

ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2023

Name of Local Authority

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS / HIGHLIGHTS

Flying Start Expansion

Since the introduction of the new 'Flying Start Approved Provider List' model, Flying Start colleagues have been working with Mudiad Meithrin to increase the number of Welsh medium providers on this list. Since the beginning of this academic year, 7 additional providers have joined the 'Approved Provider' list. A total of 125 Welsh medium Flying Start childcare places were taken this year, 56 of these places were taken up following the roll out of the expansion areas.

Development of Welsh medium education throughout the County Borough

Works have been completed on the school site of YGG Aberdar in the Cynon area to deliver a new sessional childcare facility providing an additional 30 registered places, and an extension to provide additional facilities and an additional 72 learner places at the school. Works have also been completed for YG Rhydywaun in the Cynon area to deliver an extension to increase capacity at the school. The brand new block on the school site opened to learners from September 2022 and created an additional 187 learner places at the school. In the Rhondda Fach area, capital funding has been secured to provide a brand new school for YGG Llyn y Forwyn. Work is progressing on the new school site to provide additional capacity, childcare facilities, and community use facilities to encourage the use of the language in the community. In the Taff Ely area of the county, the construction of the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin has progressed successfully. The new school will be named Ysgol Awel Taf and is on target to open to learners from September 2024 as planned.

Welsh Language Immersion

In the spring term, the Local Authority successfully recruited a specialist teacher plus 2 learning support assistants to deliver Welsh language immersion to learners who are latecomers to Welsh medium education. The immersion teacher prepared a delivery plan for the roll out of the provision and successfully received funding to purchase resources. The team started to work with 3 learners from 3 separate schools from June 2023, this support will recommence from September when returning back to school for the next academic year. Two further learners have been recruited to commence support from September 2023.

Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme

CSCJES have been working closely with all schools in RCT to support them in achieving bronze, silver, and gold awards. There are now 5 Welsh medium primary schools who've received the gold award and 1 Welsh medium secondary school has received the silver award. There are 40 English medium primary schools who've received the bronze award with 10 going on to receive the silver and 2 have received the gold award. A total of 5 English medium secondary schools have received the bronze award and 3 English medium special schools/units have received the bronze award.

Increasing Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision

Following difficulties with recruiting specialist staff, we have now successfully recruited staff for the new Welsh medium LSC provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 learners at Ysgol Garth Olwg. The provision will open to learners from September 2023. Actions undertaken to review the

sufficiency of Welsh medium ALN provision in RCT have highlighted identified areas of need for development. As a result, the proposals for the establishment of Welsh medium ALN provision in the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin have been brought forward. Consultation is currently underway and if successful, 2 new Welsh medium primary phase LSCs will be established at the new school.

OVERALL PLAN SUMMARY

The overarching target of our WESP is to increase the percentage of year one learners being taught through the medium of Welsh in RCT by 10% over the duration of the plan to increase the percentage to 30%. The data in the table below is derived from PLASC and demonstrates the number of year one learners attending Welsh medium primary schools over the previous five academic years, up to and including 2022-2023. The data demonstrates that the number of year one learners attending Welsh medium primary schools this year has decreased by 3 learners which is not a cause for concern at present. The impact of the interventions we are and will be delivering will take time to embed, so this will continue to be monitored closely each year as we move through the ten year plan.

Table A

Total Number of Year One Learners Attending Welsh Medium Primary Schools Over the Previous Five Academic Years					
Year Group	Academic Year				
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Year One	537	506	544	524	521

In order to reach our goal of increasing the percentage of learners by 10% by the year 2032, our targets for the next ten years are set out below. Please note, these are our projected target figures based off the overarching target of increasing the number of year one learners from 524 to 795, so the increase may not always follow a linear trend as depicted in the table below.

Table B

Target Number and % of Year One Learners Receiving Their Education Through the Medium of Welsh									
2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
524	20%	556	21%	583	22%	609	23%	636	24%
2027 - 2028		2028 - 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2031	
662	25%	689	26%	715	27%	742	28%	795	30%

When comparing the actual data with the projected data, although the actual number is slightly less than the projected number, as this is such a small difference it has not been assessed as a red rating. As we have not had an increase in the number it would not be appropriate to rate our progress as green, therefore we have determined that the rating of progress against our overarching target is at amber for the first year of the plan.

The first year of the WESP has provided the foundations for building constructive working relationships amongst internal and external officers, partners, groups, and organisations who contribute towards the WESP. We have made a good start to working towards achieving the targets set out in the WESP and we are progressing well across all outcomes. An increase in opportunities to communicate in Welsh in both Welsh and English medium schools has been seen during this year and we have proactively marketed the benefits of being bilingual and Welsh medium education through distribution of the Local Authority's Being Bilingual booklets and through making amendments to the authority's corporate website. We have facilitated continued investment in Welsh medium provision to deliver significant investment to improve and provide modern educational facilities for Welsh medium schools in RCT and we continue to do so as we move forward with the WESP.

A self-assessment has been conducted to rate our progress against each outcome of the WESP. Some outcomes have had more successes than others as can be seen in the detailed report that follows. When taking a balanced view of the WESP, although some outcomes could achieve a green rating, on the whole we would give ourselves an orange rating after the first year of delivery.

FOREWARD LOOK MILESTONES

Implement a marketing campaign:

During this first year, we have liaised with colleagues from the Local Authority's Marketing team to identify the key officers with responsibility for different elements of marketing. A communications strategy has been prepared and a marketing strategy is currently in development, to be implemented from September 2023. This strategy will incorporate all elements of the WESP to ensure we are proactively marketing and promoting Welsh medium education. We will work closely with WESP stakeholders and the Southeast Wales Welsh Language Education Champion to ensure effective marketing and promotion of Welsh education in RCT.

Develop Welsh Language Immersion provision:

The immersion service has recently been established, working with learners since June 2023. Promoting this service will be a key priority during year 2 of the WESP to ensure its profile is widely raised so that parents/carers are aware of the support available for learners who are latecomers to the language. As we progress through the year, we will continually review the provision and its structure to ensure its fit for purpose to fully immerse learners in the language. The demand for the service will be monitored throughout the year to assess any changes in demand for the service and to evaluate the impact of the service on learners who have accessed support.

Deliver significant investment to improve and provide modern educational facilities for Welsh medium schools, to include:

- Progress with construction of a new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin.
- Progress with construction of a new Welsh medium school for YGG Llyn y Forwyn.
- Progress with development options for YG Cwm Rhondda.
- If consultation is successful, progress with proposals for 2 new Welsh medium primary phase LSCs in the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin.
- If funding is received, progress with proposals for childcare and early years developments for YGG Castellau and YGG Penderyn.

Strengthen links between schools at local universities to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach through the medium of Welsh:

During the first year of the WESP, we've collaborated with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to promote the initiatives they are running aimed at encouraging students into Welsh medium teaching positions. We will continue to work with the Coleg to strengthen links. A key priority will be to bring together representatives from the Coleg, local universities and our Welsh medium secondary schools to encourage school aged learners to consider teaching as a career pathway and to support those considering these pathways. We also aim to strengthen the promotion of working within education in RCT through improved information and signposting on our website.

Outcome 1

More nursery children/ three year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

KEY ANNUAL DATA

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Data

The data in the table that follows is derived from the latest CIW list of registered and unregistered settings known to the Family Information Service (FIS). It demonstrates the total number of registered and unregistered Welsh and English medium childcare and early years settings alongside the number of places available in RCT.

Table 1.1

Total Number of Welsh and English Medium Childcare and Early Years Settings Available in RCT					
Childcare Type		Total No. of Registered Settings	Total No. of Places	Total No. of Unregistered Settings	Total No. of Places
Childminder		98	789	0	0
Day Care	Full Day Care	64	2,283	0	0
	Sessional Day Care	22	575	2	Unknown
	Crèches	0	0	0	0
	Out of School Care	13	530	5	Unknown
	Open Access Play Provision	5	290	2	Unknown
	Nanny	2	0	0	0
Total		204	4,467	9	0

The data in the table that follows, again derived from the latest CIW list of registered and unregistered settings known to FIS, demonstrates the total number of registered and unregistered Welsh medium childcare and early years settings (both Welsh medium and bilingual) alongside the number of places available in RCT.

Table 1.2

Total Number of Welsh Medium Childcare and Early Years Settings Available in RCT					
Childcare Type		Total No. of Registered Settings	Total No. of Places	Total No. of Unregistered Settings	Total No. of Places
Childminder		1	25	0	0
Day Care	Full Day Care	20	634	0	0
	Sessional Day Care	6	154	0	0
	Creches	0	0	0	0
	Out of School Care	3	120	3	Unknown
Total		30	933	3	0

PLASC Data

The data in the table below is derived from PLASC and outlines the number of pre-nursery, pre-nursery part-time, nursery and nursery part-time learners attending Welsh medium primary schools for the previous four academic years up to and including 2022-2023. The data for this academic year shows an increase in the numbers attending pre-nursery and pre-nursery part-time however the numbers at nursery and nursery part-time have declined.

Table 1.3

Total Number of Pre-Nursery, Pre-Nursery Part Time, Nursery and Nursery Part Time Learners Attending Welsh Medium Primary Schools Over the Previous Four Academic Years				
Year Group	Academic Year			
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Pre-Nursery	27	26	18	23
Pre-Nursery Part Time	29	39	32	49
Nursery	406	437	366	359
Nursery Part Time	130	95	145	138
Total	592	597	561	569

The data in the table below, also derived from PLASC, outlines the number of pre-nursery, pre-nursery part-time, nursery and nursery part-time learners attending English medium primary schools for the previous four academic years up to and including 2022-2023.

Table 1.4

Total Number of Pre-Nursery, Pre-Nursery Part Time, Nursery and Nursery Part Time Learners Attending English Medium Primary Schools Over the Previous Four Academic Years				
Year Group	Academic Year			
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Pre-Nursery	95	206	165	160
Pre-Nursery Part Time	262	290	216	202
Nursery	1,311	1,540	1,436	1,430
Nursery Part Time	760	359	512	460
Total	2,428	2,395	2,329	2,252

This data demonstrates a decline in the total number of learners in English medium primary schools over the five year period, however this does not correlate with an increased number of learners attending Welsh medium primary schools as a result. Although an additional 8 learners were reported in Welsh medium schools for this academic year, a loss of 77 learners were reported in English medium schools. This indicates that the numbers accessing pre-nursery, pre-nursery part-time, nursery and nursery part-time are falling in general across RCT.

Mudiad Meithrin Data

At the beginning of the academic year, there were 19 Cylchoedd Meithrin in RCT. As of July 2023, there are now 20 Cylchoedd Meithrin in RCT following the opening of Cylch Meithrin Cilfynydd.

The data received by Mudiad Meithrin in the Autumn term for the academic year 2021-2022 demonstrates the total number of children who transitioned from a Cylch to primary education, the numbers transitioned into Welsh medium education and the numbers transitioned into English medium education. The data demonstrates some positives with some settings having majority of the children transferring into Welsh medium education, however there are some pockets of the County Borough where transition rates into English medium education is higher than the transition into Welsh medium education.

Recent sub-group and steering group meetings have highlighted concerns around the accuracy of this data as many settings now offer both Welsh and English medium sessions. This means that the total number of children being accounted for includes children accessing English medium provision via the settings who will naturally transition into English medium primary education. The Local Authority's Education Data Team are working with Mudiad Meithrin on a new 'Data Sharing Agreement' between the Local Authority and Welsh medium early years

settings in order to gather accurate data on the numbers accessing both Welsh and English medium sessions and the onward monitoring of where these children transition to.

Table 1.5

Cylch	Total No. Transitioned into School	No. Transitioned into Welsh Medium Education	No. Transitioned into English Medium Education
Aberdar	43	24	19
Beddau	25	25	0
Evan James	24	23	1
Llanilltud Faerdref	9	7	2
Penderyn	37	27	10
Pentre'r Eglwys	29	13	16
Rhydyfelin	17	12	5
Seren Fach	41	21	20
Ynysybwl	17	7	10
Abercynon	-	-	-
Bronllwyn	48	38	10
Bystedd Bach (Porth)	28	28	0
Cwm Elai	24	17	7
Glynrhedyn	11	10	1
Llanhari	26	14	12
Llantrisant	12	12	0
Nant Dyrys	32	26	6
Ynysir/Wattstown	64	27	37
Ysgol Dolau	6	6	0

There are currently 13 Cylchoedd Ti a Fi in RCT. The Headteacher of the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin which is due to open in the next academic year, has been working with Mudiad Meithrin and RCT Childcare Development team to register the school to run Cylch Ti a Fi sessions from October 2023. This provision will continue once the new school opens to learners from September 2024.

Flying Start Data

Since the beginning of this academic year, the number of Welsh medium Flying Start childcare places taken were 125. Of this number, 56 childcare places were taken up following the roll out of the expansion areas. Welsh Medium places taken up also increased and 20% of the expansion places were in Welsh settings during Phase 2 of the expansion and this continues to grow. This is as a direct result of having more Welsh approved providers and a wider geographical spread.

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Flying Start Expansion

The Flying Start team have continued to work with new childcare providers including childminders to enable them to become Flying Start Approved Providers to increase the choice of provision available and the number of Welsh medium Flying Start places available. This will assist the Local Authority with meeting the demand for places as part of the expansion and will also provide parents with a wider choice of settings to meet their childcare needs and language choice.

The Flying Start team are working closely with Mudiad Meithrin to increase Welsh medium provision across RCT to bring them on board the approved supplier list for Flying Start. At the beginning of this academic year, there were 14 Welsh medium Flying Start Approved Providers in RCT. As of July 2023, there are currently 21 approved providers and Welsh medium places taken up as part of the phase 2A expansion has increased by 20%.

The Flying Start team have also designed a leaflet (Flying Start Bilingual Journey) in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin which is now circulated to every new family when the child is 18 months old via the Family Health Visitor.

Information on the Availability of Welsh Medium Education Provision

The Local Authority's 'Being Bilingual' booklets is an effective way of providing parents/carers with information on Welsh medium education and provision as it covers a range of areas to include:

- The benefits of being bilingual
- Addresses common parental concerns around choosing Welsh medium education
- The journey from Cymraeg i Blant through to Higher Education
- List of Cylchoedd Meithrin in RCT along with contact details
- List of Welsh medium schools in RCT along with contact details
- Links through to additional support for parents/carers through partner organisations such as Cymraeg i Blant, Learn Welsh Cymru and Welsh4Parents.

During this academic year, the contact details for RCT schools were updated and as such, amendments were needed to reflect the changes in our booklets. The digital version of the booklet has been updated and replaced on the website and leaflet inserts with updated contact details have been designed and printed to be placed inside the physical copies of the booklets. Further amendments were made to the digital booklets to include narrative around the support now available via the Local Authority's newly established Welsh language immersion provision. The immersion teacher has worked with the Local Authority's Design team to design and create promotional leaflets which have been shared with all Welsh medium schools in RCT. Distribution of these leaflets will be extended to Cylchoedd Meithrin, along with the Being Bilingual booklets.

The Local Authority's Childcare Development and Education teams have attended local events such as Parti Ponty and the Teddy Bears Picnic to distribute booklets and leaflets to the general public, taking advantage of the opportunities to directly engage with parents/carers who may be considering Welsh medium education as an option for their child. Wider distribution of the booklets will be completed over the summer period to include RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend birth registration services and Health Visitors.

A review of the Local Authority's corporate website has been undertaken and as a result a dedicated Welsh medium education page is now available to ensure options around Welsh medium education provision are available to parents/carers. This section of the website provides an overview of the benefits of being bilingual, links to finding your local Cylch Meithrin, links to finding schools in your catchment areas, and links through to organisations who can support to include Mudiad Meithrin, Learn Welsh Wales, Menter Iaith. This is the first step undertaken in reviewing our corporate website. During Year 2 of the WESP, further amendments to the website are planned to assist with the uptake of Welsh medium education.

During this academic year, FIS has launched a new platform which is a standalone website to the corporate website. The FIS officer is working with the Childcare Development team to incorporate changes to the new platform to include sections relating to Welsh medium childcare, early years, schools and learning. FIS team ensure the Dewis platform is regularly reviewed to ensure information available to parents/carers is as accurate as possible.

The Local Authority's School Admissions team post admissions deadline dates via corporate social media platforms, along with a message promoting Welsh medium education. This is now being done with each school admission application window. The School Admissions team closely monitor any in-year transfer requests to ensure these have been completed following the changes made to the in-year transfer process, which is detailed under Outcome 3. School Admissions officers have also received information around the late immersion provision which is promoted to any prospective parents/carers.

