



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report
2023–2024

Prepared in accordance with the requirements of the

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

April 2024

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Introduction

Welsh Language Standards

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30 September 2015. The Notice detailed the Council's duty to meet 171 Standards relating to the Welsh language, which were determined by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. An application to challenge 14 of the Standards was submitted to the Commissioner on 29 March 2016. Following further consideration and consultation, the Welsh Language Commissioner decided that no action should be applied to 9 of the Standards that were the subject of the challenge and that a variation should be applied to 5 of the Standards that were the subject of the challenge. The amended Compliance Notice was submitted to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council on 9 September 2016. It can be viewed in full [here](#).

Vision

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is committed to creating an environment that encourages its residents to use the Welsh language when contacting the Council. The Council also supports its staff to use Welsh in the workplace. As well as working towards full compliance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, the Council will do its utmost to ensure that it provides services in accordance with all the Welsh Government's key policies and strategies in relation to the Welsh language. From 2024 onwards, the Council's new Corporate Plan will again include the Welsh language among its central priorities, to ensure that planning for the delivery of services in Welsh and respecting the rights of staff and residents to use the language is addressed at the highest possible strategic level.

Governance and Accountability

In 2022, the Council established a **Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee**. The committee includes 5 members of the Cabinet. The sub-committee, which replaced the **Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group**, has been established to ensure an authority-wide approach in providing services through the medium of Welsh, in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, specifically the statutory Standards relating to the Welsh language. The sub-committee is a decision making committee, therefore policy decisions regarding the language may be made locally, without the need for escalation to the full cabinet committee. The members also provide strategic direction in terms of implementing pieces of legislation or policy, together with any local policies regarding the Welsh language, and support the Council's Welsh Language Services Unit to fulfil its duties. In addition to that, the Council's cross-party Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report and the 5-Year Welsh Language Promotional Strategy and the progress made against its aims, where appropriate.

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Council's commitments under the Welsh Language Standards are included in the authority's main organisational documents including the Corporate Plan 2020-24

(Making a Difference) and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. In addition to this, internal policies, such as Human Resources policies, mainstream Welsh language issues which is more effective than preparing individual policies to address matters relating to the Welsh language. The Council's priorities are guided by legislation including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Well-being Act 2016, which places a duty on the Council to strengthen the Welsh language. The first act requires public bodies to work towards seven well-being goals. One of these is ' a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. The Council's new Corporate Plan to be implemented from 2024 onwards will include Welsh as one of its main priorities, with one of its four themes covering 'Culture, Heritage and the Welsh language'. This will ensure that the Council further commits to the aims of this act and contributes fully to ensuring the legacy of the Pontypridd National Eisteddfod 2024 across the county borough. The second Act requires public service organisations to consider the linguistic needs of their users when providing care and support services.

Reporting

This is the eighth full year of implementing the Welsh Language Standards in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

This report, which will be published by 30 June, is a requirement of Standards 158 and 164, and states how the Council has complied with the following Supplementary Standards:

- Service Delivery Standards
- Operational Standards
- Policy Making Standards

The report also presents data on the required indicators as follows:

- the number of staff who have Welsh language skills (Standard 151).
- the number of staff who attended the training courses listed in Standard 128 if they were offered in Welsh (Standard 152).
- the percentage of total staff who attended any courses listed in Standard 128 (Standard 152).
- the number of new jobs and vacancies that were categorised as jobs that require (i) skills in the Welsh language to be essential; (ii) that it is necessary to learn skills in the Welsh language once someone is appointed to the post; (iii) skills in the Welsh language are desirable; or (iv) skills in the Welsh language were not necessary (Standard 154).
- the number of complaints the Council received (Standard 150).

Welsh Language Services Unit

The Council recognises that high priority should be given to the Welsh Language Standards due to the risks associated with not complying with them. Moreover, compliance aids the Council in fulfilling its commitment to creating an environment that encourages residents to use the Welsh language when contacting the Council, and to support staff to use the Welsh language in the workplace. It recognises that the support of the entire Council is needed to be able to offer and promote Welsh Language Services from the first contact.

