

Rhondda Cynon Taf Language Forum's Response to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Welsh Medium Education Strategy

1. It was felt that the WESP 2017-2020 provided an opportunity to introduce positive measures to support the Welsh Government's national vision, which is to develop Welsh medium education and create a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Would it be possible for the WESP to state that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is committed to operating in a way which supports this vision? The draft document does not convey the message that the Council is eager to take purposeful actions to support the Welsh Government's vision. The WESP should reflect the need for purposeful forward planning in order to increase provision and, where appropriate, symbolise the increased demand in order to realise the Welsh Government's visions for increasing Welsh medium provision.
2. Achievable but far-reaching targets need to be set in order to ensure growth.
3. The draft document refers to an investment in schools in order to build/renovate schools and increase capacity. However, there is no similar reference to the future nor to any plans to open schools and create more capacity. This is, after all, a document which should be looking towards the future. No reference is made to gaps in provision in areas such as Mountain Ash, the heart of the Rhondda, Taff Ely. These gaps mean that the current provision does not reflect the demographics of those areas. In the past, schools have been developed on a random basis (in response to the closure/relocation of English medium schools). The Council should act in a more strategic manner, and plan to open new schools in order to ensure that everyone lives within easy reach of a Welsh medium school. In addition, they should respond to the change in emphasis within the Welsh Government, in regards to creating demand rather than responding to it.
4. The Council should ensure that the benefits of Welsh medium education are promoted and marketed on every level - to the public and also to Council officials.
5. Immersion education / education for latecomers. The Council should purposefully promote opportunities to receive Welsh medium education to families who move to the area. Are Welsh medium education opportunities presented in the same way as English medium opportunities? There is a possibility that discussions tend to refer to English medium education. However, Welsh medium education should also be discussed and presented in the same way, with an outline of the immersion provision available through the consortium. 01443 40 75 70

www.menteriaith.cymru

 [menterrhondda.cynontaf](https://www.facebook.com/menterrhondda.cynontaf)

 [@menteriaithRhCT](https://twitter.com/menteriaithRhCT)

Rhif elusen / charity no: 1053135


Mae'r Gymraeg yn perthyn i bawb


The Welsh language belongs to all of us

6. It is essential that there is cohesion across all statutory phases, as well as within post-16 education and beyond. The offer to pupils must be attractive and ensure that the same academic and vocational opportunities are available in both languages. It should be ensured that school pupils are made aware of these progression routes so that they understand the opportunities available in terms of continuing to receive Welsh medium education in further and higher education.
7. In connection with the point made above, career routes are a crucial way of emphasising the importance of the Welsh language as a workplace skill. This should be included in the WESP, identifying the responsibility of schools and other agencies to ensure work experience opportunities and promote the Welsh language as an employability skill.
8. The information needs to be shared between the Education Strategy and Promotion Strategy when discussing early years education, clubs and social schemes for school pupils.
9. The complete number of children in education and within schools needs to be shown. When the number of pupils in statutory education within the County's Primary Schools are noted, along with the capacity of those schools, the Council needs to ensure that these figures reflect the true capacity of these schools by including those in unstatutory education (Nursery). This is also true for comprehensive schools with post-16 students.
10. Despite the fact that only 18% of parents responded to the language choice survey, this result should be treated as a portrait of the situation in the County. It is completely wrong to claim that the results favour the Welsh language just because of the small number of responses. Research areas have considered these results as a snapshot of the true to life situation in the County, regardless of the number of respondents.
11. There are not enough places on Flying Start Schemes, 96 out of 716 (p.9), and too much expectation for very young children to travel. A target needs to be set for Welsh medium locations within a convenient distance for parents. In addition, the recommendation to change the time of Welsh medium sessions in order to increase numbers needs to be implemented.