Partnership Working

The Local Authority's Childcare Development team offer support and guidance to childcare settings that would like to develop and expand their Welsh medium provision by offering business support, new/expansion of provision grants and signposting to relevant agencies, such as Mudiad Meithrin. Capital funding bids have recently been submitted to Welsh Government to expand and develop Welsh medium services in two areas of RCT. These bids were developed in collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin, Flying Start colleagues and the relevant Welsh medium schools. The outcome of these bids has not yet been decided.

Representatives from Cymraeg i Blant and Mudiad Meithrin have attended events such as Parti Ponty and the Teddy Bears Picnic to promote Welsh medium provision and the support available to parents/carers. A member of the Local Authority's Education team also attended the events to promote what's available locally through distribution of the Being Bilingual booklets along with Cymraeg i Blant and Mudiad Meithrin's own promotional materials. Mudiad Meithrin have created a compilation of promotional videos demonstrating the advantages of attending a Cylch Meithrin and choosing Welsh medium education. These resources, along with promotional resources received by Welsh Government, have been shared with the Local Authority's Marketing team to be promoted via the Local Authority's corporate social media platforms and with FIS to be promoted via their new website.

Cymraeg i Blant have recently appointed a new officer who will be commencing the role from September 2023. The officer will deliver Cymraeg i Blant sessions across the County Borough to include story and song time and baby yoga. We will work closely with the new officer to ensure these sessions are widely marketed and promoted to assist with uptake.

Planning of Welsh Medium Provision

The Local Authority's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) identified areas of RCT where future development is needed. As part of the CSA, mapping exercises were conducted which identified geographical gaps in Welsh medium provision across RCT. Consultations conducted

as part of the CSA identified that parents/carers in the Taf Ely area of RCT were most likely to require Welsh medium childcare. The Local Authority's Childcare Development team have met with Mudiad Meithrin and held conversations on the findings of these exercises. Further areas have been identified by Mudiad Meithrin through their own exercises which has been shared with the Childcare Development team. The findings of these exercises have identified areas of RCT where new developments are needed. These areas will be prioritised for development in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin during Year 2 of the WESP.

Promoting Access to Education Through the Medium of Welsh

Under section 10 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, all Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide learners with access to education and training through the medium of Welsh. The Measure outlines that free transport to their nearest suitable school is provided if they reside beyond safe walking distance. The law relating to safe walking distance is defined as two miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education. The Local Authority has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the Measure to make a more generous provision to learners, as set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles.
- Free transport to the nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to learners who meet the ½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of the Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday).
- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory secondary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 2 miles instead of 3 miles.

The current policy is that learners attending the nearest Welsh medium or dual language school receive free transport in accordance with its agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes.

A review has been undertaken to identify the number of Welsh medium schools which do not currently have a Welsh medium early years setting co-located on the school site, or in close proximity to the school. The outcome of this review demonstrated that there are only 2 Welsh medium schools in RCT without a setting co-located, or in close proximity of the school. However, both of these schools have settings located within less than a mile of the school. We will continue to monitor the numbers attending these settings to ensure any notable changes in relation to the numbers attending and transitioning into primary education is monitored and actioned effectively.

The Local Authority's 21st Century Schools team continue to progress and deliver projects to facilitate growth for Welsh medium childcare and early years settings in RCT. During this academic year, work was completed on a new sessional childcare facility creating an additional 30 registered places at YGG Aberdar. The setting opened to learners from September 2022 and has been successful. The setting has already expanded their offer to include afternoon sessions due to high demand.

Plans for a new dedicated childcare facility to be built co-located on the new site of the new Welsh medium school at YGG Llyn y Forwyn have progressed during this academic year. Enablement works have begun on the site with construction expected to commence over the summer period. The Local Authority's Childcare Development team have already met with the childcare provider to explain the expectations for the new settings with regards to expanding

their provision and its promotion to new parents/carers. This support will be ongoing over Year 2 of the WESP.

Outcome 1 Sub-Group

A sub-group has been established to focus solely on each outcome of the WESP. The sub-groups provide an effective focus for the Local Authority in partnership with external groups and organisations. The sub-group have met virtually on a termly basis to review the actions listed on the Outcome 1 Annual Work Plan and provide updates on any progress made and to discuss next steps for actions, where appropriate. The sub-group meetings have provided opportunities to collaborate with partners such as Mudiad Meithrin, Cymraeg i Blant, RhAG and Menter Iaith as well as representatives from different school cluster groups. These meetings have strengthened partnership working and allowed for ideas to be shared amongst key partners to ensure planning of Welsh medium childcare provision in RCT is effective and co-ordinated.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

As referred to above, we have a dedicated group focussing solely on this outcome. The Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation leads this sub-group and membership includes internal officers, representation from Welsh medium primary schools, Health Visitors, and external partners to include Mudiad Meithrin, Cymraeg i Blant, RhAG, Menter Iaith and Dysgu Cymraeg.

The initial sub-group meetings held at the beginning of this academic year focussed on developing the work plan which details the overarching targets, the actions and the key activities required to achieve the targets. The Outcome 1 Sub-group meets on a termly basis to review the targets and actions listed on the work plan to provide an opportunity for members to provide updates on any progress made, where appropriate, and to identify ways to move forward with certain actions. These meetings have been held virtually and have had good levels of engagement. The sub-group lead will review end dates of actions on the work plan to ensure the group remains on targets and in situations where the end date has surpassed, questions will be asked as to why and follow on steps agreed upon to ensure we move forward and don't miss any targets. Following each meeting, minutes of the meeting are shared with members of the sub-group and the 'Progress/Evaluation' column on the work plan is updated with any comments made during the meeting.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- Recruitment of qualified Welsh medium staff to work in childcare and early years settings: Issues being faced at present with recruiting qualified Welsh medium staff. This is preventing some settings from offering further sessions as they do not have the staff to do this.
- Sustainability of settings: New and current settings need to be sustainable if we are to encourage uptake amongst parents/carers. We need to consider where settings are being set up and how we're signposting parents/carers to Welsh medium opportunities.
- Falling birth rates across RCT:

The live birth information received from the Local Health Board indicates that birth rates in general are falling in RCT. This will impact both Welsh and English medium settings and our projected targets as we progress through the WESP.

- Flying Start expansion:

Some settings are reluctant to become approved providers due to concerns around the difficulty of the online procurement system which must be completed to become an approved provider.

- The closure of settings impacting school numbers:

For example, in the catchment area of YGG Ynyswen, there were previously 3 Cylchoedd Meithrin but now there's only 1 which is located next door to the school site. This has greatly impacted the numbers at the school which have halved following the closure of the other settings.

- The location of settings:

In line with the risk identified above, closure of other Cylchoedd within catchment areas can greatly impact the numbers at the school.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Recruitment of qualified Welsh medium staff to work in childcare and early years settings:
 - We need to find out where these types of jobs are being advertised the broaden the channels of advertising to include:
 - Education based job searching portals (for example, e-teach)
 - Social media groups – The Local Authority has a closed social media group for all childcare providers which can be used to promote job opportunities.
 - Schools' social media groups – advertise to parents/carers who may potentially be interested.
 - Engage with Welsh medium secondary schools, colleges and universities to support students to undertake the qualifications required for these posts.
 - Make working in the Welsh medium childcare sector more attractive – low pay offer, increasing responsibility and qualification requirements are hampering this. Intervention is needed at a national level if we're to make an impact.
- Sustainability of settings:
 - Continue to promote financial support for settings via the Local Authority, Welsh Government and Mudiad Meithrin grant schemes.
 - Be more proactive in signposting settings to business support for budget planning and marketing.
- Falling birth rates across RCT:
 - Mudiad Meithrin recently met with the Local Authority's Education Data team and discussed this in more detail. This data needs to be used more strategically to plan Welsh medium provision across the County Borough based on areas where births are occurring.

- Flying Start expansion:
 - The Flying Start team are working directly with settings to support them with going through the online procurement system. The team have visited various settings in RCT to help and have tried to make the process as straightforward as possible. The team are looking into the possibility of delivering workshops to settings to support them in becoming approved providers.

- The closure of settings impacting school numbers:
 - A co-ordinated approach is needed to plan out provision between the Local Authority's Childcare Development team and Mudiad Meithrin to plug the gaps in provision across RCT. The findings of mapping exercises to be used to inform areas of the County Borough where new provision is needed.

- The location of settings:
 - Almost every Welsh medium primary school in RCT has a setting co-located, or in close proximity, to the school.
 - Findings of mapping exercises to be used to identify other areas of school catchments where development of provision is needed to support an increase in numbers accessing Welsh medium primary education to make access to Welsh medium childcare and education as geographically convenient as possible.

Outcome 2

More reception class children/ five year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

KEY ANNUAL DATA

PLASC Data

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total number of primary school aged learners attending primary schools in RCT, split by Welsh and English medium for the previous five academic years up to and including 2022-2023. The data demonstrates that the split between the numbers attending Welsh medium and English medium primary schools has remained consistent over the previous five academic years.

Table 2.1

Total Number of Primary School Aged Learners Attending Primary Schools Split by Welsh and English Medium Over the Previous Five Academic Years										
Category	Academic Year									
	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
Welsh Medium Primary Schools	4,269	19%	4,220	19%	4,152	18.8%	4,097	18.9%	4,038	18.3%
English Medium Primary Schools	18,153	81%	18,078	81%	17,894	81.2%	17,627	81.1%	18,021	81.7%
Total No. Primary Schools	22,422		22,298		22,046		21,724		22,059	

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total number of reception/five year old learners attending Welsh medium primary schools for the previous five academic years, up to and including 2022-2023. The data demonstrates that the number of reception/five year old learners attending Welsh medium primary schools has slowly decreased over the last 3 academic years.

Table 2.2

Total Number of Reception/Five Year Old Learners Attending Welsh Medium Primary Schools Over the Previous Five Academic Years					
Year Group	Academic Year				
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Reception	517	565	528	523	501
Reception Part Time	1	0	0	0	0
Total	518	565	528	523	501

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The data in the table below, also derived from PLASC, outlines the total number of reception/five year old learners attending English medium primary schools for the previous five academic years, up to and including 2022-2023. The data demonstrates a decrease in the number of reception/five year old learners attending English medium schools over the last 3 years which is consistent with the data available on Welsh medium schools. This indicates that the number of reception/five year old learners attending primary schools across the board is decreasing.

Table 2.3

Total Number of Reception/Five Year Old Learners Attending English Medium Primary Schools Over the Previous Five Academic Years					
Year Group	Academic Year				
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Reception	2,136	2,049	2,087	1,943	1,993
Reception Part Time	4	26	19	4	14
Total	2,140	2,075	2,106	1,947	2,007

The data in the table below is derived from PLASC and outlines surplus capacities in Welsh medium and dual language primary schools in RCT for the previous four academic years, up to and including 2022-2023. The data demonstrates that the percentage of surplus capacities in Welsh medium primary schools has increased to 22.8% during the last four years.

Table 2.4

Surplus Capacity in Welsh Medium Primary Schools in RCT				
Category	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Primary and Dual Language Schools	19.6%	20.7%	21.6%	22.8%

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and demonstrates the number and percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic background learners attending all schools in RCT. The data has been broken down further to outline the number of learners attending Welsh medium schools in RCT for the previous five academic years, up to and including the academic year 2022-2023.

Table 2.5

Number and Percentage of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Background Learners Attending Welsh Medium Schools in RCT										
	Academic Year									
	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total No. of Learners	2,103		2,145		2,387		2,609		3,004	
No. of Learners Attending Welsh Medium Schools	210	9.99%	165	7.69%	206	8.63%	200	7.67%	210	6.99%

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme

In line with the new guidance for the Sustainable Communities for Learning rolling programme, the priorities of which are:

- Transforming learning environments and learner experience
- Meeting demand for school places
- Improving condition and suitability of the education estate
- Developing sustainable learning environments
- Supporting the community

We are currently working on our strategic outline programme for our new 9 year programme and will ensure the programme aligns with the WESP objectives, namely:

- Ensuring that every child in RCT has access to Welsh medium education in a school of their choosing and that there is sufficient supply to meet demand.
- Delivering significant investment to improve and provide modern educational facilities for Welsh medium schools and increase Welsh medium learner places at both primary and secondary school level.
- Extend Welsh medium Learning Support Classes and ALN provision across primary and secondary school settings.

Projects identified will form part of WESP sub-group discussions to ensure projects are aligned with our objectives. As we monitor and progress with project investment, the WESP targets will be reviewed to ensure identified project proposals are tailored to be consistent with the aims and objectives of the WESP.

We continue to deliver investment in Welsh medium primary education through the Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. At the beginning of this academic year, we

delivered an extension to YGG Aberdar providing additional facilities and an additional 72 places at the school.

A new Welsh medium primary school is currently being constructed in Rhydyfelin on the site of the current dual language school at Heol y Celyn Primary. The new school will welcome the school's Welsh medium pupils and those currently attending YGG Pont Sion Norton. The school will contain first-class education facilities in a 21st Century building. Construction work is underway on the school site and is moving at speed. The school is on track to open to learners from September 2024.

We have progressed with plans to deliver a brand new Welsh medium school on a new site for YGG Llyn y Forwyn. Enablement work has begun onsite with construction due to commence over the summer period. The new school will open to learners from YGG Llyn y Forwyn from September 2024.

Impact of School Organisation Proposals

In line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, school organisation proposals must be subject to consultation period before the proposal can be published. The consultation document must include information around the extent to which the proposal would support the targets of our WESP and how the proposal would expand or reduce Welsh language provision.

There are statutory requirements for Welsh Language Impact Assessments to be completed on all our school organisation proposals. The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 requires the Local Authority to ensure the person making, reviewing or reviewing a policy decision considers the effects the policy decision would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language or treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. The Welsh Language Impact Assessments identifies:

- Any effect of school organisation proposals on the Welsh language (positive, negative or both).
- Notes ways of promoting the Welsh language including the use of Welsh.
- Any adverse effects on the Welsh language.
- Due regard to the various effects listed in the Welsh Language Standards.

To complete the impact assessment, key policy areas must be reviewed to assess the impact of the proposal, this includes the WESP. Impact assessments are reviewed by the Local Authority's Welsh Language Services and feedback is provided on the strengths and any potential areas for improvement. Once amendments are made, impact assessment are reviewed by the Officer Review Panel who give consideration to the different impacts identified and robustly scrutinise the proposals being considered.

Welsh Medium Provision in English Medium Schools

The introduction of the new Curriculum of Wales has placed statutory duties on all schools to incorporate Welsh into their curriculum as a mandatory requirement. To gather information on what's being done across English medium schools in RCT to promote the Welsh language, several schools were contacted and a total of 12 schools responded.

From the responses received, it's evident that the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme run by CSCJES is having a positive impact on the increasing use of Welsh in English medium schools. Some of the common themes throughout the responses is the introduction of the Helpwr Heddiw/Helpwr y Dydd initiative and the establishment of Criw Cymraeg. The Helpwr Heddiw initiative is being used across all schools that responded, recognising learners use of Welsh using appropriate sentence patterns for their age. Each school has a Criw Cymraeg focussing on

developing and promoting the use of Welsh throughout the school. Criw Cymraeg activities across English medium schools include Welsh playground games, 'Siaradwyr Gymraeg yr Wythnos' certificates for learners who are chosen for their use of Welsh throughout the week and Cegin Cyw at lunchtimes whereby children ask for meals in Welsh. Some of the schools have linked in with Welsh medium schools in RCT to develop Criw Cymraeg activities and in some areas of the county, learners from these schools have attended English medium schools to support learners with the development and use of their Welsh language skills. All schools that responded provide weekly Welsh assemblies introducing the 'word', 'phrase' and 'question' of the week and focusing on different elements of Welsh language, culture, and heritage.

Schools are also using these opportunities to engage with parents/carers and providing support on how to develop children's Welsh language skills at home. Several schools reported that they have utilised the opportunities available with CSCJES to develop their Welsh language skills:

- Blaengwawr Primary School: 1 teacher has undertaken the Welsh Sabbatical Scheme.
- Llwydcoed Primary School: 1 teacher has undertaken the Welsh Sabbatical Scheme.
- Cefn & Craig yr Hesg: 1 teacher is on the course for September 2023 cohort.

It's positive to see that a number of schools have accessed support via the professional development opportunities available with CSCJES and further applications have been made for next year's Welsh Sabbatical Schemes in order to upskill staff and bring improvements to Welsh provision in our English medium schools. An increased use of incidental Welsh was reported by all schools both inside and outside of the classroom by both children and staff. A number of success stories were also shared, to include:

- Pontygwaith Primary School:

Holding a weekly parent/pupil workshop every Friday. The Welsh lead at the school spends the first half of the session teaching parents/carers Welsh skills with the children being invited to join their parents/carers during the second half of the session to show what they've learnt. This has proved to be very popular and a huge success at the school. Following on from the success of these sessions, the school now run a weekly Welsh class for the community led by the Welsh lead. This class runs after school every Thursday and have even had adults attending the sessions who aren't parents/carers of children attending the school.