The Council invests in a substantial Welsh Language Services Unit which includes a team of 13 translators, a team of policy officers, a Welsh language tutor, a National Eisteddfod officer, and administrative and management staff. The Unit works to support all the Council's services by doing the following:

- giving advice and support to all services regarding their statutory responsibilities under the Standards
- translating documents for the public
- providing an in-house Welsh tutor
- identifying areas of potential non-compliance
- recording customer complaints
- reporting on developments to the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-committee
- providing simultaneous translation at full Council meetings and at other meetings open to Members (e.g. scrutiny committees)
- providing simultaneous translation support to all other service areas such as legal services, human resources, education
- attending the Fforwm Iaith
- collaborating with Welsh language organisations in the community as appropriate
- representing the Council in external meetings and being the main contact with the Welsh Language Commissioner and relevant Departments in Welsh Government
- offering support across departments for promoting the Welsh language in general
- coordinating and liaising on issues relating to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- coordinating and linking to the Welsh Government's More Than Words Strategic Framework
- giving purposeful support to the National Eisteddfod of Wales which is to be held in RCT in 2024
- providing support as part of the Governing Board of the South East Wales Welsh Education Champion post, which is funded by Welsh Government
- leading on providing Welsh language policy and compliance advice for the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

The Council is investing in a Unit as a proactive response to the statutory environment and the type of work that needs to be done to try to assist all of the Council's services to meet the Standards in a more cost-effective manner.

A Senior Compliance and Policy Officer and a Compliance Support Officer monitor the

delivery of services across the Council and ensure that they comply with those Standards that apply to them. As a result of this, the roles give the Council the opportunity to provide further support to services where any potential weaknesses in meeting the requirements of the Standards is identified, as well as continuing with some of the more traditional duties of the role of a Welsh language officer. These relatively new positions are now well-embedded in the Welsh Language Services Unit, and the Council more broadly. For example, the Senior Compliance and Policy Officer regularly collaborates with equality officers, data officers and the Council's corporate performance officers to assess the impact of policies, maintain a comprehensive data tool for Council officers to use, and monitor all departments' performance against Welsh Language Standards. The Compliance Support Officer has also resumed the Unit's auditing activity which had been suspended during the Covid-19 period. So far they have carried out a comprehensive audit of the most popular sections of the Council's website, and an audit of all the Council's reception areas, to ensure compliance at a corporate level. The Support Officer will also work as the first point of contact for day-to-day inquiries regarding the Standards and other Welsh language matters from the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee staff. Again this year, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office has been generous in giving positive feedback about the way Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council fulfils its duties in terms of the Standards.

A part-time Welsh Language Tutor organises and presents Welsh courses and sessions, which are available to all of the Council's employees to learn Welsh or improve their skills in the language. In the past, the Council paid external providers (e.g. the University of South Wales' Welsh for Adults Centre) to hold sessions for internal staff but these were not successful as they did not relate to the appropriate service areas. In 2023/24, the in-house tutor has taught 94 members of staff, including Councillors, at various levels. This is on top of the staff who have completed Welsh Level 1, which is now an online course. This year, the Tutor is preparing a specific Level 1 course for catering staff who do not have access to the online resource, in order to ensure that as many staff as possible can take advantage of the training. The Council continues to work in partnership with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg Gwaith project, ensuring that Council staff can take advantage of online help and tutoring. In addition to this, the Council has, on a number of occasions, supported individuals to complete a residential course in Nant Gwrtheyrn and continues to encourage service areas to support learning through classes in the community. In order to prepare for staffing the Council's stand at the RCT National Eisteddfod 2024, 10 members of staff who speak Welsh will attend a residential course at Nant Gwrtheyrn in April 2024, to help them gain confidence when speaking Welsh with the public during the Eisteddfod and when undertaking their respective roles in the future.

