

TRANSLATION

Rhondda Cynon Taf's Fforwm Iaith response to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

A draft version of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was received in October 2016 in accordance with Welsh Language Standards 145 and 146.

The Forum's view was that it is a comprehensive strategy and it has the potential to be far-reaching. The document was carefully considered and there was an opportunity for input and observations. The responses are divided into the headings and requirements below

1. Target
2. Education
3. Action Plan

Detailed observations can be found under each headline as noted above.

1. Target

An ambitious but achievable target must be set to ensure a comprehensive and consistent action to tie-in with Welsh Government's target of achieving a million Welsh Speakers by 2050.



A comprehensive target is noted to increase the percentage of Welsh speakers in Rhondda Cynon Taf by 3.7% within the next 5 years, in order to raise the percentage from 12.3% (2011 census) to 15% (2021 census). Based on 2011 population figures, this reflects an increase of 6,054 Welsh speakers.

To achieve this, specific groups need to be targeted, as is noted in the action plan. It is proposed that far-reaching targets should be set as part of:

- 1.1. The Education Strategy in order to increase the numbers in Welsh medium education (see education heading)
- 1.2. Youth / Young People. Currently there is a decrease of about 10% who speak Welsh between young people at school age and young adults (about 2,000 people). This group should be specifically targeted to ensure that investment in Welsh medium education is successful in terms of language use post education.
- 1.3. Transferring the language at home. Put plans in place which would ensure more Welsh speakers in the long term.

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- 1.4. Adult Education. Ensure that Welsh lessons for adults and skills development opportunities are widely available with the intention of increasing the numbers of adults who are confident in using their Welsh.
- 1.5. Activities, services and events for all ages, especially children and young people in order to improve their ability and nurture their enthusiasm to use their Welsh in social situations.

We believe that the necessary headings to achieve this work are incorporated in the action plan, although clarity is needed regarding responsibilities for accomplishing the work.

2. Education

We believe that clarity is needed between the promotion strategy and the education strategy and that targets noted in the education strategy should be included in this document under the education heading. The strategy focuses on implementing plans in partnership with schools and beyond school boundaries. The current targets for growth in education are not new; rather they only re-affirm current actions. Information from the education strategy should first be sought in order to add to these targets.

Both strategies should work simultaneously in terms of sharing information where appropriate and intertwine to ensure an increase in both numbers and percentage of Welsh speakers in the County Borough.

Some points regarding the information and the targets set were also raised:

- 2.1 A need to be more strategic and plan new schools to ensure that Welsh schools are within reasonable reach of everyone and respond to the change in emphasis within government in terms of creating demand rather than responding to demand.
- 2.2 The numbers of children who are in education and who are in schools in total need to be noted, i.e. on p23 and 24, the numbers who are in statutory education in RCT Primary schools and the capacity of the schools are noted, however these figures do not reflect their true capacity, as the numbers do not include non-statutory (Nursery).
- 2.3 The advantages of Welsh medium education should be promoted and communicated at all levels – to the public and amongst Council officers.

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- 2.4 It's essential that there is progression through the statutory stages of education and within post 16 education and beyond. The offer to pupils must be attractive and the same academic and vocational options must be made available in both languages. These progression routes should be promoted to school pupils so they understand the opportunities to continue with Welsh medium education in further and higher education.
- 2.5 Related to the point above, career pathways are essential as a way of underlying the important of Welsh as a skill in the workplace. This should be part of the WESP in recognising schools' responsibilities to seek work experience opportunities, promote Welsh as a skill for employment.
- 2.6 Information needs to be shared between the Education Strategy and the promotion strategy in relation to early years education, social clubs and schemes for school pupils.

3. Action Plan

This document is the Promotion Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. We believe that the heading 'responsibility' in the action plan is misleading. There are a number of actions within the plan which are additional to the current remit of external organisations. We believe that only Council actions should be in this plan along with consideration regarding the possibility of creating agreements/contracts with external organisations where relevant in order to undertake this work. A chart of Welsh partners' current targets operating within the County Borough could be created, although this should only be for information purposes rather than as part of Council performance.

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