168	18. W01001171 Cymmer 1	11.4%
19. W01001251 Tonyrefail East 3	167	19. W01001251 Tonyrefail East 3	11.3%
20. W01001255 Tonyrefail West 3	167	20. W01001172 Cymmer 2	11.3%
62. W01001219 Pen-y-graig 3	93	62. W01001219 Pen-y-graig 3	7.3%
63. W01001200 Llwynypia 1	92	63. W01001144 Abercynon 2	7.2%
64. W01001260 Trealaw 2	92	64. W01001173 Cymmer 3	7.1%

Source: Census 2011

5.4 Communities First: ranking LSOAs by number and percentage of people with some skills in Welsh

The same exercise was carried out but by looking at the 2011 Census data on those with some skills in Welsh. There are several parallels between the data presented in section 5.3. Once again, LSOAs in Treherbert rank highly in terms of both the numbers and percentages of people with some skills in Welsh. Ynysybwl 1 has the third highest number of people with Welsh skills but this equates to only 17.4 per cent of the population and, as such, this LSOA does not feature in the top 20 by percentage.

Across Rhondda Cynon Taf as a whole 19.6 per cent of the population reported in the 2011 Census that they had some Welsh language skills. 10 of the LSOAs in Communities First clusters exceed this. The majority of LSOAs score below the local authority average with the lowest percentages standing at 12 and 13 per cent of the population. We have employed the same approach to identify the LSOAs that rank highest across both lists (in green and amber).

Table 5. People with some skills in Welsh in Communities First LSOAs, 2011 data

Highest ranking (numbers) per Community First LSOA		Highest ranking (percentage) per Community First LSOA	
1. W01001265 Treherbert 1	415	1. W01001265 Treherbert 1	28.1%
2. W01001137 Aberaman North 1	397	2. W01001268 Treherbert 4	25.6%
3. W01001282 Ynysybwl 1	367	3. W01001267 Treherbert 3	24.9%
4. W01001268 Treherbert 4	350	4. W01001280 Ynyshir 1	22.5%
5. W01001271 Treorchy 3	349	5. W01001271 Treorchy 3	22.3%
6. W01001267 Treherbert 3	340	6. W01001287 Ystrad 3	21.8%
7. W01001281 Ynyshir 2	337	7. W01001202 Maerdy 1	21.5%
8. W01001275 Tylorstown 2	314	8. W01001251 Tonyrefail East 3	20.9%
9. W01001287 Ystrad 3	305	9. W01001281 Ynyshir 2	20.8%
10. W01001202 Maerdy 1	303	10. W01001175 Ferndale 1	20.3%
11. W01001234 Rhondda 1	296	11. W01001137 Aberaman North 1	19.1%
12. W01001238 Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 2	292	12. W01001207 Mountain Ash West 2	19.1%
13. W01001175 Ferndale 1	286	13. W01001218 Pen-y-graig 2	18.7%
14. W01001185 Hawthorn 2	280	14. W01001234 Rhondda 1	18.5%
15. W01001208 Mountain Ash West 3	273	15. W01001255 Tonyrefail West 3	18.5%
16. W01001141 Aberaman South 2	271	16. W01001171 Cymmer 1	18.5%
17. W01001251 Tonyrefail East 3	270	17. W01001222 Pen-y-waun 2	18.4%
18. W01001266 Treherbert 2	268	18. W01001141 Aberaman South 2	18.3%
19. W01001218 Pen-y-graig 2	265	19. W01001185 Hawthorn 2	18.1%
20. W01001250 Tonyrefail East 2	263	20. W01001232 Porth 4	18.1%
	156	61. W01001210 Penrhiwceiber 2	12.8%
62. W01001200 Llwynypia 1		W01001173 Cymmer 3	12.8%
63. W01001260 Trealaw 2	146	63. W01001261 Trealaw 3	12.3%
64. W01001219 Pen-y-graig 3	145	64. W01001215 Pentre 3	12.2%

Source: Census 2011

5.5 Flying Start: ranking LSOAs by number and percentage of Welsh speakers

The variation in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers across Flying Start areas was less marked, which is understandable given that there are fewer LSOAs (36) that are eligible for support through the programme. Church Village 1 was the LSOA with the highest number of Welsh speakers, based on 2011 Census data. Treherbert 3 has the highest percentage of Welsh speakers, at 15.1 per cent. This is higher than the 12.3 per cent who speak Welsh across the local authority as a whole.