The translators of the Welsh Language Services Unit are an integral part of the Council's efforts to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, and they provide first class written and simultaneous translation services to all Council departments as required. The unit employs a Principal Translator who manages the day-to-day translation and proofreading work, four Senior Translators who focus on the work of the Democratic Services and provide proofreading support, and eight translators. To recognise the various specialties of current and prospective translation staff, the needs of the Council, and to provide professional development opportunities, senior translator and translator positions have now been divided into two different types of

role – those who work on written translation only, and those who provide both written and simultaneous translation – three senior translators and three translators undertake simultaneous under this arrangement at the moment, and those who work on written translation only can work towards becoming a simultaneous translator as part of their professional development should they wish to do so. Two of the senior translators coordinate this element of professional development for the other staff, after graduating with a postgraduate certificate in simultaneous translation. This year, a third senior translator has also started the postgraduate certificate in simultaneous translation to ensure that the unit continues to provide a service of the highest possible standard. To this end as well, the Principal Translator and the Senior Translators have attended training on correcting and offering feedback on the work of less experienced translators, which has also contributed to their professional development and that of the translators whose work they proofread.

In terms of the service the translation unit provides, 2023/24 has seen several positive developments. Following the Council's headquarters' move from Clydach Vale to Pontypridd, the Senior Simultaneous Translators assisted the Democratic Services in setting up the new simultaneous translation system in the Council's new Chamber, in order to ensure the best experience possible for those who wish to use the Welsh language in meetings there. Also, following the compliance officers' work in assessing different departments' practices in inviting attendees to use Welsh at meetings, and the fact that staff awareness of the need to hold meetings bilingually has increased as a result of this, the translation unit has received several requests for simultaneous translation from departments that have rarely used the service before. In addition to that, 'Bitesize' sessions held on Welsh Language Standards for staff throughout the Council included 3 sessions specifically on translation, to ensure that staff are aware of the service and how to use it, and to emphasise the importance of professional translation and ensuring time for translation when planning work.

Ongoing Activities

Here is a summary of developments in the ongoing activity of the unit, during 2023/34:

Welsh Language Impact Assessments

The Council introduced its new Welsh Language Impact Assessment Framework in 2021-22, and since then, the new process has become an established part of the Council's scrutiny programme. The Senior Compliance Officer and Compliance Support Officer work with officers across the Council on a daily basis providing them with support to identify how their proposed plans could affect the Welsh language and its speakers in the community and the workplace, and to develop measures to maximise any positive impact and mitigate for any negative impacts. In addition to written feedback and informal meetings, every month an Impact Assessment Panel is held. Panel members include compliance officers, senior independent officers from different Council departments, and members of the senior leadership team. This is not only an additional opportunity to refine the impact assessment with the help of highly experienced officers, but it ensures that the impact assessment process is understood and given priority in all service areas and among the Council's directors as well, meaning that its importance is communicated throughout the entire organisation.

This effect can be seen in the nature of the additional activity in this area across the

Council during the past year. As part of a series of 'Bitezise' sessions on Welsh Language Standards and related issues for staff, sessions were held on Impact Assessments, which were attended by 50 members of staff across the Council. With guidance from Welsh Services, in January 2024, the Human Resources department presented an update to its Management of Change process, which now includes a specific section for assessing any impact on the Welsh language that may come as a result of changes to staffing. This section asks managers to state what effect any changes will have on the service area's ability to deliver services in the Welsh language and fulfil the Welsh Language Standards, and how they will continue to do this after the change without relying too much on the translation service or Welsh speakers from other departments. Officers from the Welsh Language Services Unit attended a meeting of the department's chief officers in order to offer them further guidance in the field as they begin to implement the new process in the service areas for which they are responsible. In addition to this, a number of the Council's senior officers and directors attended the Welsh Language Commissioner's sessions on Welsh Language Impact Assessments during the year. All this is testimony to the fact that the Council is proactive in assessing the impact of its decisions on the Welsh language, and that this process is given clear priority across the organisation.