- SS Gabriel & Raphael Primary School:

The whole school won a heritage award for their work on the Cynefin project which focuses on Welsh stories, songs, famous people, landscape, local artists, song writing, and performances based on your local area.

- Cwm Clydach Primary School:

The Welsh lead at the school has attended Tric a Chlic training and the school have now purchased the resources. This will be rolled out at the school from September 2023.

- Williamstown Primary School:

The school have requested a visit from the ambassador for the National Eisteddfod and have put themselves forward to participate in events.

- Cefn & Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools:

Teachers at the school have set up a Welsh choir focussing on learning and performing through Welsh.

Schools Transitioning to a Different Category

In September 2021, Penderyn Primary became solely a Welsh medium school. The Head of Penderyn Primary is a member of the WESP Outcome 2 Sub-group to support increasing numbers at the new Welsh medium school in an area of RCT where there was not a Welsh school previously.

A new Welsh medium primary school is currently being constructed in Rhydyfelin on the site of the current dual language school at Heol y Celyn Primary. The new school will welcome the school's Welsh medium pupils and those currently attending YGG Pont Sion Norton and will open to learners from September 2024.

Late Immersion Support

In February 2023, the Local Authority successfully recruited a specialist teacher to deliver Welsh language immersion provision to learners who are latecomers to Welsh medium education. Two Learning Support Assistants have also been recruited with the relevant skills and experience needed to support the delivery of immersion provision in RCT. The immersion lead has visited other immersion centres and networked with a range of practitioners to share best practices to identify the way in which provision can be rolled out in RCT. The provision will adapt a peripatetic model of delivery with the immersion team going out to the Welsh medium schools to support learners. The immersion lead has prepared a delivery plan for the roll out of provision and has successfully received funding to purchase resources.

The immersion lead has visited all Welsh medium schools in RCT to share information and resources with the schools and to promote the services available. The immersion team have created a Seesaw account where they'll be able to share photos of immersion sessions and learners progress, with permission of the parent/guardian. Immersion provision is being prioritised for a marketing campaign over the summer period to promote the support available to latecomers to the language. Changes are currently being made to the Local Authority's corporate website for information and signposting purposes. The immersion lead has worked with the Local Authority's Design team to create and print promotional leaflets which have been distributed to the community during events such as Parti Ponty and the Teddy Bears Picnic. Wider distribution of the leaflets will be a priority action during Year 2 of the WESP.

The immersion lead also attended an open day event at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin whereby parents/carers of learners currently attending the dual language school at Heol y Celyn, were in attendance. The immersion lead spoke with parents/carers and promoted the support available through immersion for parents/carers who did not want to move their children to the new English medium school site. This was the first time many had heard of the service as it's something new to the authority. The immersion lead will engage with parents/carers again closer to the time of the new school opening.

The immersion team are currently supporting learners during the final term of this academic year with 3 learners accessing support:

- 1 from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castellau
- 1 from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James
- 1 from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail

The team started to support these learners from the 12th of June 2023 and will continue to support from September. Baseline assessments were completed in the first instance to have a clear understanding of each learners needs so that the service can be tailored to support these learners. Progress monitoring and reporting documents have been created which will be shared with the relevant school and parents/carers to show progress. Provision will be fully operational from

September 2023 and the team have already recruited 2 further learners to commence support from September.

Outcome 2 Sub-Group

A sub-group has been established to focus solely on each outcome of the WESP. The sub-groups provide an effective focus for the Local Authority in partnership with external groups and organisations. The sub-group have met both virtually and in-person on a termly basis to review the actions listed on the Outcome 2 Annual Work Plan and provide updates on any progress made and to discuss next steps for actions, where appropriate. The sub-group meetings have provided opportunities to collaborate and share ideas amongst different school cluster groups.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

We have a dedicated group focussing solely on this outcome. The Head of Achievement leads this sub-group and membership includes internal officers and representation from Welsh medium primary schools.

The initial sub-group meetings at the beginning of this academic year focussed on developing the work plan which details the overarching targets, the actions and the key activities required to achieve the targets. The Outcome 2 Sub-group meets on a termly basis to review the targets and actions listed on the work plan to provide an opportunity for members to provide updates on any progress made, where appropriate, and to identify ways to move forward with certain actions. These meetings have been held both virtually and in-person and have had good levels of engagement. The sub-group lead will review end dates of actions on the work plan to ensure the group remains on targets and in situations where the end date has surpassed, questions will be asked as to why and follow on steps agreed upon to ensure we move forward and don't miss any targets. Following each meeting, minutes of the meeting are shared with members of the sub-group and the 'Progress/Evaluation' column on the work plan is updated with any comments made during the meeting.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- Falling birth rates across RCT:

The live birth information received from the Local Health Board indicates that birth rates in general are falling in RCT. This will impact both Welsh and English medium schools and our projected targets as we progress through the WESP.

- Low uptake for immersion provision:

As this is a new service to RCT, we're not able to predict demand for the service yet.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Falling birth rates across RCT:

The live birth data received by the Local Health Board needs to be used more to strategically plan Welsh medium provision in RCT based on areas where births are occurring. Wider promotion on the benefits of receiving education through the medium of Welsh to be implemented.

- Low uptake for immersion provision:

Implement a marketing campaign to promote the support available to latecomers.

Outcome 3

More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

KEY ANNUAL DATA

PLASC Data

The data in the table below is derived from PLASC and outlines the transition rates of learners between each key stage for Welsh medium primary, secondary and through schools for the previous five academic years, up to and including 2022-2023. Please note that the transition rates between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 takes into consideration learners from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough attending YG Rhydywaun due to there not being a Welsh medium secondary school in that county. Similarly, Ysgol Llanhari in the South Taf area sees learners attending from Bridgend County Borough due to the geographical location of the school.

Table 3.1

Transition Rates of Learners Between Each Key Stage for Welsh Medium Primary, Secondary and Through Schools for the Previous Five Academic Years					
Transition	Academic Year				
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2	97.4%	97.5%	96.1%	95.8%	97.9%
Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3	97.3%	94%	94.7%	95.4%	95.5%
Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4	98.2%	97.3%	98.7%	98.3%	96.1%
Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5	53.5%	55.9%	48.5%	48.9%	45.1%

It's positive to see the percentage of learners transitioning from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 has increased this year and is now back to pre-Covid percentages. Transition rates from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 has remained static over the previous five academic years however the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 shows a decline in the percentages transition through this phase this year. The percentages of learners transitioning from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 is concerning as the percentage has decreased by almost 10 percentage points over the duration of the last five years.

However, when comparing this data with the transition rates of learners between each Key Stage for English medium schools, the data is much the same. The percentages transitioning

from Foundation Phase through each Key Stage up until Key Stage 4 are consistent with the percentages transitioning in Welsh medium schools. The transition from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 in English medium schools also shows a decrease of almost 10 percentage points over the duration of the last five years. This indicates that the transition between these key stages is not only an issue being faced in Welsh medium education but across the board.

Table 3.2

Transition Rates of Learners Between Each Key Stage for English Medium Primary, Secondary and All Through Schools for the Previous Five Academic Years					
Transition	Academic Year				
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2	97.6%	97.6%	97.5%	98.5%	97.6%
Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3	95.9%	96.1%	96.1%	95.1%	95.8%
Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4	98.2%	98.0%	98.5%	97.7%	97.1%
Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5	42.6%	44.0%	45.4%	40.7%	33.5%

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Monitoring Linguistic Progression

The linguistic progression of learners is monitored by the Local Authority's Education Data team and begins from the earliest stages of statutory education. Once PLASC data is available, the data team analyse the data and prepare pupil projection reports which are shared with all Welsh medium schools in RCT. The data is further analysed to identify any notable data changes in relation to Welsh medium education. If any anomalies in the data are identified, or if any of the Headteachers request to discuss this further, the data team will convene meetings with the respective Headteachers.

To ensure we can monitor linguistic progression from pre-statutory education phase, the Local Authority's Education Data team are working with Mudiad Meithrin on a new 'Data Sharing Agreement' between the Local Authority and Welsh medium early years settings. This agreement will allow for accurate data to be gathered on the numbers accessing the settings and the numbers transitioning onwards to primary education. Through implementing this new data agreement, this will enable the Education Data team to monitor the transition of children from early years settings to Welsh medium primary education and onwards through each stage of their statutory education. As we move forward with the ten-year plan, this will simplify the process of monitoring transition through each stage of statutory education as well as

helping us to identify the stages where learners are transitioning out of Welsh medium education to inform future planning of targeted marketing and promotional strategies.

During the first year of the WESP, changes have been made to improve the process of handling in-year transfer requests. This change means that in-year transfer forms can only be provided by the current school. The current Headteacher must have signed the form before the school admissions team will process the application. This change has been implemented and all Headteachers in both Welsh and English medium schools have been made aware of the change. This will improve communications between Welsh and English medium schools, ensuring transfers are actioned in a co-ordinated manner and providing the opportunity for the current Headteacher to engage with the parents/carers prior to making the move. The message around this change continues to be reinforced during regular Headteacher meetings. As this is a new change to the process, we do not have data available as of yet to monitor the impact of this change.

Transition Arrangements from Primary to Secondary Schools

Each Welsh medium secondary school in RCT has a Cluster Curriculum Policy in place between them and the primary schools within their cluster which outlines their transition arrangements for the academic year, in line with the new Welsh Statutory Instruments: 2022 No.566 (W.131) Education, Wales, The Transition from Primary to Secondary School (Wales) Regulations 2022.

There are 4 Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT, each of which has their own transition arrangements with the primary schools within their cluster. The examples below provide a brief overview of the some of the arrangements in place in line with each schools' curriculum policy:

Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun:

- Transition days at the school for Year 6 learners of the cluster primary schools to provide opportunities to visit the school, meet other learners in their year group and have a feel for some of the lessons.
- Open evenings/information evenings for parents/carers of Year 6 pupils of the cluster primary schools.
- Teachers at the school to visit Year 5 learners of the cluster primary schools to host engagement activities.
- Share resources and upcoming open events with parents/carers of Year 6 learners via the 'Year 6' section of the schools' website.
- Additional transition days for vulnerable learners/learners with ALN.
- Cluster schools' sports competition day in the summer term.
- Cluster schools Year 6 residential transition weekend event at Llangrannog (postponed this year, recommencing in 2023-2024).

Ysgol Garth Olwg:

- Transition days at the school for Year 6 learners to visit the school and other learners in their year group from other cluster schools.
- Transition days at the school for Year 5 learners.
- Transition meetings held for parents/carers of learners in Year 5 and Year 6 of the cluster primary schools.
- The transition team visits all primary schools within the cluster to host engagement activities.

Ysgol Llanhari:

- Host an open day for Year 6 parents/carers of the cluster primary schools to visit the school and speak directly with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and the Transition Lead.
- Open evening/information evening event held for Year 6 parents/carers to of cluster primary schools to attend and gather information/ask any questions.
- Teachers from the foreign languages department of the school visits Year 5 and Year 6 learners of the cluster primary schools to provide weekly language lessons.
- ALNCo visits each cluster primary school to discuss the needs of vulnerable learners/learners with ALN.
- Additional open evening/information evening for Year 6 vulnerable learners/learners with ALN and parents/carers of each cluster primary school to attend and meet with the inclusion team.

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda:

- Offer opportunities for parents/carers of vulnerable learners/learners with ALN to visit the school to meet the inclusion team.
- Host information evenings for parents/carers of Year 6 learners at the school.
- As a cluster, funding a transition teacher to support transition arrangements.
- Arrange a trip to watch the schools' drama production for Year 6 learners of each cluster primary school.
- Cluster transition teacher spends 1 day a week in each cluster primary school to work directly with Year 6 learners.
- Cluster transition teachers continues to support Year 7 learners once they've started secondary school.
- Transition days for Year 6 learners of cluster primary schools to visit the school, meet other learners in their year group and experience some of the different lessons available.
- Hold transition days at each cluster primary school in agreed areas of learning, whereby staff from the school will visit each cluster school.
- Year 6 residential transition weekend event at Llangrannog with each cluster primary school.
- Cluster schools' sports competition day in the summer term.
- Year 7 residential trip during the first term of school.

Continuity of Arrangements for Learners Receiving Welsh Medium Education

Work has been ongoing across the region and with partners such as Coleg y Cymoedd to ensure continuity of arrangements for learners receiving Welsh medium education. On a regional basis, CSCJES have been working with Welsh medium secondary schools across the region to promote the opportunities available via the E-sgol programme. E-sgol have visited Ysgol Llanhari to promote the opportunities available. Ysgol Llanhari have taken advantage of the E-sgol programme and have partnered with YG Llangynwyd, which is in Bridgend County Borough, for the delivery of the programme. E-sgol have also presented to the Headteachers who are members of the Gyda'n Gilydd group however to date only Ysgol Llanhari have engaged with the programme.

E-sgol held a conference event on the 3rd of July to promote the programme to schools across the region. The conference provided schools with an opportunity to further understand what is available through E-sgol, looking at successful case studies and networking with other schools. The conference was widely advertised with secondary schools across in RCT via CSCJES and the Local Authority's Education team communication channels as well as being promoted during WESP steering group and sub-group meetings. A total of 39 attendees

across the region attending the conference, however E-sgol have confirmed that no further schools have shown interest as of yet. During Year 2 of the WESP, we will continue to work with CSCJES and Welsh medium secondary school to promote the support available and the benefits of accessing the provision. Data on the number of courses being delivered via the Ysgol Llanhari and YG Llangynwyd partnership can be found under Outcome 4 (Table 4.8).

Welsh medium secondary schools have been working Coleg y Cymoedd to explore opportunities for collaborative working between the schools and the college to ensure a more extensive Welsh medium curriculum is available for Key Stage 5 learners. Coleg y Cymoedd Senior Leadership team and the Recruitment and Progression Manager have met with representatives from YG Rhydywaun, Ysgol Garth Olwg and Ysgol Llanhari to discuss 14-16 pathways with the aim of aiding retention of learners into Welsh medium sixth form education. Discussions went well and the college are now putting together a new 14-16 pathways Key Stage 5 collaborative offer. This will be monitored during the next academic year to ensure the conversations around this continue.

Outcome 3 Sub-Group

A sub-group has been established to focus solely on each outcome of the WESP. The sub-groups provide an effective focus for the Local Authority in partnership with external groups and organisations. The sub-group have met both virtually and in-person on a termly basis to review the actions listed on the Outcome 3 Annual Work Plan and provide updates on any progress made and to discuss next steps for actions, where appropriate.

The sub-group meetings have provided opportunities to collaborate and share ideas amongst different school cluster groups and partner organisations. For example, transition arrangements being used in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda were shared with Ysgol Llanhari who have now adapted some of these arrangements into their own transition arrangements to improve their transition rates from primary to secondary, especially between the cluster schools which are not on the school site. During these meetings, different sets of data have been reviewed and analysed by the group which has provided opportunities for those on the group to access the data sooner. The group has looked at baseline numbers of Welsh medium schools at each year group, numbers transitioning from primary to secondary education and pupil forecasts. This has welcomed open discussions around these key areas of transition and provided opportunities for the Headteachers who are members of this group, to speak directly with the Head of Data Systems and Admissions around different areas of data.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

We have a dedicated group focussing solely on this outcome. The Head of Service Transformation, Data Systems, Admissions and Governors leads this sub-group and membership includes internal officers, representation from Welsh medium primary schools, Coleg y Cymoedd and Menter Iaith RCT.

The initial sub-group meetings at the beginning of this academic year focussed on developing the work plan which details the overarching targets, the actions and the key activities required to achieve the targets. The Outcome 3 Sub-group meets on a termly basis to review the targets and actions listed on the work plan to provide an opportunity for members to provide updates on any progress made, where appropriate, and to identify ways to move forward with certain actions. These meetings have been held both virtually and in-person and have had good levels of engagement. The sub-group lead will review end dates of actions on the work

plan to ensure the group remains on targets and in situations where the end date has surpassed, questions will be asked as to why and follow on steps agreed upon to ensure we move forward and don't miss any targets. Following each meeting, minutes of the meeting are shared with members of the sub-group and the 'Progress/Evaluation' column on the work plan is updated with any comments made during the meeting.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- Falling birth rates across RCT:

The live birth information received from the Local Health Board indicates that birth rates in general are falling across RCT. This will impact both Welsh and English medium settings and our projected targets as we progress through the WESP.

- Transition data available on the numbers transitioning from early years settings into statutory education is not accurate:

The data available on numbers transitioning from Welsh medium childcare and early years settings into statutory education is not accurate. The data available is gathered verbally through settings have discussions with parents/carers. The data also includes numbers accessing English medium sessions and therefore needs to be looked at in more detail.

