



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

22 APRIL 2021

**WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS COMPLIANCE REPORT
TO THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER
2020 – 2021**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION, AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR GERAINT HOPKINS**

AUTHORS: Wendy Edwards, Service Director - Community Services
(01443 425512)
Steffan Gealy, Service Manager, Welsh Language Services
(01443 570002)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Welsh Language Steering Group with a copy of the Welsh Language Standards Compliance Report 2020 – 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report;
- 2.2 Approve the report for publication on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's website, and approve the distribution of the report to each of the authority's offices that are open to the public by no later than 30 June 2021 so that it is made available to the public;
- 2.3 Approve arrangements for publicising the fact that the annual report has been published.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Standards 158, 164 and 170 of the Compliance Notice issued under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to produce a report (an "annual report") in relation to each

financial year which outlines the way in which the Council has complied with:

- the Service Delivery Standards with which the Council were under a duty to comply during the year in question;
- the Policy Making Standards with which the Council were under a duty to comply during the year in question;
- the Operational Standards with which the Council were under a duty to comply during the year in question.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30th September 2015 which outlined the Council's duty to meet 171 of the statutory Welsh Language Standards introduced by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

4.2 An application to challenge 14 of the Standards was presented to the Commissioner on 29 March 2016. This resulted in the imposition date for achievement of aspects of 3 of the standards (52, 58 and 64¹) being postponed until 31st March 2018.

4.3 The report at Appendix 1 covers the fifth full year of the implementation of the standards – from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The report must be published on the Council's website and made available in each of the Council's offices that are open to the public no later than 30 June 2021.

4.4 The Council is under a statutory duty to publicise the fact that it has published an annual report.

4.5. As well as complying with the aforementioned Standards in 3.1, the annual report must include the following:

- the number of complaints that were received during the year that relate to the Council's compliance with the (i) service delivery (ii) policy making (iii) operational standards with which it was under a duty to comply;

¹ Standard 52 – full compliance in respect of websites other than the corporate website was not required until 31/3/2018.

Standard 58 – full compliance in respect of social media other than the Council's main social media account was moved to 31/3/2018.

Standard 64 – areas defined as 'reception services' (for example, Libraries, Leisure centres etc) apart from the Council's main reception service was moved forward to 31/8/2018.

- the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question;
- the number of members of staff who attended training courses offered by the Council in Welsh during the year in question;
- the percentage of the total number of staff who attended training courses offered in Welsh by the Council during the year in question;
- the number of new and vacant posts that the Council advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where - (i) Welsh language skills were essential, (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post, (iii) Welsh language skills were desirable, or (iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary during the year in question.

5. **CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 The Annual Monitoring Report at Appendix 1 outlines the work of the Council over the past year to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. In previous years, the work undertaken by service areas has mostly been captured via Service Self Evaluations and published as an appendix to the report. But due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was decided to suspend Service Self Evaluation for the year 2020 – 2021 in order for service areas to focus on responding to the needs of residents during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5.2 In addition, the Welsh Language Commissioner suspended investigation into non-compliance between 1st April 2020 and 1st August 2020 in recognition of the service delivery adjustments public sector bodies needed to put in place in light of the pandemic.
- 5.2 Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, there have been notable successes in Welsh language compliance and service areas should be congratulated for their continued efforts during the crisis. Of particular note are the following:
- Our Learn Welsh Campaign promoting Welsh Language classes available internally and via external partners.
 - The organisation and delivery of Welsh language tuition to 212 members of staff at all levels via our internal Welsh Language Tutor.
 - The introduction of a mandatory e-module for all new starters that discusses the standards and their implications for staff in a more interactive way using infographics and animation.