With that in mind, the Welsh Language Services Unit is constantly updating its Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance, and the intention in 2024/2025 is to fully revise it, together with its Welsh Language Impact Assessment Tool. These revised versions will draw on what officers have learned during the first three years of implementing the new framework, as well as feedback from those who have carried out impact assessments during the period. It will also be a further opportunity for the Unit to communicate important messages about the Commissioner's work in this area, through announcements to staff about the new resources and further training sessions.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

The Unit has continued to support the work of coordinating the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and given support to staff preparing the action plan for the first 5 years, and the marketing subgroup.

5 Year Strategy for Promoting the Welsh Language 2022-2027

Since the approval of the [new strategy for the promotion of the Welsh language](#) and the [associated action plan](#) in 2022-2023, the Council's departments continue to implement the actions and priorities identified. Despite the disappointing all-Wales picture obtained in the 2021 Census figures, the situation was more promising in Rhondda Cynon Taf itself, where there was an increase of 2.8% in the numbers of people able to speak Welsh, from 27,779 to 28,556. This progress is testament to the contribution and commitment of the Council's staff and elected members to improve services and meet targets. The new strategy tries to build on this success and aims to increase the number of speakers in RCT by 5%. In June 2024, we will begin the work of assessing the progress to date against the new strategy and its associated action plan and submit a report to the Cabinet Sub-committee in October.

Welsh Level 1 Training

With the Council's new HR system now implemented, Welsh Language Services officers are able to track the Welsh language skill levels of new employees more efficiently, and as of 2024/25, the Council's process of inviting all new staff who do not meet the Level 1 requirements upon appointment to complete the Welsh Level 1 Training as part of their probationary period will resume. The Welsh Tutor also holds regular 2-hour Level 1 'Bitesize' sessions on Teams to support staff learning in this area too. The Tutor has also produced an online Level 1 course for Councillors and is in the process of preparing a similar course aimed specifically at catering staff.

Learning Welsh

This year saw the fourth formal, integrated campaign to encourage staff to learn Welsh in the Council. During the summer of 2023, our poster and information booklet advertising all community and virtual provision were sent to all Council staff. As a result of this, the Council's internal courses were full by the time the courses started in September, with 87 having registered for lessons at that point (a further 7 joined later). We have now returned to holding some face-to-face lessons and this has been popular with learners. Despite this, as a result of the challenging economic climate, many staff are finding it difficult to balance lessons and higher workloads, so Welsh Language Services will continue to remind managers that staff are allowed to have time during working hours to learn the Welsh language, and the importance of that to the Council's ability to deliver services effectively. The Council will review the provision for next year in accordance with the feedback it receives.

The Unit's newsletter

The Welsh Language Services Unit continues to publish a quarterly newsletter to Council staff in order to showcase some of our main areas of work and to assist with the efforts to comply with Welsh Language Standards across the Council. This follows the change in the way the Council communicates internally as an organisation with an increased number of staff working from home more often following the Covid-19 pandemic. The newsletter is emailed to all staff and posted on the Council's private Facebook group for staff. The aim is to ensure that as many staff as possible read it, including staff with limited access to a computer or institutional email account. Over the past year, the newsletter has raised awareness about the Eisteddfod and related events, promoted our information sessions on the Welsh language, distributed the latest guidelines, and informed staff about the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.

Rhondda Cynon Taf National Eisteddfod 2024

In March 2023, the Eisteddfod announced their arrival in Rhondda Cynon Taf by holding a launch event at The Lion Pub, Treorchy. This signalled the beginning of the 18-month preparations that would see local appeal committees established with the purpose of raising money towards bringing the Eisteddfod back to RCT for the first time since Aberdare 1956. Over the coming months, local volunteers met to establish a committee in the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas, and work began immediately. Local events were being organised, and still are to date, not only raising money but actively promoting the Welsh language positively whilst bringing those from various

backgrounds together.

June 2023 saw the Eisteddfod Proclamation event visit Aberdare, and this was, for a lot of local residents, their first experience of the Eisteddfod and the Gorsedd. The event received overwhelmingly positive feedback and showed local residents that the Eisteddfod is open to all to get involved, breaking down previous misconceptions that you had to be a Welsh speaker to enjoy.