Table 4. Welsh speakers in Flying Start LSOAs, 2011

Highest ranking (numbers) per Flying Start LSOA		Children aged 3-15 who speak Welsh	Highest ranking (percentage) per Flying Start LSOA	
1. Church Village 1	237		83	1. Treherbert 3
2. Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 2	223	112	2. Church Village 1	14.5%
3. Treherbert 3	206	77	3. Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 2	14.0%
4. Aberaman North 1	205	86	4. Treherbert 2	13.0%

5. Treorchy 3	198	86	5. Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 3	12.7%
6. Tylorstown 2	193	101	6. Treorchy 3	12.6%
7. Maerdy 1	172	63	7. Hirwaun 3	12.2%
8. Graig 1	169	74	8. Graig 1	12.0%
9. Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 3	168	70	9. Tyn-y-nant 3	12.0%
10. Treherbert 2	168	59	10. Mountain Ash West 2	11.8%
11. Tonyrefail East 3	167	82	11. Tonyrefail East 3	11.3%
12. Cwmbach 2	157	60	12. Pen-y-waun 1	11.2%
13. Mountain Ash West 2	157	75	13. Tylorstown 2	11.1%
14. Llanharry 2	155	64	14. Tylorstown 1	11.0%
15. Pen-y-waun 1	155	82	15. Llanharry 2	10.9%
16. Pen-y-waun 2	150	63	16. Glyncoch 1	10.2%
17. Ynyshir 1	148	57	17. Maerdy 1	10.1%
18. Glyncoch 1	140	43	18. Aberaman South 1	10.0%
19. Tylorstown 1	140	78	19. Pen-y-waun 2	9.8%
20. Aberaman South 1	136	44	20. Cwmbach 2	9.6%
34. Cymmer 3	93	34	34. Abercynon 2	7.2%
35. Pen-y-graig 3	93	37	35. Cymmer 3	7.1%
36. Trealaw 2	92	49	36. Cymmer 4	7.1%

Source: Census 2011

5.6 Flying Start: ranking LSOAs by number and percentage of people with some skills in Welsh

The LSOAs in Flying Start areas with some skills in Welsh follow a similar pattern to the previous table. There are six LSOAs (shaded green) which are in the top 10 LSOAs of numbers and percentage of people with Welsh language skills. The data indicates that the highest concentrations of people with skills in Welsh in Flying Start areas are to be found in Aberaman, towards the top of the Rhondda Fawr (Treherbert and Treorchy), in Church Village and in Rhydyfelin.

Table 7. People with some skills in Welsh in Flying Start LSOAs, 2011 data

Highest ranking (numbers) per Flying Start LSOA	Children aged 3-15 with some skills in Welsh	Highest ranking (percentage) per Flying Start LSOA	
1. Aberaman North 1	397	108	1. Treherbert 3 24.9%
2. Church Village 1	373	116	2. Church Village 1 22.8%
3. Treorchy 3	349	101	3. Hirwaun 3 22.5%
4. Treherbert 3	340	108	4. Treorchy 3 22.3%
5. Tylorstown 2	314	123	5. Treherbert 2 20.9%
6. Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 2	296	134	6. Mountain Ash West 2 19.1%
7. Maerdy 1	292	80	7. Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 2 18.5%
8. Treherbert 2	270	74	8. Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 3 18.5%
9. Tonyrefail East 3	261	108	9. Pen-y-waun 1 18.4%
10. Pen-y-waun 1	256	97	10. Aberaman South 1 18.1%
11. Mountain Ash West 2	255	105	11. Tylorstown 2 18.0%
12. Pen-y-waun 2	250	80	12. Tyn-y-nant 3 17.8%
13. Cwmbach 2	250	77	13. Tonyrefail East 3 17.7%
14. Graig 1	248	90	14. Graig 1 17.6%
15. Aberaman South 1	247	65	15. Aberaman North 1 17.4%