01443 40 75 70

www.menteriaith.cymru

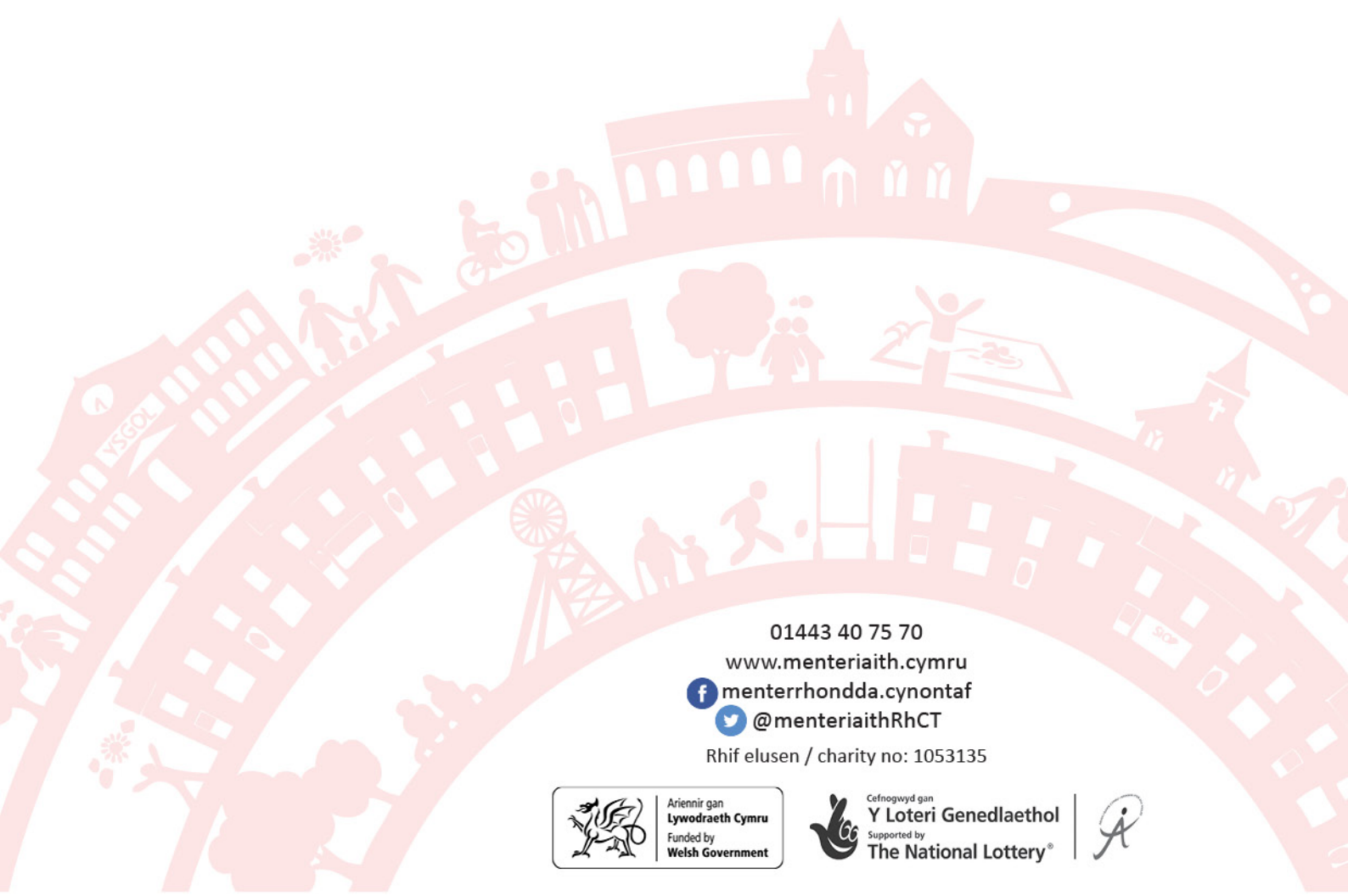
 [menterrhondda.cynontaf](https://www.facebook.com/menterrhondda.cynontaf)

 [@menteriaithRhCT](https://twitter.com/menteriaithRhCT)

Rhif elusen / charity no: 1053135



Mae'r Gymraeg yn perthyn i bawb
The Welsh language belongs to all of us



01443 40 75 70

www.menteriaith.cymru

 [menterrhondda.cynontaf](https://www.facebook.com/menterrhondda.cynontaf)

 [@menteriaithRhCT](https://twitter.com/menteriaithRhCT)

Rhif elusen / charity no: 1053135