- Retention of learners from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 in Welsh medium schools:

Due to the lack of Welsh medium vocational qualifications available, learners are opting into English medium schools or colleges instead if they know which vocation they wish to pursue.

- Workforce issues at secondary school level:

Welsh medium secondary schools are facing issues with recruiting specialist staff for several subject areas meaning the Welsh medium GCSE and A Level offer may not be on par with neighbouring English medium schools. This is an issue being faced pan Wales as many practitioners are leaving the profession.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Falling birth rates across RCT:

The Local Authority's Education Data team recently met with Mudiad Meithrin to discuss this in more detail. This data needs to be used more to strategically plan Welsh medium provision across the County Borough based on areas where births are occurring.

- Transition data available on the numbers transitioning from early years settings into statutory education is not accurate:

- The Local Authority's Education Data team are working with Mudiad Meithrin on a new 'Data Sharing Agreement' between the Local Authority and Welsh medium childcare and early years settings in order to gather details of children attending the settings so that these can be mapped across into primary education, ensuring we have official data on the numbers transitioning. This will be in place by September 2023.
- A meeting will be arranged for the new academic year between Flying Start colleagues, Childcare Development colleagues and Mudiad Meithrin to discuss further

concerns around settings offering Welsh and English medium sessions to ensure the data being recorded moving forward is accurate.

- Retention of learners from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 in Welsh medium schools:
 - The Gyda'n Gilydd group are working with the WJEC to create Welsh medium Level 3 vocational qualifications.
 - Coleg y Cymoedd to are working with Welsh medium secondary schools to create a Key Stage 5 collaborative offer. This will be an action on Year 2 of the work plan to ensure the developments around this are monitored closely.

- Workforce issues at secondary school level:
 - Work with partners such as Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Cardiff Metropolitan University and CSCJES to promote the benefits of teaching as a profession to encourage people to consider this as a career pathway.
 - Promote the alternative routes into teaching available via the Open University Salaried Route whereby Welsh Government contributes towards the student teacher's salary and the ITE programme.

Outcome 4

More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

KEY ANNUAL DATA

PLASC Data

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total number of secondary school aged learners attending schools in RCT, split by Welsh and English medium for the previous five academic years up to and including 2022-2023. The percentages of learners receiving their education through the medium of Welsh and English has remained stable over the previous five academic years.

Table 4.1

Total Number of Secondary School Aged Learners Attending Secondary Schools Split by Welsh and English Medium Over the Previous Five Academic Years										
Category	Academic Year									
	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
Welsh Medium Schools	3,058	19.4%	3,141	19.6%	3,197	19.3%	3,136	19%	3,121	19%
English Medium Schools	12,685	80.6%	12,868	80.4%	13,346	80.7%	13,365	81%	13,317	81%
Total No. All Schools	15,473		16,009		16,543		16,501		16,438	

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total number of year ten learners attending Welsh medium secondary schools for the previous five academic years, up to and including 2022-2023. The data demonstrates that the number of year ten learners attending Welsh medium secondary schools has steadily increased over the previous five academic years, with the most recent year showing the highest number of learners.

Table 4.2

Total Number of Year Ten Learners Attending Welsh Medium Secondary Schools Over the Previous Five Academic Years					
Year Group	Academic Year				
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Year Ten	496	513	517	533	539

The data in the table below, also derived from PLASC, outlines the total number of year ten learners attending English medium secondary schools for the previous five academic years, up to and including 2022-2023. The number of year ten learners in English medium schools was at its highest in 2020-

2021 and has declined since then, however there is a slight increase this year when comparing with the previous year.

Table 4.3

Total Number of Year Ten Learners Attending English Medium Secondary Schools Over the Previous Five Academic Years					
Year Group	Academic Year				
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Year Ten	2,105	2,251	2,303	2,232	2,284

The data in the table below is derived from PLASC and outlines surplus capacities in Welsh medium secondary and through schools in RCT for the previous four academic years, up to and including 2022-2023. The data demonstrates that the percentage of surplus capacities in Welsh medium secondary schools has increased to 27% during the last four years.

Table 4.4

Surplus Capacity in Welsh Medium Secondary and Through Schools for the Previous Four Academic Years				
Category	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Secondary and Through Schools	23.1%	21.0%	26.6%	27%

Data on the Number of Learners Registered for GCSE Welsh

The data in the table that follows is derived from Welsh Government data and outlines the total percentage of year eleven learner entries for GCSEs in Welsh (first and second language) for the previous five academic years, up to and including the academic year 2021-2022. The data demonstrates a slight increase in the number of entries for Welsh Second Language GCSE however the entries for Welsh First Language has remained stable over this period of time.

Table 4.5

Total Percentage of Year Eleven Learner Entries for GCSEs in Welsh (First and Second Language) Over the Previous Five Academic Years					
Category	Academic Year				
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Welsh (First Language)	17%	17%	18%	18.4%	18.2%
Welsh (Second Language)	45%	59%	63%	62.1%	64.2%

The data in the table that follows is derived from Welsh Government data and outlines the total percentage of year twelve and thirteen learner entries for AS and A Level Welsh (first and second language) for the previous five academic years, up to and including 2021-2022. During the most recent

academic year, the number of learner entries has decreased slightly when comparing to the previous four years.

Table 4.6

Total Percentage of Year Twelve and Thirteen Learner Entries for AS and A Level in Welsh (First and Second Language) Over the Previous Five Academic Years					
Category	Academic Year				
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Welsh (First and Second Language)	4.2%	3.7%	3.5%	3.7%	3.1%

Coleg y Cymoedd Data

The data in the table below is provided by Coleg y Cymoedd and demonstrates the number of learners at the college that completed elements of their studies through the medium of Welsh for the academic year 2021-2022. This is the most recent data available, the data for the current academic year will be released in January 2024. An explanation of the codes is provided below.

Table 4.7

Number of Learners Completing Bilingual Learning at Coleg y Cymoedd	
Code	2021-2022
B1	13
B3	43
C1	592
Total	648

Code

E1	Learning and assessment completed in English only.
B3	A small amount of Welsh medium learning completed in Welsh, limited to verbal communication or a minor part of the learning activity, with the assessment being completed in English only. This can be used to record situations where some Welsh is used during learning, however minimum use of incidental Welsh is not sufficient for it to be recorded. There needs to be Welsh language interaction between the assessor/lecturer/teacher and learner for it to be a meaningful use of the language.
B2	A significant amount of Welsh medium learning (both verbal and written) used in many, but not all parts, of the learning activity. Assessment completed mainly in English, but there may be some elements of Welsh.
B1	Learning completed in a bilingual context with at least 50% of the available assessments within the learning activity being completed through the medium of Welsh. The outcome may be achieved using any appropriate teaching methodology.
C1	Learning completed in a Welsh medium context with all the available assessments within the learning activity being completed through the medium of Welsh.

E-sgol Data

At present, there is only 1 Welsh medium secondary school in RCT providing further opportunities to learners through the E-sgol programme. Ysgol Llanhari have a partnership with YG Llangynwyd which is located in Bridgend County Borough. Although this school is in a neighbouring county, this is the closest Welsh medium secondary school to Ysgol Llanhari geographically.

The data in the table below has been provided by E-sgol and outlines the courses being delivered through the Llanhari/Llangynwyd partnership for the academic year 2022-2023. The data contains the number of learners on each course split by year group however, these figures also include learners accessing the programme from YG Llangynwyd so are not specific to RCT learners only. The data shows that there are 10 courses being delivered this academic year with 48 year 12 learners and 15 year 13 learners accessing learning through the E-sgol programme.

Table 4.8

Courses Offered and Numbers on Courses for the Ysgol Llanhari/ Ysgol Llangynwyd E-sgol Partnership		
Subject	Year 12	Year 13
Sociology	9	1
Health and Social Care	10	5
Physical Education	4	0
Music	1	0
Sports	1	4
Product Design	2	0
Physics	9	1
Protective Services	4	3
Digital Technology	8	0
Applied ICT	0	1
Total	48	15

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Increasing the Number of Welsh Medium Qualifications Available

A key focus of Outcome 4 of the WESP is to maintain and broaden the GCSE, AS and A Level provision available through the medium of Welsh. CSCJES have been working closely with the Gyda'n Gilydd group and WJEC to address the disparity in the number of accessible qualifications available, especially vocational qualifications through the medium of Welsh. Funding has been utilised for the creation of more accessible qualifications, mainly developing Level 2 and 3 Welsh medium vocational qualifications. CSCJES has provided Gyda'n Gilydd with £10,000 funding in 2021-2022 and an additional £10,000 in 2022-2023 to work alongside WJEC to develop Welsh medium Level 3 vocational qualifications. Qualifications are currently being developed for Business, Tourism, Public Services and Sports. The group continues to work with the WJEC on this project and strong progress is being made.

Welsh medium secondary schools have been working Coleg y Cymoedd to explore opportunities for collaborative working between the schools and the college to ensure a more extensive Welsh medium curriculum is available for Key Stage 5 learners. Coleg y Cymoedd Senior Leadership team and the

Recruitment and Progression Manager have met with representatives from YG Rhydywaun, Ysgol Garth Olwg and Ysgol Llanhari to discuss 14-16 pathways with the aim of aiding retention of learners into Welsh medium sixth form education. Discussions went well and the college are now putting together a new 14-16 pathways Key Stage 5 collaborative offer. This will be monitored during the next academic year to ensure the conversations around this continue.

Coleg y Cymoedd are also developing Welsh medium and bilingual provision in vocational areas in line with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol 'Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh Medium Action Plan.' The college has employed Welsh language facilitators in the areas of Childcare, Health and Social Care and Public Services are currently recruiting in the areas of Creative Industries and Business. The Welsh language facilitators in these priority areas are working directly with tutors and learners to develop bilingual provision. Coleg y Cymoedd are continuing to work closely with awarding bodies to ensure learners are able to submit work in Welsh.

Tools and resources developed by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Sgiliau Iaith are used to encourage the use of Welsh within the college classroom. Welsh medium and bilingual opportunities (both in the classroom and extracurricular) are being widely advertised through college brochures, 'Welsh at Coleg y Cymoedd' booklets, internal staff and student portals, social media campaigns and open events and fairs.

Welsh Medium Learning Pathways

In our WESP, we included our aims to further develop learning pathways for 14 to 19 year old learners to provide a wider range of options for learners. The Local Authority's Gatsby Benchmark Manager is a member of the Outcome 4 sub-group and has been proactive in discussions around developing the Gatsby Benchmark Programme and Green Light Provision in our Welsh medium secondary schools. Amendments have been made to the Benchmark framework to support the development of further learning pathways in Welsh medium schools, to include:

- Added to Benchmark 4 – "With an emphasis on all subject teachers to emphasise on the importance of succeeding in Welsh".
- Added to Benchmark 7 "Encounters with Further and Higher Education" – "Pupils understand and have experience of routes that transition or move into further and higher education through the medium of Welsh".

The Gatsby Benchmark Manager has made links with Sian Lloyd Morgan (senior lecturer at Cardiff University with responsibility for Welsh Language pathways) to develop further understandings of what is available to share with career leads and Headteachers. This will be a focus for Year 2 of the WESP.

Green Light Provision is now being delivered in all Welsh medium secondary and through schools, linking careers using the Welsh language and how they can be achieved through Welsh qualifications. A Welsh speaking member of staff is now available to conduct the advice and guidance sessions and Green Light support through the medium of Welsh.

A pilot project entitled 'Ysbrydoli Fi/Inspire Me' has taken place during this academic year in both Welsh and English medium secondary schools in RCT. The project invites inspirational speakers from a range of career backgrounds to speak to learners from all year groups on their career journeys and how the ability to communicate in Welsh has supported their career aspirations. A third pilot school, an English medium through school, will run the 'Ysbrydoli Fi' programme in January 2024 focusing on career pathways through and using the Welsh language.

E-sgol Provision in RCT

There is currently only 1 school in RCT engaging with the E-sgol provision to provide learners with a wider range of subjects through the medium of Welsh. Following a visit to Ysgol Llanhari by the E-sgol team whereby they promoted the opportunities available, the school have taken advantage of the programme and have partnered with YG Llangynwyd, located in Bridgend County Borough, for the delivery of the programme. E-sgol have also presented to the Headteachers who are members of the Gyda'n Gilydd group however to date only Ysgol Llanhari have engaged with the programme. The data in the table above (Table 4.8) demonstrates the range of subjects being accessed by learners at Ysgol Llanhari through the E-sgol programme, providing a wider offer of Welsh medium qualifications to aid retention of learners at the school.

E-sgol held a conference event on the 3rd of July to promote the programme to schools across the region. The conference provided schools with an opportunity to further understand what is available through E-sgol, looking at successful case studies and networking with other schools. The conference was widely advertised with secondary schools in RCT via CSCJES and the Local Authority's Education team communication channels as well as being promoted during WESP steering group and sub-group meetings. A total of 39 attendees across the region attending the conference, however E-sgol have confirmed that no further schools have shown interest as of yet. We will continue to work with CSCJES and Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT to promote the support available via the E-sgol programme to widen their Welsh medium qualification offer.

Promoting Welsh as a Subject and Subjects Through the Medium of Welsh

CSCJES prepared a document linking through to a collection of resources produced by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol that support schools to emphasise and promote the benefits of studying Welsh as a subject. The resources encourage learners to continue to study Welsh as an AS/A Level subject and as a university degree. The collection contains various materials such as video clips and links to external websites. The link to these resources: <https://www.porth.ac.uk/en/collection/pam-astudio-r-gymraeg-fel-pwnc>

The document contained a link to the 'Choose Lefel A Cymraeg' campaign and resources. This campaign is funded by Welsh Government and aims to encourage more young learners to study Welsh as an A Level by providing promotional assets to raise awareness around the endless benefits the language has on academic, cultural and working life. The link to the campaign and resources: <https://www.porth.ac.uk/en/collection/dewisa-lefel-a-cymraeg-ymgyrch-ac-adnoddau>

The document also linked through to the E-sgol website which outlines its aims to expand opportunities for post-14 and post-16 learners to study courses that would otherwise not be available to them. This document has been shared widely with both Welsh and English medium secondary schools in RCT via CSCJES and the Local Authority's Education team communication channels.

In order to ensure parents/carers are informed of the opportunities available, changes have been made to the Local Authority's corporate website to include a section on post-16 provision for learners in RCT. The changes made were the first step in creating a post-16 provision section of the website. During Year 2 of the WESP, further changes will be made to the website to develop this further along with schools' individual websites to ensure the post-16 Welsh medium offer is available for parents/carers to see, ensuring the opportunities which are available are widely promoted.

CSCJES are also looking into funding a group to produce marketing resources aimed at increasing the number of learners studying Welsh as a subject, and subjects through the medium of Welsh. CSCJES have had discussions with Welsh Government around this and it was highlighted that the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol have produced a wide range of resources which have now been shared directly with schools via CSCJES communication channels and via their social media platforms.

CSCJES have informed schools of the 2023-2024 'Welsh in Education Grant' which is available from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. This grant is aimed at promoting Welsh as a subject with the aim of increasing the number of learners studying Welsh at A Level. CSCJES are awaiting uptake data for RCT from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol: Welsh in Education Grant - [Welsh in Education Fund 2022/23](#)

The benefits of studying Welsh as a subject are also being promoted in our English medium schools. Porth Community School, which is an English medium through school, faced challenges at the beginning of this academic year as they were not able to recruit a Welsh medium teacher to deliver Welsh lessons at the school. This had an impact on the opportunities available to offer Welsh as subject to the older learners as they did not have a specialist teacher who could deliver these lessons. In recent months, the school have successfully recruited a Welsh teacher who has already implemented positive changes at the school with regards to changing attitudes towards the Welsh language.

A 'Cryw Cymraeg' has been established for Years 5, 6 and 7 which allows learners to vote for staff who have used incidental Welsh in lessons and throughout the school. The aim of this initiative is to raise awareness and use of incidental Welsh across the school in an engaging and impactful way. The 'Cryw Cymraeg' learners have also created posters for the school based on bilingualism and the advantages of speaking and studying Welsh and held a competition where learners had to create a Welsh welcome sign to be placed in reception areas. These activities form part of a learner centred initiative where the school are shifting the focus from Welsh being imposed by teachers, to learners having direct ownership of how Welsh can become an increasingly relevant part of the everyday culture of school. Plans are already in place for activities for the next academic year which include:

- Language teachers choosing a language ambassador at the end of each half term for a breaktime treat.
- Promoting and celebrating language focused cultural events – European day of languages, Santes Dwynwen etc.
- The school Eisteddfod will increase in prominence and scope to involve a variety of acts and skills in collaboration with other staff and subject areas.
- A trip to Llangrannog currently being planned with the Urdd for Year 6 and 7 learners for March 2024.