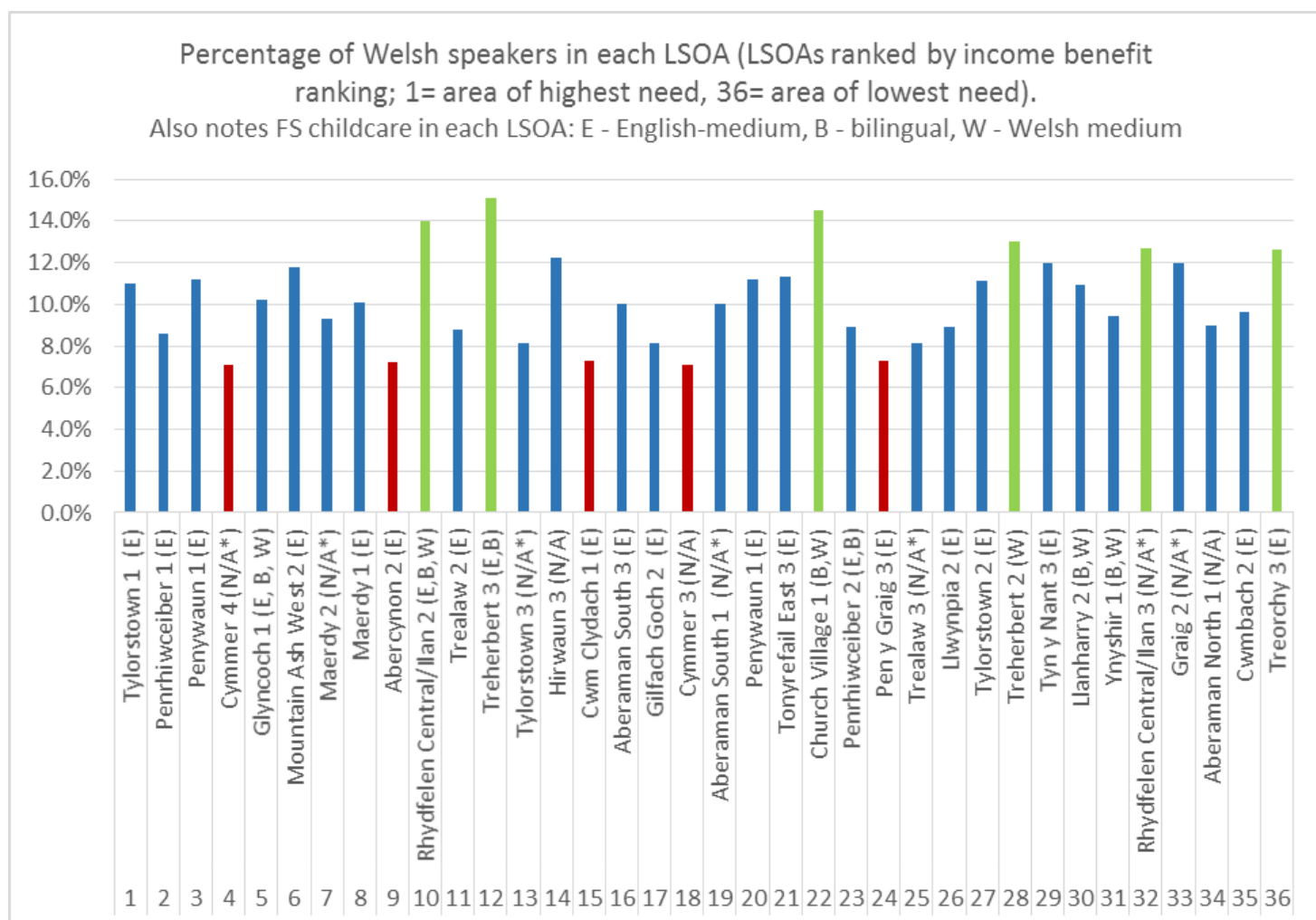
16. Rhydfelen Central/Ilan 3	244	93	16. Maerdy 1	17.1%
17. Llanharry 2	233	85	17. Pen-y-waun 2	16.5%
18. Aberaman South 3	230	88	18. Llanharry 2	16.3%
19. Hirwaun 3	225	50	19. Tylorstown 1	16.1%
20. Gilfach Goch 2	222	84	20. Maerdy 2	15.9%
34. Cymmer 3	93	53	34. Cwm Clydach 1	12.8%
34. Pen-y-graig 3	93	53	35. Cymmer 3	12.2%
36. Trealaw 2	92	60	36. Pen-y-graig 3	12.3%

Source: Census 2011

5.7 Flying Start: ranking LSOAs by need (income benefit ranking) and Welsh language skills

We have examined the data on Welsh speakers in Flying Start areas and plotted this against the level of need in each LSOA in order to determine whether there is a correlation between the two. The figure below summarises the data which shows no significant correlation (based on $R^2=0.0243$).