The Council continues to work closely with the Eisteddfod, by supporting local appeal committees, and most recently in the development of the Eisteddfod footprint in RCT – working in partnership to identify usable infrastructure to help deliver the festival. With an expected 160,000 or more visitors arriving in RCT for the first week of August, Council officers are working closely with local businesses to help them brush up on their Welsh language skills with the intention of offering *A Warm Welsh Welcome* to all that visit our town centres.

Legacy themes have also been identified, with an emphasis on the linguistic impact of the Eisteddfod. A bilingual pamphlet has recently been developed to help the people of RCT to brush up on any existing skills but also pick up some Welsh conversational phrases with the Eisteddfod in mind. When the Eisteddfod begins to pack down on 11 August 2024, Council officers will be using the momentum of the Eisteddfod to continue working towards building on recent Census results that saw an increase in the Welsh language being used locally.

Cultural Campaigns

Welsh Language Services promoted the following Cultural Campaigns during 2023-2024:

St David's Day

For St David's Day this year, the Welsh Language Services Unit posted messages on the Council's social media accounts asking our followers to take part in the celebrations. In addition, St David's flag was raised at a special event outside Llys Cadwyn in Pontypridd on the 1st of March, with representatives from the local authority senior leadership team, the town council and children from Ysgol Gynradd Maes-Y-Coed present.

Shwmae Su'mae Day

For Shwmae Su'mae Day this year, making use of the Menter Iaith promotion pack, the Welsh Language Services Unit posted a series of messages on our social media accounts encouraging residents to start their conversations with 'Shwmae', to start learning Welsh, and to listen to a playlist of Welsh songs created especially for Shwmae Day. Furthermore, as happens every year, the Shwmae Su'mae Day flag was raised outside our offices (which were located at the time) in Clydach Vale.

Saint Dwynwen's Day

This year, the RCT Council celebrated St Dwynwen's Day by posting a series of messages on our social media accounts promoting a number of local events relating to St Dwynwen's Day and the joint Eisteddfod appeal committees.

Welsh Music Day

The Welsh Language Services Unit produced a series of messages on social media promoting Welsh playlists, gigs and local Welsh music sessions. In addition, Welsh Music Day materials, available on the Welsh Government website and designed for school children, were shared with the County Borough's schools.

New Projects and Campaigns

During 2023/24, the Welsh Language Services implemented the following projects and campaigns, and prepared new associated documents and resources, in order to further strengthen compliance, and increase the use of the language and its profile, among the workforce and in the community:

Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Welsh Speakers Level 3 or Higher

Rhondda Cynon Taf Cabinet approved a new recruitment scheme which will guarantee an interview for a job to any applicants who speak Welsh to a Level 3 standard or higher (provided they also meet all of the essential criteria). Although the Council has worked hard over the years to embed the Welsh Language Standards, recruit Welsh speakers and improve the Welsh language skills of its current staff, the annual self-evaluations of the Council's various services continue to highlight the need to prioritise having enough Welsh speakers across the Council, but especially among the front-line staff. To that end, Welsh Language Services proposed this new scheme to respond to this challenge and the growing demand for Welsh language services. Following its approval by the Cabinet in October 2023, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office welcomed this innovative development. The plan will be mainstreamed into all of the Council's recruitment policies, and Welsh Language Services will collaborate with the Human Resources department on technical and practical requirements for implementation. It is hoped that the scheme will be ready for implementation sometime in 2025.

'Bitesize' Sessions on the Welsh Language Standards

Following a complaint (CS1080) via the Welsh Language Commissioner about the lack of Welsh at a meeting held by the Council for parents of pupils at one of the county's secondary schools, Welsh Language Services decided that a specific campaign was needed to remind staff of the Council's duties under the Welsh Language Standards. Eight years have passed since the Council became subject to the Standards in 2016, and although extensive activities were carried out at that time to introduce the Standards to the Council's workforce, a number of staff members have moved to other organisations, and junior staff have been promoted to management positions in the meantime. The Welsh Language Services staff, of course, regularly provide policy and compliance advice to the Council's individual departments, but it was felt that it was high time to run an organisation-wide campaign to re-introduce the Standards to staff in new roles, and give others the opportunity to remind themselves of the requirements. To that end, Welsh Language Services planned 6 different 'Bitesize' sessions, to discuss various areas of priority for the Council in terms of continuing to ensure compliance – one session offered an overview of the Standards and other requirements in terms of legislation, and the other five sessions address organising meetings, correspondence with the public, translation, recruitment, and assessing the impact of policy on the Welsh language. Each session has been held