Courses Offered and Uptake Through the Medium of Welsh

The Local Authority's 14-19 Strategy Officer works closely with CSCJES and local partnerships to monitor the number of courses offered and the uptake through the medium of Welsh, as required by Section 116B (4) of the Education Act 2022.

The data below shows the number of courses offered through the medium of Welsh to year 10 and year 11 learners in RCT. This data relates to courses being delivered fully through Welsh, however it's important to note that there are a small number of no more than 18 learners in this age category who are completing the course bilingually. The number of courses being offered through the medium of Welsh at post-14 qualification level has remained fairly consistent over the previous four years. It's positive to see that the number of learners undertaking courses through the medium of Welsh at post-14 qualification level has steadily increased over this time period.

Table 4.8

Post-14 Welsh Medium Offer – Number of Courses and Number of Learners				
Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number of Courses Offered Through the Medium of Welsh	32	31	31	33
Number of learners taking courses through the medium of Welsh	1,002	1,024	1,038	1,046

The data below shows the number of courses offered through the medium of Welsh to year 12 and year 13 learners in RCT. This data relates to courses being delivered fully through Welsh, however as mentioned above, there are a small number of no more than 18 learners in this age category who are completing the course bilingually. The number of courses offered through the medium of Welsh at post-16 qualification level is consistent with the post-14 offer in terms of the number of courses being offered is fairly consistent over the previous four academic years. However, the number of learners undertaking courses through the medium of Welsh at post-16 level has declined since the academic year 2020-2021. Although there is an increase in the number of learners during 2022-2023, this is still a decrease on the numbers undertaking courses prior to 2020-2021.

Table 4.9

Post-16 Welsh Medium Offer – Number of Courses and Number of Learners				
Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number of Courses Offered Through the Medium of Welsh	33	33	32	34
Number of learners taking courses through the medium of Welsh	474	484	449	465

The data demonstrates the challenges currently being faced with the retention of learners in Welsh medium education at post-16 level as the numbers undertaking courses through the medium of Welsh at this level have more than halved during each academic year when comparing with the numbers undertaking courses at post-14 qualification level. The Local Authority will continue to work with partners and schools in RCT to develop Welsh medium vocational qualifications and to further promote the qualifications available through the medium of Welsh with the aim of increasing the numbers as we progress through the ten year plan.

Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme

We continue to deliver investment in Welsh medium primary education through the Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. At the beginning of this academic year, we delivered an extension to YG Rhydywaun to increase capacity at the school. The brand new block on the school site opened to learners from September 2022 and created an additional 187 learner places at the school.

A design team is currently being assembled to look at development options to deliver a modern, innovative teaching and learning environment at YG Cwm Rhondda. Proposals are currently in their earliest stages, these will be developed further during year 2 of the WESP in collaboration with the school, and officers will be working to secure funding via the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

Outcome 4 Sub-Group

A sub-group has been established to focus solely on each outcome of the WESP. The sub-groups provide an effective focus for the Local Authority in partnership with external groups and organisations. The sub-group have met on a termly basis to review the actions listed on the Outcome 4 Annual Work Plan and provide updates on any progress made and to discuss next steps for actions, where appropriate. The establishment of this sub-group has been successful in creating constructive working relationships between the Local Authority, CSCJES, Welsh medium secondary schools and Coleg y Cymoedd who are all working towards the same goal of broadening and maintaining learning opportunities through the medium of Welsh. The sub-group meetings have provided opportunities to collaborate and share ideas amongst different school cluster groups.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

We have a dedicated group focussing solely on this outcome. The Head of Achievement and Wellbeing leads this sub-group and membership includes internal officers, representation from Welsh medium secondary schools, local college and CSCJES.

The initial sub-group meetings at the beginning of this academic year focussed on developing the work plan which details the overarching targets, the actions and the key activities required to achieve the targets. The Outcome 4 Sub-group meets on a termly basis to review the targets and actions listed on the work plan to provide an opportunity for members to provide updates on any progress made, where appropriate, and to identify ways to move forward with certain actions. The sub-group lead will review end dates of actions on the work plan to ensure the group remains on targets and in situations where the end date has surpassed, questions will be asked as to why and follow on steps agreed upon to ensure we move forward and don't miss any targets. Following each meeting, minutes of the meeting are shared with members of the sub-group and the 'Progress/Evaluation' column on the work plan is updated with any comments made during the meeting.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- Workforce issues at secondary school level:
Welsh medium secondary schools are facing issues with recruiting specialist staff for a number of subject areas meaning the Welsh medium GCSE and A Level offer may not be on par with neighbouring English medium schools. This is an issue being faced pan Wales as many practitioners are leaving the profession.
- Retention of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 learners in Welsh medium schools:
Due to the lack of Welsh medium vocational qualifications available, learners are opting into English medium schools or colleges instead if they know which vocation they wish to pursue.

- Funding schemes ending:

The Local Authority received funding to roll out the Green Light Provision in Welsh medium schools which has proven to be successful, however this funding will end eventually and there's no confirmation of further funding as of yet.

- New qualifications:

Certain qualifications have not been renewed which runs the risk of continuum of learning for some learners who may opt to an English medium school or college to carry out the qualification.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Workforce issues at secondary school level:

- Work with partners such as Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Cardiff Metropolitan University and CSCJES to promote the benefits of teaching as a profession to encourage people to consider this as a career pathway.
- Promote the alternative routes into teaching available via the Open University Salaried Route whereby Welsh Government contributes towards the student teacher's salary and the ITE programme.

- Retention of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 learners in Welsh medium schools:

- The Gyda'n Gilydd group are working with the WJEC to create Welsh medium Level 3 vocational qualifications.
- Coleg y Cymoedd to are working with Welsh medium secondary schools to create a Key Stage 5 collaborative offer. This will be an action on Year 2 of the work plan to ensure the developments around this are monitored closely.

- Funding schemes ending:

We hope that further funding will come available once this funding scheme ends as the roll out of the provision in Welsh medium schools has proven to be a success.

- New qualifications:

We are awaiting decisions and consultations from Welsh Government and Qualification Wales regarding this issue.

Outcome 5

More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

KEY ANNUAL DATA

Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus Data

The data in the table below is provided by CSCJES and demonstrates the baseline data of the number of Welsh medium primary schools that had received the Siarter Iaith gold, silver and bronze awards as of September 2022, against the most recent data. Since the beginning of this academic year, 1 additional school has received the silver and 3 additional schools have received the gold.

Table 5.1

Welsh Medium Primary Schools – Siarter Iaith		
	September 2022	July 2023
Bronze	17	17
Silver	12	13
Gold	2	5

The data in the table below is provided by CSCJES and demonstrates the baseline data of the number of Welsh medium secondary schools that had received the Siarter Iaith gold, silver and bronze awards as of September 2022, against the most recent data. Since the beginning of this academic year, 1 additional school has received the bronze award.

Table 5.2

Welsh Medium Secondary Schools – Siarter Iaith		
	September 2022	July 2023
Bronze	1	2
Silver	1	1
Gold	0	0

The data in the table below is provided by CSCJES and demonstrates the baseline data of the number of English medium primary schools that had received the Cymraeg Campus gold, silver and bronze awards as of September 2022, against the most recent data. Since the beginning of this academic year, 8 additional schools have achieved the bronze award, 10 schools have achieved the silver award and 2 schools have achieved the gold award.

Table 5.3

English Medium Primary Schools – Cymraeg Campus		
	September 2022	July 2023
Bronze	32	40
Silver	0	10
Gold	0	2

The data in the table below is provided by CSCJES and demonstrates the baseline data of the number of English medium secondary schools that had received the Cymraeg Campus gold, silver and bronze awards as of September 2022, against the most recent data. Since the beginning of this academic year, 4 additional schools have received the bronze award.

Table 5.4

English Medium Secondary Schools – Cymraeg Campus		
	September 2022	July 2023
Bronze	1	5
Silver	0	0
Gold	0	0

During the first year of the WESP, the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus provision was extended to include special schools and units in RCT. CSCJES Improvement Partners have worked with schools and units to support the roll out of the programme. The data in the table below demonstrates the baseline data of the number of special schools/units that had received the Cymraeg Campus gold, silver and bronze awards as of September 2022, against the most recent data. Since the beginning of this academic year, 3 schools have received the bronze award.

Table 5.5

English Medium Special Schools/Units – Cymraeg Campus		
	September 2022	July 2023
Bronze	0	3
Silver	0	0
Gold	0	0

There are 17 Welsh medium primary schools in RCT. All Welsh medium primary schools in RCT have now engaged with the Siarter Iaith programme and all have received the bronze award. There are 4 Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT, all of which have now engaged with the Siarter Iaith programme.

There are a total of 82 English medium primary schools in RCT. Of these 82 schools, there are 6 English medium primary schools yet to engage with provision. There are 13 English medium secondary/although schools in RCT. Of these 13 schools, 4 are yet to engage with provision.

The schools yet to engage were invited to an 'Introduction to Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus' session hosted by CSCJES in the spring term, whereby the schools were encouraged to engage with the programme. These schools will be targeted again during the 2023-2024 academic year. There are 6 special schools/units in RCT. Of the 6 settings, only 1 has yet to engage. CSCJES Improvement Partners are continuing to work closely with the relevant officers to support engagement and roll out of provision.

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Youth Services

In November 2022, the Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) launched its 'Your Voice/Eich Llais' survey to capture the views of young people aged 11 – 25. Young people were given the opportunity to complete a series of interactive questions asked on a range of thematic areas using an online survey platform. Almost 5,000 people responded to the survey across schools, colleges, youth clubs and other community settings across the Local Authority. Part of the survey explored respondents' use of the Welsh language and asked the question: *Would you welcome more opportunities to learn, or use, the Welsh language outside of school/in your free time in any of these places?* The options of places included: online, libraries, art clubs, sports clubs, during school holidays, youth clubs, after school clubs.

The outcome of this survey shows that respondents would like more opportunities to learn and use the language online, at sport clubs and at after school clubs. This data will be used by YEPS to inform future planning of Welsh medium opportunities in RCT and to improve the way YEPS and partner organisations deliver services for young people in the area.

The YEPS team, Menter Iaith and the Urdd have met regularly throughout this academic year to co-produce opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts. YEPS received funding via the Youth Support Grant to support a range of activities which was commissioned out to the Urdd and Menter Iaith. The additional funding remaining has been used to increase the number of trips YEPS are able to run which also includes mixed trips to develop conversations in Welsh with learners from English medium schools. These trips will run throughout the school summer holidays.

Partnership Working

The Urdd and Menter Iaith have been working in partnership with Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT to establish Welsh language youth forums in each school. During Year 2 of the WESP, the Urdd and Menter Iaith will build relationships with English medium schools in RCT in order to establish Welsh language forums if there's funding remaining. The Urdd and Menter Iaith have also been working with Coleg y Cymoedd's Bilingual Development Officer to establish Welsh language youth forums at the college which has now been done. The officer has been building a bank of Welsh speakers at the college who are now members of the forum.

The college's Bilingual Development Officer is currently working with the Welsh Language team of each college campus in RCT to create a 'Cwtsh Cymraeg' on each campus. This will be a Welsh language area with a visual focal point for Welsh related activities for learners attending Coleg y Cymoedd campuses. During Year 2 of the WESP, the officer will be recruiting 3 Welsh Language Learner Ambassadors to support with the promotion of Welsh related activities. The college continue to ensure a range of activities and experiences are provided for learners attending the college, these activities include:

- Regular challenges related to the Welsh language for staff and learners on each campus.
- Social activities for Welsh speaking learners.

- Sessions for learners wanting to learn basic level of Welsh.

In our WESP, we committed to strengthening links between the Local Authority and the Urdd to provide learners with a wide range of activities to use the Welsh language in different contexts. The Local Authority's Leisure Services team have been working with the Urdd to deliver sport activities for Welsh medium schools in RCT. Leisure Services now have a Service Level Agreement in place with the Urdd to deliver sporting sessions through the medium of Welsh. Swimming lessons through the medium of Welsh are currently being delivered on a weekly basis every Monday at Llantrisant Leisure Centre and every Tuesday at Rhondda Sports Centre. There are currently over 130 children per week undertaking their swimming lessons through the medium of Welsh at these centres and lessons will also be starting at Aberdare Sobell Leisure Centre soon.

The Urdd host a range of multi-sport activities through the medium of Welsh at the following schools:

- YGG Bodringallt
- YGG Bronllwyn
- YGG Castellau
- Dolau Primary School (dual language)
- Ysgol Garth Olwg
- Ysgol Llanhari
- YGG Llwyncelyn
- YGG Llyn y Forwyn
- YGG Pont Sion Norton
- YGG Tonyrefail
- YGG Ynyswen

The Urdd offer support to every Welsh medium school in RCT to run provision such as Dinnertime Club and School Club. The schools listed below are currently working with the Urdd to deliver this type of provision. The Urdd are prioritising engaging with all Welsh medium schools during the next academic year in order to provide further Welsh medium opportunities across RCT.

List of schools currently engaged with the Urdd:

- YGG Bodringallt
- YGG Bronllwyn
- YGG Castellau
- Dolau Primary School (dual language)
- YGG Evan James
- Ysgol Garth Olwg
- Gwauncelyn Primary (English medium)
- Heol Y Celyn Primary (dual language)
- Ysgol Llanhari
- YGGG Llantrisant
- YGG Llwyncelyn
- YGG Llyn y Forwyn
- YGG Pont Sion Norton
- YGG Tonyrefail
- Tŷ Coch (Special School/Learning Support)
- YGG Ynyswen

The Urdd also provide sport activities outside of the classroom through the delivery of Welsh medium community clubs across RCT. The data in the table below has been provided by the

Urdd and demonstrates the type of classes available and the number of children attending these sessions per week:

Table 5.6

Sport Activity	Numbers Attending
Gymnasteg Garth Olwg	19
Gymnasteg Canolfan Hamdden Rhondda	31
Gymnasteg Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	16
Nofio Llantrisant	83
Nofio Rhondda	55
Pel-rwyd #FelMerch	6
Rygbï Cwm Rhondda	8
Tenis Taffs Well	10

Evaluation of Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus

Formal evaluation of the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme has not been conducted during year 1 of the WESP. The data available above shows high levels of engagement with the provision demonstrating that all sectors of education are accessing further opportunities to use Welsh in different contexts. A number of English medium primary schools in RCT were contacted to gather information on what the schools are doing to promote the use of the Welsh language. From the responses received, it's evident that the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme is having a positive impact on the increasing use of Welsh in English medium schools. Some of the common themes throughout the responses was the introduction of the Helpwr Heddiw/Helpwr y Dydd initiative and the establishment of Criw Cymraeg. The Helpwr Heddiw initiative is being used across all schools that responded, recognising learners use of Welsh using appropriate sentence patterns for their age. Each school has a Criw Cymraeg focussing on developing and promoting the use of Welsh throughout the school. Criw Cymraeg activities across English medium schools include Welsh playground games, 'Siaradwyr Gymraeg yr Wythnos' certificates for learners who are chosen for their use of Welsh throughout the week and Cegin Cyw at lunchtimes whereby children ask for meals in Welsh. Some of the schools have linked in with Welsh medium schools in RCT to develop Criw Cymraeg activities and in some areas of the county, learners from these schools have attended English medium schools to support learners with the development and use of their Welsh language skills. All schools that responded provide weekly Welsh assemblies introducing the 'word', 'phrase' and 'question' of the week and focusing on different elements of Welsh language, culture and heritage. During year 2 of the WESP, we will evaluate the impact of the programme across all schools in RCT.

Further Opportunities to use Welsh Outside of the Classroom

The Local Authority's Musical Services team have been identifying different ways to promote bilingual opportunities through using musical services. Since the beginning of this academic year, they've had an increase in the number of harp lessons being provided in both Welsh and English medium schools and are currently looking into the feasibility of delivering jazz sessions through the medium of Welsh outside of the school day. Musical Services are engaging with both Welsh and English medium schools to encourage learners who show an aptitude towards playing instruments to take part in the Urdd Eisteddfod and are also looking into establishing a Welsh folk group with the possibility of a performance at the National Eisteddfod which is being held in RCT in 2024.

The Local Authority's Leisure Services have continued to work closely with partners to develop opportunities to introduce the Welsh language into leisure sessions. Menter Iaith have supported

Leisure Services to develop and deliver a bilingual training programme for physical activity. Through partnership working, they have delivered workshops to staff on how the Welsh language can be introduced into traditionally English sporting activities. The programme includes consultation, mentoring, development of new resources and further development of workshops for future rollout. This initiative is in its early stages and will be further developed during Year 2 of the WESP.