Figure 6: Welsh speakers in LSOAs plotted against areas of highest need



Note on Figure 6: N/A indicates that there is no Flying Start childcare provision in the LSOA, but that there is Flying Start childcare in an adjacent LSOA. E.g. there is no FS childcare in Maerdy 2, but there is provision in Maerdy 1.*

Figure 6 also notes whether there is English-medium, bilingual or Welsh-medium Flying Start childcare provision in each LSOA. In some cases there is a combination of provision with some settings offering, for example, Welsh-medium provision in the morning and bilingual provision in the afternoon. The figure shows that the LSOAs with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers (green in the figure) are served by bilingual and/or Welsh-medium provision. The exception is Treorchy 3, which has a high percentage of Welsh speakers (relative to other Flying Start LSOAs) but only English-medium provision Flying Start childcare provision.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter draws on the findings outlined in previous sections of the report and summarises the research team's key conclusions, based on the evidence collected. We also set recommendations, with a view to these being incorporated into future projects and activities.

6.1 Conclusions

General

- i. Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is to be commended for undertaking this research. It demonstrates a commitment to supporting the implementation of the Standards at programme level. The Council has also recognised the need for discussion of the issues arising from the Standards to be addressed at management and operational levels.
- ii. Overall there appears to be an appetite among programme managers and service delivery partners in each of the tackling poverty programmes to support the Welsh language by complying with the Standards. This is encouraging and it is important to harness and build on the goodwill demonstrated, planning and providing appropriate support where necessary.
- iii. There is a recognition that, in some cases, activities are starting from a relatively low baseline and that existing Welsh language services are under-developed. The Welsh language skills of staff teams are variable, which presents challenges in terms of complying with certain Standards and in planning activities to promote the use of the language.
- iv. For each of the programmes under consideration in this research – Communities First, Flying Start and Families First – there are two distinct elements. Firstly, ensuring compliance with the Standards in terms of service delivery, staffing and administrative arrangements. This involves ensuring that operational practices, policies and procedures comply with the requirements set out and that staff are able to access appropriate support and/or training. As noted in Chapter 3 of this report, where appropriate programme managers should draw on the central support mechanisms that exist within the local authority.
- v. The second element relates to more forward-looking promotion of the Welsh language, which also forms part of the Standards. In seeking to support the promotion of the language, the findings of the research underline the need for activity to be strategic and targeted. Commissioning arrangements provide useful levers to be able to plan services and projects aimed at support the Welsh language strategically.

Recommendation 1:

Programme managers and teams should continue to be proactive in identifying the needs arising as a result of implementing the Welsh language Standards. This includes identifying the services and administrative arrangements where Welsh language skills will be required.

- vi. There remains some uncertainty among programme teams about what implementing the Standards will mean on practical and operational levels. The research has found that programme staff have invested time in interpreting what the Standards mean in terms of day-to-day operational and administrative activities. Ensuring regular bilingual contact with service users via social media was seen as a concern across all programmes. Platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are used to relay message or respond to service users directly and protocols are needed that set out how to do this effectively and in compliance with the requirements of the Welsh language Standards.

Recommendation 2:

There is a need for clear protocols and practical tools to enable staff to implement the standards. These could include examples of:

- Bilingual signage and promotional/publicity materials;
- Good practice guides in addressing members of the public and service users by telephone;
- Written correspondence;
- Websites and social media.

In support of this, all programme staff should have access to the guidelines outlined in 'Welsh, What's Changed' – the resource prepared by the Council's Welsh language unit. Training sessions to support the use of the document would be beneficial. Where appropriate, relevant guidelines and tools could be made available to external delivery partners.

- vii. Welsh language training provision is offered to staff across all three programmes to enable them to enhance or develop Welsh language skills. It is important that provision is continued and is targeted strategically to ensure that it supports programmes' ability to deliver bilingually. The research found a growing interest in Welsh language awareness sessions. There was interest among programme managers and teams in creating regular awareness sessions and for those sessions to be tailored to reflect the needs of individual tackling poverty programmes where possible.