three times so far, and 919 members of staff have registered for them. The intention is to plan a new cycle of sessions for 2024/25, on themes including creating Welsh and bilingual videos, hosting and organising training and education courses, and managing staff who speak or are learning Welsh.

Checklist for Arranging Meetings

Another resource prepared by the Welsh Language Services following the CS1080 complaint was the Arranging and Facilitating Bilingual Meetings and Events Checklist. This is an interactive PDF document containing four checklists for people to use when organising different types of meetings or events (invited meetings, meetings related to welfare, open meetings, and events organised or funded by the Council), to check that they have complied with the relevant Standards and organise translation and simultaneous translation where necessary. As well as a place to tick to say that they have completed necessary steps, there is also a place for the organisers to write notes in order to keep a record of other details that are relevant to the Standards. These have been shared with all Council staff, and are available on the intranet, and the feedback received from those who have used them so far has been very positive.

Presentations to Managers

As well as holding 'Bitesize' sessions for all Council staff, Welsh Language Services officers also gave more detailed sessions to different groups of managers. In September 2023, a presentation was given on the Welsh Language Standards in the biannual Managers' Briefing sessions which were attended by 455 members of the Council's management staff. As a result, an invitation was received to hold tailored sessions for the Council's Senior Leadership Team so that they could plan work programmes and the workforce more strategically from a Welsh language perspective. Following this, the Service received further requests to attend a meeting of senior managers in Education and Inclusion Services, to present in more detail and suggest solutions to managers on the specific challenges that arise among their services when trying to comply with some of the Standards. Welsh Language Services' officers also attended a meeting of principal officers in the Human Resources department in order to provide further guidance in the area of assessing the impact of staffing changes on the Welsh language.

Give Welsh a Go Booklet

Following work in 2022/23 to launch a 'Welsh Friendly' business project on Treorci's high street, the Welsh Language Services Unit has built on this during 2023/24 in order to increase awareness and use of the Welsh language in other principal towns across the county borough, including Pontypridd and Aberdâr, in order to prepare businesses for the National Eisteddfod. The Unit has produced a bilingual booklet presenting many aspects of the language to the owners and employees of the towns' businesses, including the meaning of local place names, opportunities in the area to learn, improve and use Welsh language skills, and pages of vocabulary and pronunciation for use in dealing with the public. Early in 2024/25 the Welsh Language Services will contribute to a campaign to distribute the booklet across the county and raise awareness of the language, the Eisteddfod and its legacy.

Working with other Council Departments

Here are some examples of new projects Welsh Language Services have worked on in collaboration with other Council Services, demonstrating good practice across departments with regards to Welsh language promotion and legislation:

Corporate Performance – The Council’s Corporate Plan

Following written and verbal feedback given to the department by Welsh Language Services during the Welsh Language Impact Assessment Process, the Corporate Performance team included the Welsh language as one of the Council’s main priorities in its new Corporate Plan. Outcome 4 now focuses on ‘Culture, Heritage and the Welsh Language’. The plan was approved by Cabinet in March 2024, ensuring that the Welsh language is a strategic priority for all Council services for the next 6 years.

Human Resources – Management of Change Process

As a result of reviewing the Council’s Welsh Language Impact Assessment Framework in light of increasing pressures on Council budgets, Welsh Language Services staff felt that a more robust approach was needed to ensure managers consider the impacts of any service cuts (including job losses) on their ability to deliver services in Welsh. To this end, Welsh Language Services worked with HR officers to design a bespoke Welsh Language Impact Assessment tool to be included in the Management of Change Process document, for managers to use when considering cuts and possible redundancies, to ensure the Council’s ability to comply with the Welsh Language Standards is not diminished.