Leisure Services have also engaged with community sporting groups across RCT to encourage an uptake in Welsh language community clubs for children. We are pleased to report that Leisure Services have successfully established the first fully Welsh leisure club in RCT and are continuing to work closely with 'Dregiau Dar Football Club' to develop Welsh medium training sessions. The club are developing an under 10s mixed section with 5 volunteers and coaches supporting this. The club have received Sport RCT Accreditation and have an application pending with Sport Wales for the Be Active Wales Fund. As this is the first club of its type in RCT, a case study will be completed in due course with the aim of promoting this wider to encourage more clubs to develop Welsh medium provision.

The Local Authority's Welsh Language Services have been identifying ways in which non-teaching, education based staff can train or upskill themselves so that they can engage with learners through the medium of Welsh. The first area being targeted for support is the Local Authority's Catering Services. The Welsh Language Services team have liaised with Catering Services to identify practical ways of rolling out Welsh lessons to all school-based catering staff. Several challenges were faced with this due to catering staff working shorter hours and the difficulty of finding cover for staff to be released for Welsh lessons. The team have been working closely with the Local Authority's ICT department and have successfully arranged for all school kitchens to be distributed with dedicated tablets. Work is ongoing to explore suitable applications for unique log on, so that the tables can be shared amongst colleagues for the lessons. The Local Authority tutor who will be delivering these lessons has prepared bilingual materials to provide to Catering Services to support them with their Welsh language skills.

The Local Authority's Arts, Culture and Library Services team have been exploring options to develop further opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in community settings. An issue they're currently facing is a lack of providers available who are able to deliver sessions through the medium of Welsh. The team have been promoting the Arts Council of Wales' initiatives to upskill the cultural sector to create more providers who are able to deliver sessions through the medium of Welsh. The Level 1 Welsh e-module which is available to Local Authority employees is being looked into in order to utilise the training available and encourage the freelance artists and organisations that the team work closely with, to undertake the module so that they have an introduction to the Welsh language. Work around these actions are ongoing and will carry on into Year 2 of the WESP.

The National Eisteddfod is being held in RCT in 2024. The Local Authority's Eisteddfod Project team have created a marketing campaign which is currently being implemented in partnership with the National Eisteddfod team. The Eisteddfod launch event was held in the spring term where performers, artists and community groups came together to create a taster session. Further community meetings have been held to engage with the general public. The Local Authority's Eisteddfod team will be consulting with schools in RCT in September 2023 for their input to help shape the Eisteddfod's own school strategy. Promotion and marketing of the National Eisteddfod will be a priority action for Year 2 of the WESP, ensuring all schools across RCT are involved with the activities despite their language category.

Outcome 5 Sub-Group

A sub-group has been established to focus solely on each outcome of the WESP. The sub-groups provide an effective focus for the Local Authority in partnership with external groups and organisations. The sub-group have met virtually on a termly basis to review the actions listed on the Outcome 5 Annual Work Plan and provide updates on any progress made and to discuss next steps for actions, where appropriate. Strong working relationships have been established between partners who are members of the Outcome 5 sub-group which has enabled information, opportunities and best practices to be shared amongst partners.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

We have a dedicated group focussing solely on this outcome. The Head of Attendance and Wellbeing leads this sub-group and membership includes internal representation from Youth Services, Welsh Language Services, Arts and Culture Services along with external representation from partners to include Menter Iaith, Urdd, CSCJES and Coleg y Cymoedd.

The initial sub-group meetings at the beginning of this academic year focussed on developing the work plan which details the overarching targets, the actions and the key activities required to achieve the targets. The Outcome 5 Sub-group meets on a termly basis to review the targets and actions listed on the work plan to provide an opportunity for members to provide updates on any progress made, where appropriate, and to identify ways to move forward with certain actions. These meetings have been held virtually and have had good attendance at each meeting. Many important points have been raised and actioned accordingly. The sub-group lead will review end dates of actions on the work plan to ensure the group remains on targets and in situations where the end date has surpassed, questions will be asked as to why and follow on steps agreed upon to ensure we move forward and don't miss any targets. Following each meeting, minutes of the meeting are shared with members of the sub-group and the 'Progress/Evaluation' column on the work plan is updated with any comments made during the meeting.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- Lack of qualified Welsh medium staff available to deliver Youth services:
YEPS and partner organisations such as Menter Iaith and the Urdd are facing challenges with recruiting qualified Welsh medium staff to support their services. Members of the sub-group have raised that funding is an issue, as the English medium positions typically offer a higher pay and are therefore more desirable.
- Arts, Culture and Library Services teams initiatives to upskill the cultural sector:
These initiatives are being introduced to create more providers who are able to deliver sessions through the medium of Welsh but are reliant on freelance artists and organisations taking up the offer of Level 1 Welsh e-modules which they may not choose to do. Arts Council Wales information is currently being awaited and this information will impact the likelihood of this target.
- Indicative funding:
The funding received via the Youth Support Grant is indicative and usually runs per annum. This poses a risk as it doesn't provide job security for staff and the quality of candidates may be compromised when only offering time-limited posts due to funding.

- Schools yet to engage with Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus provision:

There are a group of schools who have yet to engage and are reluctant to do so.

- Action short of strike in schools:

This has created some challenges in some school settings for CSCJES Improvement Partners.

- Catering Services upskilling:

Current difficulties and challenges in staff accessing Welsh lessons due to their shorter working hours and the ability to find cover during their working hours for release.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Lack of qualified Welsh medium staff available to deliver Youth services:

Partners such as Menter Iaith, YEPS, Coleg y Cymoedd are working collaboratively to try to address the challenges faced with recruitment.

- Arts, Culture and Library Services teams initiatives to upskill the cultural sector:

Arts Council Wales information is currently being awaited and this information will impact the likelihood of this target being achieved.

- Indicative funding:

Partners are sharing resources where possible however this is not fixing the issues. Consider funding streams that last longer than a year to aid retention of staff in these types of positions.

- Schools yet to engage with Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus provision:

CSCJES are targeting these specific schools during the next academic year to get them onboard following attempts this year via the 'Introduction to Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus' sessions.

- Action short of strike in schools:

The impact of ASOS on developments will continue to be monitored.

- Catering Services upskilling:

Work ongoing to find practical ways to introduce sessions for these staff without financial implications that the Local Authority cannot commit to.

Outcome 6

An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

KEY ANNUAL DATA

PLASC Data

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and demonstrates the number and percentage of learners with ALN in English medium schools in RCT for the previous five academic years, up to and including the academic year 2022-2023. The data demonstrates a decrease in the number of learners with ALN in English medium education between the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The percentage of learners for this academic year has increased slightly, however still remains significantly lower than previous years.

Table 6.1

Number and Percentage of Learners in English Medium Education with ALN										
Academic Year										
Year	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
Total No. with ALN	7,494	24.3%	6,283	20.3%	5,310	17%	1,508	4.87%	1,926	6.28%

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and demonstrates the number and percentage of learners with ALN in Welsh medium schools across the RCT for the previous five academic years, up to and including the academic year 2022-2023. The data demonstrates the same trend within both Welsh and English medium education whereby the percentage of learners with ALN in Welsh medium education has decreased between the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The percentage of learners for this academic year has increased slightly, however still remains significantly lower than previous years.

Table 6.2

Number and Percentage of Learners in Welsh Medium Education with ALN										
Academic Year										
Year	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
Total No. with ALN	1,478	20.17%	1,367	18.57%	1,090	14.83%	200	2.77%	256	3.58%

OUTCOME SUMMARY

The Sufficiency of Welsh Medium Additional Learning Provision in our Locality

In line with the duties placed upon us section 63 of the Additional Learning Needs Act and the Education Tribunal (Wales) 2018 Act, the Local Authority's Access and Inclusion team have carried out a review of the additional learning provision currently available in Welsh medium early years settings in RCT. To complete these reviews, the team engaged with 15 Welsh medium registered education providers and asked for surveys to be completed. Out of the 15 settings, 13 settings engaged with the survey. The surveys demonstrated the following strengths:

- 100% of settings have a designated ALNCo.
- 12/13 settings have an agreed graduated response with clear areas of good practice in relation to multi-agency collaboration, use of assessment data and PCP.

The barriers reported by settings were similar across all responses received:

- Lack of available resources in Welsh.
- Recruiting Welsh speaking staff.
- Limited Welsh language abilities of parents/carers to support at home.

Of the 13 settings which engaged with the survey, 12 agreed that support available to them was good from a range of professionals. However, the support provided to settings is delivered predominantly by non-Welsh speaking specialist staff within ALN services.

Potential areas for development:

- Review service delivery within education ALN services with the aim of increasing the Welsh medium specialist support available to Welsh medium early years settings.
- Identify key resources that are not available in Welsh for early years settings on a local basis and in collaboration with other Local Authorities in the region.

Please see report below '*Review of Welsh Medium Early Years ALP – Registered Education Providers*' for more detail.



Review of Welsh
medium Early Years A

The Access and Inclusion team have carried out reviews of the sufficiency of Welsh medium ALN provision in education settings across RCT to support learners with ALN. The first step was to review the additional learning needs of Welsh medium learners with ALN who access support via the Local Authority's Access and Inclusion Services.

At the current time, there is sufficient coverage as each team has Welsh speakers, however not all teams have permanent Welsh essential posts. To safeguard provision, there is a need to ensure that all teams have Welsh essential posts going forward. Over the last three years referrals to the Local Authority's Learner Support Service have doubled in number. Further analysis is required to analyse whether the increase in the number of referrals are from Welsh medium schools as this would demonstrate an increased demand for Welsh medium ALN specialist services. Current data indicates that some learners with significant and complex ALN who were previously attending Welsh medium education in RCT are now accessing specialist education provision.

Potential areas for development:

- Ensure all teams in each service area have Welsh essential posts.
- Analyse demand for Welsh medium support from Access and Inclusion Service areas to increase the number of Welsh essential posts where there is the highest demand.
- To bring forward proposals to Cabinet to establish primary Welsh medium learning support class provision to encourage pupils with significant and complex ALN to continue their education through the medium of Welsh.

An audit of the additional learning needs of learners in Welsh medium mainstream education has been conducted to analyse the different types of additional learning needs learners have in each National Curriculum year. The findings of the audit have informed initial planning of provision in terms of the main focus being on the opening of a new Welsh medium learning support class which will open to learners from September 2024.

Proposed action moving forward:

A further audit is needed to include analysis of severity of need – e.g., eligibility criteria for specialist placement to inform short to medium term planning for development of Welsh medium specialist provision. A detailed Audit of ALN data within the WM sector has been undertaken.

A further audit has been carried out focussing on the provision maps of Welsh medium schools in order to evaluate the range of additional learning provision available and the impact of this. The audit highlighted areas of good practice and areas for development in relation to the quality of schools' additional learning provision and the impact of this for learners.

Potential areas for development:

- Identify key evidence-based interventions/resources that are not available in Welsh that would improve the additional learning provision offer in Welsh medium schools on a local basis in RCT and with other Local Authorities in the region.
- Explore opportunities for the development and adaptation of Welsh medium ALN interventions/resources on an all Wales basis, involving Welsh Government.
- Identify support for Welsh medium schools to ensure effective provision mapping to meet individual pupils' needs.

Please see report below '*Welsh Medium Provision Map Report*' for full detail.



Welsh Medium
Provision Map report

The Access and Inclusion team have been working collaboratively with Coleg y Cymoedd to carry out a scoping exercise of the post-16 Welsh medium provision currently being offered to learners at the college. This scoping exercise identified current Welsh medium/bilingual courses on offer and highlighted potential areas for development.

Potential areas for development:

- Work collaboratively with Coleg y Cymoedd to keep the Welsh medium ALN curriculum offer under review and informed by the needs of Welsh medium ALN learners identified through the transition process.
- Establish an agreed graduated response to meeting the needs of post-16 Welsh medium ALN learners and thresholds for support from the Local Authority.

- Ensure that the development of post-16 processes for accessing Welsh medium additional learning provision at Coleg y Cymoedd is included in the RCT post-16 steering group Year 1 Action Plan.
- Develop consistent approaches and protocols in relation to securing additional learning provision for Welsh medium post-16 further education learners with Coleg Merthyr.

Please see report below '*Scoping Exercise of post-16 Welsh medium provision Coleg y Cymoedd*' for further detail.



Scoping exercise of post-16 Welsh mediu

The Access and Inclusion team work provide Welsh medium Educational Psychology Services provided to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. Processes are being developed for post-16 ALN provision in further education in collaborating with the psychology service.

The Access and Inclusion team have been working with CSCJES to ensure effective ALN provision is available for learners in mainstream education and special schools and classes in RCT. Improvements have been made to the self-evaluation processes to ensure information regarding ALN forms part of each schools' monitoring, evaluation and review cycle. A new process has been agreed to implement a joint professional development opportunity and quality assurance process to ensure a shared understanding between Access and Inclusion services, CSCJES Improvement Partners, Headteachers, ALN Co-Ordinators and Governors regarding effective self-evaluation of ALN. This will include:

- Guidance for mainstream schools on effective self -evaluation of ALN (from September 2023).
- Training on effective self-evaluation for CSCJES Improvement Partners, Headteachers, ALNCos and Governors (from September 2023).
- Support and oversight by CSCJES Improvement Partners as part of their quality assurance processes – ongoing throughout academic year.
- Designated joint Access and Inclusion services and CSCJES meetings to discuss good practice and concerns to inform support for individual schools.

These audits and reviews which have been conducted during the first year of the WESP will be used to inform future planning of additional learning provision across RCT.

Development of Welsh Medium ALN Provision in our Locality

The Access and Inclusion team have been working closely with Ysgol Garth Olwg for the opening of a new Welsh medium Learning Support Class (LSC) provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 learners at the school. Provision was due to open to learners from September 2022 however, there have been many barriers due to not being able to recruit a specialist teacher. Recruitment for this post has been advertised numerous times throughout the academic year however the number of applicants and quality of the applications has been low. In recent months, appointment has been successful following readvertisement of the post as a secondment. Due to the delay in the appointment, a high level of ALN specific training and mentoring will be provided to the staff on an ongoing basis and evaluated through the Learning Support Class Quality Assurance protocol. This provision will open to learners from September 2023.

Proposals for the establishment of Welsh medium ALN provision in the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin were previously listed as Year 2 to 3 actions however, to ensure we work at greater pace in response to identified need, the proposals have been brought forward. The proposals

were presented to Cabinet for approval in May 2023 and consultation is now underway. If the consultation is successful, 2 new Welsh medium primary phase LSCs will be established in the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin which will open to learners in 2024, enhancing its Welsh medium specialist ALN placement provision.

The Sufficiency of Welsh Medium ALN Workforce Available

A review has been carried out on the size and capability of the workforce available to deliver Welsh medium early years ALN provision, analysing ALNCo training for this age group to identify what training is available and whether it's being accessed. The analysis highlighted that a wide range of training is provided for settings through formal training sessions, drop-in sessions and forum sessions. Training is available for specific interventions in relation to individual learners. The analysis showed that attendance at training is variable with less than 50% of settings attending training opportunities relation to the new ALN system and inclusive practices. It also highlighted that the training and resources available are only available in English due to a lack of Welsh medium ALN specialist staff available to support early years settings.

Potential areas for development:

- Prioritise training opportunities that can be delivered through the medium of Welsh.
- Offer Welsh medium training to settings and analyse potential uptake.
- Explore establishing cross-border Welsh medium early years ALNCo forums and training opportunities with neighbouring Local Authorities.

The Access and Inclusion team consulted with Welsh medium ALNCoS and Welsh medium staff within the Local Authority's Access and Inclusion services to gather information on the barriers to providing effective Welsh medium additional learning needs provision. The consultation was held through focus groups which had 17 participants: 8 Welsh medium ALNCoS, 2 Welsh medium educational psychologists, 1 assistant Educational Psychologist, 6 members of the Learner Support Service and the additional learning provision team who work through the medium of Welsh in Welsh medium schools.

The consultation focussed on two main areas:

- 1) Perceived barriers to providing effective Welsh medium additional learning provision in RCT.
- 2) Possible solutions to overcoming barriers to providing effective Welsh medium ALP in RCT.

The focus group identified the following barriers:

- Lack of Welsh medium resources.
- Lack of appropriately trained/skilled staff.
- Limited opportunities for Welsh medium continuous professional development.
- Lack of Welsh medium specialist placement provision – e.g., Learning Support Classes in RCT.
- Parents having difficulty providing support.
- Lack of value placed upon the Welsh language – lack of equity.

Possible solutions identified included:

- Increase in the number of Welsh medium staff in Access and Inclusion services.
- Recognition of the value of the language.
- Increased funding and more Welsh medium resources.
- Provision of Welsh medium continuous professional development opportunities.
- Increased Welsh medium Learning Support Classes provision.
- Welsh language parent support groups.