- The commissioning of local artists, in collaboration with RCT Arts Service, to produce a St David's Day Song for all RCT Schools to learn during 2021-2022.
- Our presentation within all corporate induction sessions – highlighting the importance of the Welsh Language within RCT Council.
- The introduction of Mail-tips to promote more written Welsh being used between Council officers.
- The publishing of the approved List of Welsh place-names as applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf to Council Senior Officers and all Council Staff.
- The 'mainstreaming' of the Welsh language into new day-to-day operations across the whole organisation, including service-specific videos, for example, walking guide videos, Inspire2work videos and leisure and fitness videos; and Powerpoint presentations and videos on behalf of Early Years to ensure continued interaction and support to parents and young children.
- The introduction of on-line simultaneous translation provision, via Zoom. RCT quickly introduced simultaneous translation provision for Elected Members at Council and Committee meetings by July 2020. This has been well-received.
- In addition to the above, simultaneous translation provision has been readily available to all service areas to ensure full compliance with the Welsh language Standards. On-line Corporate consultation sessions and appointment interviews have been held successfully throughout this period.
- The support of Eisteddfod y Rhondda, a new volunteer led Eisteddfod established during the pandemic and held virtually online.
- The holding of a County-wide virtual jobs fair, using procured software, that mainstreamed the Welsh language into service provision.
- The co-ordination, internally and with external stakeholders, of a new 'Being Bilingual' booklet which promotes Welsh Medium education.
- Diwrnod Shwmae, St David's Day and Welsh Language Rights Day were promoted as part of Welsh language awareness campaigns.
- Completing 3 audits, focusing on Social Media, Websites and Recruitment.

- All official pandemic-related signage and online forms have been fully compliant with the Welsh Language Standards.
- Presentations were delivered at Careers Wales' Careers Fair to highlight the importance of Welsh Language skills to RCT Council.
- The Council continues to offer compliance support to the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service and many other organisations where the Council is the lead authority – such as the Cwm Taf Social Care Workforce Development Service, The Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru, Joint Educational Psychology Service, Schools HR Service, Staying Well @ Work.

5.2 Despite the good progress made by the Council, challenges remain as we seek to achieve full compliance. Areas that remain challenging include the following:

- The continuing need to increase the number of Welsh speaking staff;
- Monitoring the partnership elements of the 5 Year Strategy;
- Responding to the continuing demand for simultaneous translation cover;
- Ability to respond both to the continuing demand for translation services and the nature of the work which is being required by service areas – e.g. media associated work and instant turnarounds;
- Responding to the increasing need to advise on policy proposals in light of the Welsh Language Commissioner's Guidance published in November 2020;
- Mainstreaming the Strategic 'More than Words' Policy Framework into Social Services provision;
- Challenges surrounding the availability of Welsh IT systems at point of procurement;
- Continuous training and awareness regarding Welsh Language Standards.

5.3 Standard 37, and standards 83 to 93 are particularly challenging as they require significant resourcing. These standards are outlined in Appendix 2.

- 5.4 Even in the face of some of the challenges identified at 5.2 in addition to the Covid-19 crisis, feedback from the Welsh Language Commissioner during the annual meeting with their Compliance Officers continues to be very positive in respect of the progress made in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

7. CONSULTATION

A consultation process was not required for this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

There are no financial implications aligned to this report. However, there may be costs and resources as yet not fully ascertained in respect of implementation of any recommendations by the Welsh Language Commissioner as well as continued implementation of the 171 Standards. Non-compliance with a Standard could incur financial penalties of up to £5,000.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Statutory Standards 2015 regulate this area of work.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 10.1 The Welsh language is a cross-cutting theme in the Corporate Plan and underpins all corporate priorities as the Council is required to comply with the amended Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner in September 2016.
- 10.2 The Annual Compliance Report outlines the work undertaken by the Council to comply with the Welsh language statutory standards that will contribute to the Welsh Government's longer-term goal of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. The work undertaken to achieve these standards involves working collaboratively with partners and residents to facilitate a wide range of opportunities for the use of the Welsh language in communities across the county. Achievement of the standards will prevent complaints from residents who have been unable to access services in the Welsh language.

10.3 The content of this report is directly related to Goal 7 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act - a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Compliance with the standards will support the normalisation of the Welsh language and ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language. It also contributes to the creation of a more equal Wales by providing opportunities for Welsh speakers to access Council services in the medium of Welsh if they so wish.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 This is the sixth Annual Report published by the Council that highlights the way in which it has complied with the Welsh Language Statutory Standards introduced by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The report outlines the good progress made by service areas in embedding arrangements for delivering services through the medium of Welsh.

11.2 It is recognised that further work must be done, especially considering the resources needed to meet standards 37¹ & 83 to 93² (which are a challenge). However, the Council is confident that the systems developed to monitor compliance are robust and that support is available for service areas to further improve their performance where required.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Overview & Scrutiny / Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group

Contact Officer - Wendy Edwards, Service Director (Community Services)
Steffan Gealy, Service Manager, Welsh Language Services