Recommendation 3:

Heads of each of the three programmes in Rhondda Cynon Taff should ensure that they have a current and comprehensive audit of Welsh language skills. This

will enable managers to deploy existing staff members with Welsh language skills in a way that ensures that services can be delivered bilingually. Where gaps in language skills are identified, programme managers should use this data to inform ongoing Welsh language training and recruitment processes. Services should assess the standard of written, and spoken Welsh of staff in order to ensure the most relevant training and recruitment needs are met.

Programme managers should consider advertising all new frontline posts as 'Welsh essential' until a sufficient number of Welsh speaking staff are in post.

Recommendation 4:

The Council should provide training opportunities to meet the different needs of programme staff:

- i. Bespoke language awareness sessions delivered across all three programmes could help ensure a greater understanding of the Standards and their implementation as well as ensuring regular discourse between managers and staff with regard Welsh language / bilingual delivery.
- ii. Confidence building courses for staff with some ability in the language, but lack confidence.
- iii. Welsh language classes / training for staff who wish to learn the language.

Communities First

- viii. There is a need to set a clear plan for what the programme aims to achieve locally in terms of supporting the Welsh language. Rather than relying on what providers are able to deliver – which has resulted in provision that is, at best, *ad hoc* – Communities First should embed Welsh language objectives as part of the commissioning programme as a means of driving activity.

Recommendation 5:

Communities First in Rhondda Cynon Taf should ensure that all commissioned providers are aware of the need to provide services that comply with the requirements of the Welsh language Standards. Additionally, Communities First should consider the need to use the commissioning programme to commission projects or activities designed specifically to support and promote the Welsh language. The programme could consider drawing on the expertise of external partners to help design and plan activities.

- ix. Delivery partners would welcome guidance and specific ideas for projects that include Welsh language activity, including projects aimed at young people, families and arts-based activity.

Recommendation 6:

Communities First should prepare and disseminate examples of previous projects that have proven successful and which could be adapted or replicated in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- x. Cluster leads and delivery partners should be encouraged to think innovatively about how to include the Welsh language within a range of projects relating to employability, health and wellbeing, and community engagement. A number of specific areas of activity were suggested during the research.
- Welsh language or bilingual family activities. There was a general consensus that family and inter-generational projects would be welcomed and could provide valuable opportunities to promote adult learning and support the skills and learning of young people.
 - The number of Welsh language children's play schemes and after-school clubs have diminished over recent years and a need for those numbers to increase and made available to local communities were noted.
 - Welsh language youth activities and clubs have also declined recently. One particular area of need could be focusing on employability and promoting activities that highlight the value of Welsh language skills in the workplace.
 - Delivering arts and heritage activities and events across clusters could promote the use of the Welsh language, raise awareness of local history, and increase skills.
- xi. It would seem sensible to focus activity in Communities First areas (LSOAs) that have the highest concentrations of Welsh speakers. The analysis in Chapter 5 of this report highlights communities with the highest numbers and percentages of people with Welsh language skills, which could be of value to clusters and delivery partners in planning activity.

Recommendation 7:

Taking into account the views expressed by programme staff and delivery partners, Communities First should encourage new activity in the following areas:

- Welsh language youth provision;
- Welsh language children and family activities;
- Arts-based projects that involve the Welsh language.

The Council should consider drawing on the knowledge and expertise of organisations (including Welsh language organisations) that have experience of delivering in these fields.

- xii. In light of the lack of capacity in some areas to delivery bilingually, there may be merit in encouraging activity across cluster areas. This may require allocating time for

clusters to jointly plan and deliver some activity. Cross-cluster activity should take account of the need to ensure that Welsh language activities are accessible to people in different communities.

Recommendation 8:

The programme may wish to promote cross-cluster working as a means of delivering some Welsh language activities.

Linked to this, a cross-cluster approach to language awareness training and the sharing of good practice in relation to Welsh language provision and projects may be beneficial.

- xiii. More Welsh language courses should be offered across all clusters. These courses have been popular and are currently running in most areas. However there is a need to ensure that these courses are timed carefully to ensure that they are convenient and accessible for people.