Further consultation was carried out to identify barriers ALNCoS and other school-based staff face with providing effective Welsh medium additional learnings needs provision. To conduct the consultation, a focus group was held online with 40 participants in attendance from specialist teams.

The consultation focussed on two main areas:

- 1) Perceived barriers to providing effective Welsh medium additional learning provision in RCT.
- 2) Possible solutions to overcoming barriers to providing effective Welsh medium ALP in RCT.

The focus group identified the following barriers:

- Recruitment of Welsh medium ALN staff.
- Skillset of existing school staff in mainstream Welsh medium schools.
- Lack of specialist Welsh medium placement provision – e.g., Learning Support Classes.
- Budget restraints restricting ability of staff to improve their Welsh language skills.
- SEBD dual placement model – Welsh medium learners having to attend part-time English medium specialist placement.
- Lack of Welsh medium ALN resources.

Possible solutions identified included:

- Recognition of increase in central Welsh speaking ALN staff.
- Equity of provision – increasing specialist provision.
- Provision mapping and skills audit of Welsh medium schools regarding ALN.
- Development of Welsh medium resources.

The outcomes of both consultations, in particular the suggested solutions, will be used to identify specific actions to be progressed during year 2 of the WESP.

Audits have been undertaken to identify the Welsh language competency of staff working in all specialist ALN settings in RCT, this includes Learning Support Classes, Pupil Referral Units and special schools. Please see below for an overview of the outcome of the audits and potential follow up actions:

Central Access and Inclusion Services:

- 70% of the staff are at Welsh Language Competency Level 1.
- 10% of staff of the staff are currently at Welsh Language Competency Levels 2-4.
- 20% of the staff are currently at Welsh Language Competency Level 5.

All service areas have Welsh language staff at Level 5 and are able to provide a Welsh medium service with the exception of the early years team and additional learning needs administrative service (ALNAS), which does not work directly with pupils to provide specialist ALN assessment or provision. Despite nearly all service areas/teams within Access and Inclusion having Welsh medium staff, there is a need to ensure all teams have sufficient Welsh essential posts within their structure. Currently not all service areas have Welsh essential posts.

Initial potential areas for development:

- Ensure that all service areas have a Welsh essential post in their structure.
- Analyse demand for Welsh medium support from all service areas to increase the number of Welsh essential posts in specific service areas with the highest demand.

Please see report below '*RCT AI Staff Competency Levels*' for full analysis.



RCT AI Staff
Competency Levels.doc

Learning Support Class Staff:

- Of the 50 LSC teacher responses, 60% are currently at Welsh Language Competency Level 1. This contrasts with the teaching assistants where 89% of the responses indicate that the teaching assistants are currently at Welsh Language Competency Level 1.
- 6% of the teachers indicate a Welsh language Competency Level of 4 with 3% of the teaching assistants reporting the same.
- There are no teachers currently at Welsh Language Competency Level 5 although 1 teaching assistant has identified that they are at this competency level.

Due to no LSC teachers identifying themselves as Level 5, it is not currently possible to develop a succession plan in relation to current LSC teachers taking up Welsh medium posts in our new Welsh medium LSCs and external advertisements will need to be made. It's also apparent that a review of the provision of Welsh language in the curriculum needs to be undertaken in LSCs to ensure compliance with the new curriculum due to the barriers identified by LSC staff.

Initial potential areas for development:

- Explore the feasibility of developing the Welsh language skills of the Level 4 teaching and non-teaching staff to provide enhanced Welsh medium capacity for LSC provision.
- Review delivery of Welsh in the Curriculum for Wales in LSCs to ensure pupils with ALN in English medium LSCs have access to their statutory entitlement for Welsh in line with statutory requirements.

Please see report below '*LSC Staff Competency Levels Summary*' for a more detailed breakdown.



LSC Staff
Competency Level Summary

Special Schools and PRU Welsh Language Competency Levels:

- 75% of Special School/PRU teachers are at Welsh Language Competency Level 1 or 2.
- 7% of Special School/PRU teachers are at Welsh Language Competency Level 5.
- 87% of Special School/PRU teaching assistants are at Welsh Language Competency Level 1 or 2.
- 3% of Special School/PRU teaching assistants are at Welsh Language Competency Level 5.

An increase in the number of Welsh speaking staff at Level 5 in special schools/PRUs is needed to enable pupils to access Welsh medium education in these specialist settings with the aim of providing full time access to Welsh medium special school and PRU provision within the special schools/PRUs over time.

Initial potential areas for development:

- Discuss with relevant Local Authority departments on how to incorporate Welsh essential posts into the structure of special schools and PRUs.
- Consider the feasibility of establishing Welsh medium special school hub provision in designated special schools.

Please see report below '*Special School PRUs Competency Levels*' for full breakdown.



Special Schools
PRU's Competency Le

The Sufficiency of Welsh Medium ALN Workforce in Other Service Areas

A key target of Outcome 6 of the WESP is to review and monitor the size and capability of the workforce available in other service areas to ensure there's sufficient workforce available to support Welsh medium ALN provision. We have started to strengthen connections between the Local Authority and the Local Health Board to support us achieving these targets. The Local Health Board created their own Strategic Delivery Plan to identify gaps in Welsh medium provision within the service. This is currently being delivered and a Welsh Language Steering Group has recently been established which is chaired by a board member as the core governance to ensure progress with all aspects of bilingual provision. Summary of the actions carried out during this academic year will be available via the Local Health Board's Annual Welsh Language Standards report which will be available from September 2023.

As part of their internal recruitment and workforce planning to support staff to learn or develop their Welsh language skills, an application has been submitted to the National Centre for Learning Welsh for support. If the application is successful, the Local Health Board will have dedicated support for its staff who wish to improve their skill or confidence in Welsh. Discussions are ongoing with Learn Welsh Glamorgan to provide support opportunities for members of staff who are beginners.

The Local Health Board are implementing changes around their recruitment process. A key change that is being worked on is the introduction of job advertisements being advertised in Welsh for positions where Welsh language skills are required. They have been creating a new job description template which will be used for all future job advertisement. This will include the need for all new members of staff to learn Welsh to Level 1. An assessment tool is now in place to assess the level of Welsh skill needed for all posts. A working group will be established in Year 2 of the WESP to move forward with these actions in line with their action plan.

Outcome 6 Sub-Group

A sub-group has been established to focus solely on each outcome of the WESP. The sub-groups provide an effective focus for the Local Authority in partnership with external groups and organisations. The sub-group have met virtually on a termly basis to review the actions listed on the Outcome 6 Annual Work Plan and provide updates on any progress made and to discuss next steps for actions, where appropriate. The sub-group meetings have provided opportunities for the Local Authority's Access and Inclusion team to work collaboratively with partners such as CSCJES, Coleg y Cymoedd and the Local Health Board to ensure effective Welsh medium ALN provision is available to learners in RCT.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

We have a dedicated group focussing solely on this outcome. The Head of Inclusion Services leads this sub-group and membership includes internal officers from the Access and Inclusion team, representation from the Local Health Board and representation from Welsh medium schools.

The initial sub-group meetings at the beginning of this academic year focussed on developing the work plan which details the overarching targets, the actions and the key activities required to achieve the targets. The Outcome 6 Sub-group meets on a termly basis to review the targets and actions listed on

the work plan to provide an opportunity for members to provide updates on any progress made, where appropriate, and to identify ways to move forward with certain actions. The sub-group lead will review end dates of actions on the work plan to ensure the group remains on targets and in situations where the end date has surpassed, questions will be asked as to why and follow on steps agreed upon to ensure we move forward and don't miss any targets. Following each meeting, minutes of the meeting are shared with members of the sub-group and the 'Progress/Evaluation' column on the work plan is updated with any comments made during the meeting.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- Recruitment of specialist Welsh medium staff:

This is a risk which is evident at all stages of education from early years through to post-16. The experience we've had of not being able to recruit from the new LSC class at Ysgol Garth Olwg is evidence that this is a serious risk to the ongoing development of Welsh medium ALN provision in RCT.

- Early years ALN staff not sufficiently trained:

The analysis conducted whilst reviewing the sufficiency of the early years ALN workforce highlighted that less than 50% of settings have attended training opportunities in relation to the new ALN system and inclusive practices which demonstrates potential issues with engagement. We can provide the opportunities but cannot force staff to uptake.

- Lack of Welsh medium resources to support services and learners:

This is a common barrier which was identified through the focus groups.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Recruitment of specialist Welsh medium staff:

Intervention is needed at a national level to address the challenges being faced with lack of specialist staff available to support ALN services.

- Early years ALN staff not sufficiently trained:

Access and Inclusion services will work more closely with Welsh medium early years settings to promote the training opportunities available and encourage uptake of these opportunities.

- Lack of Welsh medium resources to support services and learners:

Increased funding is needed to create and develop more Welsh medium resources.

Outcome 7

Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

KEY ANNUAL DATA

Welsh Language Unit Data

The data in the table that follows is provided by the Local Authority's Welsh Language Unit and outlines the total number and percentage of school-based staff who identified themselves as fluent or fairly fluent in the Welsh language.

Table 7.1

Total Number of Staff who Identified Themselves as Fluent or Fairly Fluent in Welsh							
No. of Staff with Welsh Language Skills		Fluent (Welsh Language Level 4 and 5)		Fairly Fluent (Welsh Language Level 3)		Total (Welsh Language Level 3, 4 and 5)	
Category	Total No. of Staff	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Non-School Based Staff	7,352	660	8.9%	146	2.0%	806	10.9%
Total	12,896	1,530	11.8%	347	2.7%	1,877	14.5%

PLASC DATA

The data in the table that follows is derived from PLASC and outlines the total percentage of teachers employed by the Local Authority who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh for the previous five academic years, up to and including this academic year. The data for 2022-23 demonstrates a drop in the percentage of qualified teachers teaching Welsh as a first language in comparison with 2021-2022, however the data also demonstrates an increase in the number of qualified teachers teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh and the number of teachers who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh but are not doing so in their current post.

Table 7.2

Total Percentage of Teachers who are able to Teach through the Medium of Welsh					
	Academic Year				
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Qualified Teachers Teaching Welsh as a First Language	10.9%	9.7%	8.8%	14.1%	10.9%
Qualified Teachers Teaching Welsh as a Second Language (Only)	38.6%	39.6%	36.3%	36.3%	36%

Qualified Teachers Teaching Other Subjects through the Medium of Welsh	8.4%	9.7%	11.2%	5.5%	8.7%
Qualified Teachers Able to Teach through the Medium of Welsh, but not doing so	6.3%	3.8%	3.4%	2.9%	4.2%
Not Qualified to Teach through the Medium of Welsh	35.9%	37.2%	40.3%	41.2%	40.2%

SWAC data

Please see Appendix A for SWAC data 2022. Key themes emerging from the data is summarised as follows:

- **Table A.1** outlines the Welsh language ability of practitioners by school phase across all schools in RCT. The highest levels of proficiency in Welsh language was evident in the 40-49 age range with 150 staff members displaying this level of skill. A total of 433 of teachers had no skills in the Welsh language which is a clear area for improvement.
- **Table A.2** identifies teacher Welsh language proficiency by phase. A total of 318 out of the 433 teachers identified as having no Welsh language skills were in the secondary sector, with a further 90 in the all through school sector. This clearly requires targeting.
- **Table A.3** shows the Welsh language abilities of practitioners teaching Welsh as a subject only at primary level. Data for 2022 demonstrates that 155 out of 598 of teachers in English medium primary schools teaching Welsh as a subject had only entry level skills, suggesting that this is an area for further development.
- **Table A.4** identifies the Welsh language ability of teachers in English medium schools (years 7-14) by main subject. 15.2% had intermediate level skills (W4), 20.6% had advanced skills (W5) and 44.7% were proficient (W6).
- **Table A.5** identifies the Welsh language ability of teachers in English medium schools (years 7-14) by all subjects taught. 17% has intermediate skills (W4), 24% had advanced skills and 52% were proficient (W6).
- **Table A.6** contains data on the Welsh language ability of teachers teaching through the medium of Welsh across all schools in RCT, split by school phase. A total of 5 had foundation level skills (4 primary, 1 PRU) and had 4 intermediate skills (3 primary and 1 secondary). A total of 68 had advanced skills, and 368 were deemed to be proficient (114 in primary, 117 in through/middle schools and 136 in secondary schools).
- **Table A.7** illustrates the Welsh language ability of those teaching through the medium of Welsh by their main subject. A total of 21 teachers of science and 25 in mathematics were deemed to be proficient in Welsh which is relatively low. A further teacher of mathematics teaching through the medium of Welsh was deemed to have advanced level skills.
- **Table A.8** identifies the Welsh language ability of those teaching through the medium of Welsh in all subjects taught. The data highlights that there are 532 teachers teaching through the medium of Welsh in all subjects taught (3 with intermediate, 28 with advanced and 501 with proficient level skills).
- **Table A.9** outlines the Welsh language ability of ALN Co-ordinators across all schools in RCT, split by school phase. Of the 16 ALNCoS, 2 have advanced skills and 14 have proficient skills.
- **Table A.10** outlines the Welsh language ability of ALN support staff across all schools in RCT, split by school phase. Of these support staff, 36 have no skills and 44 have entry level skills suggesting that there is potential scope for supporting these staff to further improve their Welsh language skills.
- **Table A.11** demonstrates the Welsh language ability of the Local Authority's school-based workforce for the academic year 2020/21 – 2021/22. Data suggests that there has been a

reduction in the number of staff with no Welsh language skills (from 21.2% in 2020-2021 to 20.7 in 2021-2022) and a slight growth of 0.6% and 1.9% in staff with entry level and foundation level skills respectively during the same period. Small gains were evident in advanced level skills (0.2%) but a small reduction was evident in the percentage of staff deemed to be proficient in the Welsh language during the same period (reduction of 1.6%).

- **Table A.12** outlines the total number of school-based workforce (including headteachers, school teachers and school learning support workers) employed by the Local Authority, teaching/working through the medium of Welsh for the academic year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Data highlights a small reduction in the percentage working through the medium of Welsh in their current post (a drop of 0.4%) and a slight reduction of 0.3% in the percentage being able to teach and work through the medium of Welsh but were not doing so.

ITRENT data

The datasets below are derived from the Local Authority's internal HR systems and demonstrate movement of teachers in Welsh medium education in terms of recruitment and retention. Data demonstrates that 43 Welsh medium practitioners were recruited in RCT during the academic year 2022-2023.

Table 7.3

Starters	Total
Headteacher	0
Assistant/Deputy Headteacher	0
Teacher Threshold	9
Teacher Main Scale	32
Instructor/Unqualified Teacher	2
Total	43

When comparing this against the total number of Welsh medium practitioners who terminated their employment during the academic year 2022-2023, data demonstrates a net loss of 2 practitioners across RCT.

Table 7.4

Leavers	Number	%
Headteacher	3	10.0%
Assistant/Deputy Headteacher	1	2.9%
Teacher - Threshold	18	8.5%
Teacher - Main Scale	23	23.0%
Instructor/Unqualified Teacher	0	0.0%
Total	45	11.8%

The data gathered on the reasons for leaving teaching posts (Table 7.5) demonstrates that the over 50% of practitioners left voluntarily, 17.8% reached the end of their contract, 13.3% left through mutual agreement and 8.9% transferred to another local authority.

Table 7.5

Reasons for Leaving	Number	%
Age Retirement	1	2.2%
Compulsory Redundancy and Pension Access	1	2.2%
Compulsory Redundancy No Pension Access	1	2.2%
Death in Service	1	2.2%
End of Contract	8	17.8%
Mutual Agreement	6	13.3%
Transfer To Another Local Authority	4	8.9%
Voluntary	23	51.1%
Total	45	

The data available can also be broken down to age profiles of practitioners starting and leaving posts. The data in the tables below demonstrates that the 25-34 age category had the highest percentage of starters and the highest percentage of leavers, leaving a net loss of 3 practitioners within this age category for the academic year 2022-2023. Further improvement in retaining staff is required if we are to satisfactorily grow the education workforce.

Table 7.6

Age Profile/Breakdown of Starters	21-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Number of Starters	14	20	6	3	0	0
Percentage of Starters	32.6%	46.5%	14.0%	7.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 7.7

Age Profile/Breakdown of Leavers	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Number of Leavers	2	23	7	4	9	0
Percentage of Leavers	4.4%	51.1%	15.6%	8.9%	20.0%	0.0%

Welsh Development Programmes Data

The data in the table below is provided by CSCJES and demonstrates the number of RCT practitioners undertaking the Welsh in a Year Sabbatical Scheme for the previous four academic years, up to and including 2022-2023.

Table 7.8

Welsh in a Year Sabbatical Scheme				
Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number	5	3	1	2

The Welsh in a Year Sabbatical Scheme will end this academic year and will be replaced with the new Two Term and One Term Sabbatical Schemes. The data in the table below shows the number of RCT practitioners that have undertaken these courses this year.

Table 7.9

Number of RCT Practitioners Undertaking the One and Two Term Sabbatical Scheme		
Scheme	Two Term 2022-2023	One Term 2022-2023
Number	4	4

The data in the table that follows demonstrates the number of RCT practitioners undertaking Welsh language professional learning courses to develop their Welsh language skills, linked to the Welsh Language Competency Framework.

Table 7.10

Number of Practitioners Undertaking Welsh Language Professional Learning Course	
Number	7

The data in the table that follows is provided by CSCJES and outlines the number of senior leaders who attended the Consortium's 'Leading Welsh Strategically in School' programme for the previous three academic years, up to and including the academic year 2022-2023.

Table 7.11

Leadership of Welsh in English Medium Schools			
Year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number	8	6	5

The data in the table below has been provided by CSCJES and outlines the number of Welsh medium candidates receiving NPQH for the previous four academic years, up to and including the academic year 2022-2023.

Table 7.12

Number of Welsh Medium Candidates Achieving NPQH				
Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number	0	0	2	2

The data in the table below is gathered by CSCJES and demonstrates the number of Welsh medium RCT practitioners undertaking the Aspiring Headteachers Programme for the previous four academic years, up to and including 2022-2023.

Table 7.13

Numbers on the Aspiring Headteachers Programme				
Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
No. of Primary Schools	1	No course.	3	1
No. of Middle Schools	2		0	0
No. of Secondary Schools	0		1	1

The data in the table that follows is provided by CSCJES and outlines the number of Welsh medium practitioners undertaking the Middle Leaders Development Programme for the previous four academic years, up to and including the academic year 2022-2023.

Table 7.14

Numbers Undertaking Middle Leaders Development Programme				
Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
No. of Primary Schools	11	0	2	1
No. of Secondary Schools	0	0	1	7
No. of All Through Schools	1	2	1	0
Total	12	2	4	8

The data in the table below is provided by CSCJES and outlines the number of Welsh medium practitioners undertaking the Senior Leaders Development Programme for the previous three academic years, up to and including the academic year 2022-2023. This programme did not begin until the year 2020-2021 therefore this is the only data available.

Table 7.15

Numbers Undertaking Senior Leaders Development Programme			
Year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
No. of Primary Schools	1	0	0
No. of Secondary Schools	1	2	1
No. of All Through Schools	2	2	1
Total	4	4	2

Open University Data

The data in the table below has been provided by the Open University and demonstrates the number of Welsh medium schools in RCT supporting students into teaching positions through alternative routes (ITE partnerships, Open University salaried route). The date input into the 'Qualifying' column is the expected date that each student will be qualified by.

Table 7.16

Number of Welsh Medium Schools in RCT Supporting Students into Teaching Roles via Alternative Routes into Teaching		
School	Numbers	Qualifying
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	1	July 2024
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James	1	July 2023
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	1	July 2024
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bronllwyn	1	Awaiting outcome

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Data Returns

To ensure accurate data is collected on the number of vacancies in the Local Authority across primary, secondary, special and ability, CSCJES and RCT Education Data team have been working with schools and practitioners to support accurate return of the SWAC through activities such as:

- CSC have created and published a playlist incorporating an explanatory video which focuses on schools' procedures for planning professional learning and accurately reporting on practitioner development in the SWAC.
- RCT Education Data team have provided workshops to support schools in completing their SWAC returns.

We will continue to work in partnership with CSCJES to ensure that schools' SWAC data accurately reflects practitioners' Welsh language skills and reflects the true skills of staff. Revised guidance on SWAC data has been devised and CSCJES and the Local Authority's Education Data team will actively engage with schools in RCT to ensure accurate completion on the SWAC to inform future planning.

In addition to SWAC datasets, further analysis of key datasets has been undertaken to inform strategic planning. For example, the Council's Human Resources information management system has been used to inform strategic planning. Data from the iTrent System, PLASC and SWAC have been used to identify staffing pressures across the education workforce and the data has been shared and presented to the Education and Inclusion Service Scrutiny Committee.

The data highlights the staffing pressures across the system and potential areas for further development. These include:

- Growing the number of central staff who identify themselves as fluent and fairly fluent Welsh speakers;
- Strengthening a range of partnerships and strategic interventions to grow the number of qualified teachers who are able to teach Welsh as a first language;
- Providing effective support and professional learning opportunities for qualified teachers who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh but are not doing so currently;
- Targeting the workforce who have 'no skills' or 'entry level skills' in the Welsh language and ensuring that they are supported to develop their Welsh language skills;
- Ensuring that teachers who teach in the English medium sector and have intermediate or advanced Welsh language skills have opportunities to access the necessary professional learning and support to become proficient so that they are able to teach through the medium of Welsh should they wish to do so;
- Ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for staff with Welsh language skills to access the right leadership pathways to progress in their careers; and
- Promoting and growing the numbers of staff accessing alternative routes into teaching.
- Investing in careers advice and guidance for young people so that they see working within education as a potential and rewarding career choice.

Progress Made Against Increasing the Workforce

All four Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT have partnerships with local universities to provide opportunities for students. Strategic initiatives aimed at encouraging the development of alternative routes into teaching in the Welsh medium sector will continue using effective promotion and marketing opportunities. Current successful partnerships include the:

- Ysgol Garth Olwg and YG Rhydywaun partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University to support delivery of the ITE programme.
- Ysgol Llanhari and YG Cwm Rhondda partnership with University of Wales Trinity Saint David to support delivery of teaching programmes for students.

There have been some successes relating to the Open University salaried route into teaching but this requires further development and expansion.

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol have several projects ongoing aimed at teacher training such as the 'Dysgu'r Dyfodol' project which is targeted at Welsh speaking undergraduate students at any University studying any subject and in any year of their studies. Students on this programme will be matched with an early career teacher for mentoring and work experience opportunities. The Coleg are tracking progression of these students once they've completed their studies to identify whether they transfer into teaching positions. The project started in January 2023 and 50 applications were received for this academic year.

CSCJES and regional Headteachers have been working with Cardiff Metropolitan University and Welsh Government to explore potential new routes to achieving qualified teacher status (QTS) for practitioners with experience in an education setting (high level teaching assistants, FE lecturers).

Welsh Government have agreed in principle a new fast track route to QTS for Welsh medium practitioners. The programme is currently being developed by Cardiff Metropolitan University with the aim of launching during 2023-2024.

The Local Authority's Workforce Development team are currently working on a targeted campaign to promote teaching as a profession. The team are creating a 'Teaching as a Profession' section on the Local Authority's new careers portal which will include information on the profession, the different routes available, support available for current practitioners looking to be supported into Welsh medium education, video clips of RCT practitioners talking about their experiences working in the profession. The Workforce Development team have been out to Welsh medium schools to hold video sessions, engaging with Welsh medium practitioners to promote the benefits of teaching as a profession and specifically through the medium of Welsh. Once completed, further marketing strategies will be deployed to ensure that it reaches the right target audience.

There are 2 schools in RCT which have supported students at Cardiff Metropolitan University on the PGCE Pontio group. This group is a short course aimed at developing confidence and use of Welsh to encourage student teachers to transfer into job opportunities in Welsh medium education. One further school has worked with Cardiff Metropolitan University to place a student on the 'Blas ar Ddysgu' programme which is a week taster in a Welsh medium school, aimed at undergraduate students from Cardiff Metropolitan University and Cardiff University.

The Sufficiency of Welsh Medium ALN Workforce Available

A review has been carried out on the size and capability of the workforce available to deliver Welsh medium early years ALN provision. A full and comprehensive analysis of this work is provided in Outcome 6.

Leadership Development

The Local Authority is proactive in developing its leadership capacity by running an annual Aspiring Leaders Programme. This programme is highly effective and is commissioned by the Local Authority as part of its succession planning strategy and was identified by Estyn as innovative practice in the Local Authority inspection in January 2023 and a best practice case study was requested and written. This annual programme includes aspiring leaders from the Welsh medium sector and every effort is made to encourage and secure good representation from the sector to involve senior leaders with Welsh language skills. There are currently 2 Welsh Medium practitioners enrolled on the 2023-2024 programme. Consideration is now being given to developing a Local Authority course for middle leaders to ensure earlier identification of potential future leaders, and funding has been secured to pilot this programme for a 12 month period.

CSCJES have widely promoted the NPQH and Aspiring Headteacher Programme via all communication channels and through Improvement Partner conversations with schools. Data on the numbers undertaking these programmes is detailed in Table 7.12 and 7.13 respectively. The numbers accessing these leadership programmes will require further growth during 2023/24 if we are to ensure sufficient future leadership capacity within RCT.

The Gyda'n Gilydd programme, which is a leadership programme made up of Welsh medium practitioners across the region, has 3 RCT practitioners on the current programme for 2022-2023.

The National Programme for Senior Leaders is delivered by Ysgol Llanhari on behalf of CSCJES. Data on the numbers undertaking leadership development programmes are referred to above in Table 7.15. A dip was evident in 2022-23 and further promotional work will be required in future to ensure a growth in numbers in the Welsh medium sector.

CSCJES held Governor training sessions during the summer term 2022 and the spring term 2023, focussing on enhancing awareness on the responsibility around the Welsh language. 14 governors attended and are now equipped to support school leaders. Further awareness raising on the WESP for governing bodies will be provided during 2023/24 academic year through chair of governors meetings with the Director of Education and her leadership team and via Director reports to governing bodies during the academic year.

Partnership Working to Upskill Staff

The Local Authority has been working with internal service areas and external partners to support school-based staff in improving their Welsh language skills.

CSCJES have been planning Welsh language development for practitioners strategically using the Welsh language competency framework and linking it to the SWAC. CSCJES have widely promoted their professional learning opportunities for the Welsh language via all communication channels and via Improvement Partner conversations with schools. During the academic year 2022-2023, 7 Welsh medium practitioners undertook Welsh language professional learning courses through CSCJES to develop their Welsh language skills, linked to the Welsh Language Competency Framework.

The Local Authority's Welsh Language Services are working with the Local Authority's ICT department for the secure roll out of different electronic applications to support the linguistic skill development of staff. If the roll out is successful, the applications will be placed on the devices of all Local Authority based staff in the first instance. Further work is needed to identify ways to successfully roll out the applications to school-based staff as not all members of staff use Local Authority devices. The Local Authority's Catering Services are the first cohort of school-based staff which will pilot the roll out of support.

Welsh Government's Hwb portal has been promoted with RCT schools and WESP partners via general communication channels. The portal includes a range of professional learning opportunities available for practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills.

The free resources available via Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to support staff with upskilling their Welsh language skills, have been shared with RCT schools and WESP partners via general communication channels:

- To enhance language skills - [Gloywi Iaith \(porth.ac.uk\)](https://porth.ac.uk/gloywi-laith)
- Interactive learning resources for developing Welsh language skills in the context of the classroom - [Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol : Adnoddau Iaith i Athrawon](#)
- Support material for teaching Welsh as a second language - [Blackboard Learn \(porth.ac.uk\)](https://porth.ac.uk/blackboard-learn) (need to register to access the resource)
- App Sgiliau Iaith - Search for 'Sgiliaith' on App store or Playstore.

CSCJES have been proactive in rolling out and promoting the support available to practitioners via the Welsh Sabbatical Schemes. Data on the numbers undertaking the sabbatical schemes for this academic year and previous years is referred to above in Table 7.8 and Table 7.9. The Welsh in a Year Sabbatical scheme will end this year and be replaced with the new One Term and Two Term Sabbatical schemes. CSCJES are currently recruiting for the following sabbatical courses which will take place in summer 2024:

- 5 week entry level course for teaching assistants
- 8 week foundation level course for teachers

The opportunities available have been widely promoted by CSCJES and the Local Authority's Education team.

CSCJES provide post-sabbatical scheme support which includes network meetings, sharing of good practice and resources, leadership of Welsh short course, bespoke 1:1 session with development officers and support to share their knowledge and skills with other practitioners. This will continue in 2023-2024 for practitioners returning to school from September 2023.

Outcome 7 Sub-Group

A sub-group has been established to focus solely on each outcome of the WESP. The sub-groups provide an effective focus for the Local Authority in partnership with external groups and organisations. The sub-group have met virtually on a termly basis to review the actions listed on the Outcome 7 Annual Work Plan and provide updates on any progress made and to discuss next steps for actions, where appropriate. Throughout the first year of this plan, as discussions have broadened membership has grown to include key partners such as Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. There has been regional work underway to support the activities in relation to this outcome which has been widely promoted by CSCJES and the Local Authority's Education team. An action for Year 2 of the plan will be to link with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to further enhance our actions around this outcome.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

We have a dedicated group focussing solely on this outcome. The Director of Education and Inclusion Services leads this sub-group and membership includes internal officers, CSCJES, representation from both Welsh and English medium schools and Coleg y Cymoedd and representation from external partners to include Mudiad Meithrin, Welsh Government and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

The initial sub-group meetings at the beginning of this academic year focussed on developing the work plan which details the overarching targets, the actions and the key activities required to achieve the targets. The Outcome 7 Sub-group meets on a termly basis to review the targets and actions listed on the work plan to provide an opportunity for members to provide updates on any progress made, where appropriate, and to identify ways to move forward with certain actions. These meetings have been held virtually and have had good attendance at each meeting. Many important points have been raised and actioned accordingly. The sub-group lead will review end dates of actions on the work plan to ensure the group remains on targets and in situations where the end date has surpassed, questions will be asked as to why and follow on steps agreed upon to ensure we move forward and don't miss any targets. Following each meeting, minutes of the meeting are shared with members of the sub-group and the 'Progress/Evaluation' column on the work plan is updated with any comments made during the meeting.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- **Inaccurate SWAC returns:**
Schools not completing the SWAC return accurately, providing inaccurate data to inform future education planning.
- **Lack of Welsh medium teachers and support staff:**
There's a lack of Welsh speaking teachers and support staff available to fill posts in schools across RCT, especially in certain subject areas. This is national issue but geographically we have additional challenges.

- Low number of applicants for teaching courses at universities:

It's been reported that the numbers applying for teaching courses at Cardiff Metropolitan University are lower than previous years.

- High numbers of practitioners leaving the profession:

Data trends demonstrate a number of teachers and support staff are leaving the profession completely. We do however appear to have some success in recruiting but due to the number of staff leaving the our employment, the net gain is negligible. RCT experienced very high covid rates and death rates were the highest in Wale and the impact on the wider community and on the resilience of the workforce could be an issue. Retaining young professionals in the sector appear to be a particular challenge.

- Geographical location of RCT:

Due to where the county is situated geographically, this prevents some qualified practitioners who reside in neighbouring counties to travel to our schools for work due to greater employment opportunities being closer to home. Retention of staff therefore is an important consideration.

- Succession Planning:

Age profiles of the school-based workforce needs to be analysed at regular intervals in order to assist with strategic planning.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Inaccurate SWAC returns:

- CSCJES have created and published a playlist incorporating an explanatory video which focuses on schools' procedures for planning professional learning and accurately reporting on practitioner development in the SWAC.
- RCT Education Data team have provided workshops to support schools in completing their SWAC returns.
- Support will be ongoing into Year 2 of the plan whilst schools are preparing their SWAC returns for 2023.

- Lack of Welsh medium teachers and support staff:

- Implementing a workforce development campaign focusing specifically on the benefits of teaching or working within education in RCT.
- Links between local Welsh medium schools, local Universities and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to be strengthened to ensure students transfer into teaching opportunities once they've completed their studies.
- Stronger links have been established with careers initiatives and more is being done to highlight the benefits of working within education and the different routes into teaching.
- More high potential staff to be encouraged to engage with leadership programmes so that we have sufficient supply of high calibre leaders to meet future demand.

- Low number of applicants for teaching courses at Universities:

Links between local Welsh medium schools, local Universities and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to be strengthened to promote the benefits of teaching as a profession and the routes available into teaching to school learners who are considering their future career pathways.

- High numbers of practitioners leaving the profession:
 - Effective wellbeing support is put in place for those who are experiencing challenges.
 - It is important that exit interviews are undertaken to understand the reasons for leaving our employment as a Local Authority.
 - iTrent reports enable us to gather intelligence and to routinely scrutinise data to identify any trends.

- Geographical location of RCT:

Implement a targeted recruitment campaign to promote teaching as a profession in RCT and the benefits of working in our community and for RCTCBC as an employer.

- Succession Planning:
 - Continued delivery of the Local Authority's highly successful Aspiring Leaders Programme and implementation of plans to deliver a Middle Leaders Programme.
 - Proactive steps to be taken to ensure good engagement levels with the wide range of leadership programmes available with CSC.
 - Ensure that the professional learning provided is targeted and effectively upskills the language abilities of the workforce.