Recommendation 9:

There is a need to sustain close dialogue with Welsh for Adults managers to develop course timetables that are most relevant and convenient to users.

- xiv. Connecting with local Welsh-medium schools is of paramount importance and provides opportunities to promote school-community links and promote the use of the Welsh language socially. There are examples of good practice in transition projects between primary and secondary schools that involve Welsh Bacc learners. Similar projects could be rolled out in other clusters if supported through the commissioning programme.

Recommendation 10:

All clusters should engage with local primary and secondary schools to discuss opportunities to promote the Welsh language through project-based activity. Projects could be developed through schools directly or by utilising external partners.

- xv. This research, including the conclusions and recommendations, refers frequently to Welsh language projects and activities. In reality, much of the activity discussed will involve bilingual delivery. There are examples of successful bilingual projects in RCT and the Heads of the Valleys, with some still running in Communities First areas. These have included arts-based projects that have supported participants' skills, employability, health and wellbeing. As noted in Recommendation 6, there is scope to draw on the experiences and expertise of organisations that have been involved in such projects. One key thing in the context of 'bilingual' delivery is the need to define

and clarify what constitutes a bilingual project and what is expected of organisations delivering bilingually.

Recommendation 11:

The Council should clarify the meaning of 'bilingual' delivery and activities, setting out the need to offer provision in English and Welsh equally.

Flying Start

- xvi. Flying Start offers Welsh language childcare to all parents who wish to access it. There is bilingual and/or Welsh-medium provision in various settings in Rhondda and Taf, although not currently in Cynon. The research has found that there is scope to re-assess the way in which provision is planned and commissioned with a view to ensuring that Flying Start can form an important part of the Council's 5-year strategic plan for promoting the Welsh language.
- xvii. One question that has arisen through this research is whether there is scope to encourage settings to deliver more Welsh-medium or bilingual sessions during mornings in order to boost the numbers of parents/children who use this type of provision.

Recommendation 12:

The Flying Start team in Rhondda Cynon Taf should work with providers to identify opportunities to increase the Welsh-medium or bilingual delivery during the most 'popular' sessions. This should be done strategically, targeting those settings that are in closest proximity to LSOAs with the highest numbers of Welsh speakers.

- xviii. Alongside this, settings may benefit from support or training in bilingual childcare methodologies in order to promote consistency and quality in provision.

Recommendation 13:

Flying Start may wish to consider creating guidance or a good practice guide to support bilingual delivery in childcare settings. An external organisation or one of the current settings could be asked to develop exemplar session plans to support bilingual provision. This could be used as a training tool for Flying Start staff and delivery partners and could also support compliance with some Welsh language Standards (notably Service Delivery and Operational Standards).

- xix. Rhondda Cynon Taf has a unique resource by virtue of its in-house Flying Start training centre that delivers a wide range of formal accredited training and other support to childcare practitioners. The small team visits settings on a termly basis to conduct an audit of training needs and plans a training programme for the following term. The team is responsive, therefore, to the needs of childcare providers. There is

recognition, however, of the potential value of a proactive approach to raising awareness of the Welsh language Standards and supporting the Welsh language skills of the Flying Start workforce.

Recommendation 14:

The Flying Start training centre in Rhondda Cynon Taf should include additional questions as part of its regular audit of childcare settings to determine the type of support needed to support Welsh language skills among the workforce. Following this a series of sessions should be planned (built into planned training programmes).

- xx. There is a need to increase the Welsh language skills of the childcare workforce and a longer-term approach could involve working with Welsh-medium secondary schools to raise awareness of career opportunities and provide initial training opportunities to learners with an interest in this sector. Rhydywaun and Gartholwg are secondary schools in Flying Start areas and could be a focus for discussions.

Families First

- xxi. There is capacity in some Families First teams to deliver support to families through the medium of Welsh. In some cases, this is a result of having recruited Welsh speakers to teams. However, the language appears to have a low profile within the programme and there is scope to be more proactive in raising awareness of the availability of bilingual support services.

Recommendation 15:

In order to ensure compliance with the requirement of the Welsh language Standards, the availability of Welsh language or bilingual advice and support should be advertised and promoted regularly and bilingual staff should be available at all times to respond to the needs when they arise.