ICT and Digital – Welsh links in Teams meetings invitations

As part of Welsh Language Services’ drive to improve compliance across the Council in relation to organising meetings, staff from the unit worked with the ICT department to include Welsh language links to Teams meetings on all invitations sent internally and externally by Council officers. This work has been rolled out at the beginning of 2024/25 and it is hoped it will remind internal staff of their statutory duties in regards to the Welsh language, and encourage external invitees to exercise their language rights when dealing with the Council.

Complaints

Complaint submission date	Nature	Submitted by	Outcome/Response
November 2022	Department of Education: Complaint about the Council giving a presentation and providing resources to parents in English only at one of the County's Welsh schools. The complaint also stated that there were errors in the Welsh questionnaire distributed as part of the presentation.	A member of the public via the Welsh Language Commissioner (CS1080)	The Council admitted that it had failed to meet the expectations of the Welsh Language Standards in relation to the presentation given, but noted that it had provided appropriate bilingual resources. The Council also stated that it had already shared guidelines for organising bilingual meetings with staff in an attempt to avoid such oversights. Nevertheless, the Welsh Language Commissioner decided to proceed with a full investigation into this matter. Following a thorough investigation into the matter, it was decided that the Council had not breached Standards in relation to the standard of the Welsh language on the materials provided, but that it had breached a standard in relation to organising bilingual meetings. An action plan was drawn up by the Council which stated that officers in Welsh Services would hold

			<p>a series of 'Bitesize' sessions about the Welsh Language Standards and the delivery of services in Welsh, in order to remind Council staff of their duties. The Council has also prepared a Checklist for Organising Bilingual Meetings and this has been circulated to all Council departments.</p>
<p>July 2023</p>	<p>Department of Employment, Education and Training: Complaint about an award ceremony for local school pupils held by the Council. The complainant claimed that most of the presentation had been in English, that there were errors in the Welsh written materials used, and that a Welsh questionnaire was not available at the same time as the English version.</p>	<p>A member of the Public via the Welsh Language Commissioner (CS1180)</p>	<p>The Council responded to confirm that it was responsible for the event. It admitted that the standard of Welsh used in the materials fell short of what was expected, and confirmed that the Translation Unit had not been responsible for providing this translation. The Council noted that the presenter had opened and closed the event in Welsh, and that guest speakers had also presented in Welsh during the event. It admitted that the questionnaires were not initially available in Welsh, but an officer had printed them out following the request and they were available within the next 10 minutes. The Commissioner decided to carry out a full investigation</p>

			<p>into these matters, and came to the decision that the Council had breached Standard 36 by treating the Welsh language less favourably. The Council is currently reminding all departments of their duties when organising meetings, sharing the Checklist for Organising Bilingual Meetings with them. It will provide a further report on this to the Commissioner in due course.</p>
<p>August 2023</p>	<p>Highways: A complaint that English-only signs had been placed near one of the county borough's train stations whilst Transport for Wales carried out repairs.</p>	<p>A member of the Public via the Welsh Language Commissioner (CS1182)</p>	<p>The Council was not responsible for the sign. Amey Infrastructure (which carried out the repair work on behalf of Transport for Wales) was responsible for this, and the company had removed the Council's bilingual sign. The Council made several attempts to contact Amey Infrastructure in order to have the sign removed, but was unsuccessful. The matter was therefore escalated to Transport for Wales.</p>

<p>December 2023</p>	<p>Youth Engagement and Participation: Complaint that the service had not uploaded Welsh videos to its website, and that it had uploaded videos in English only.</p>	<p>A member of the Public via the Welsh Language Commissioner (CS1218)</p>	<p>In its response to the Commissioner, the Council admitted that it had fallen short of meeting the expected standard in relation to this matter. It also noted the work the department had already undertaken to rectify the mistake, namely: removing the videos immediately and carrying out a full survey of the website in question; department managers attending a special training session on creating bilingual videos, provided by Welsh Services; recirculating the Council's decision tree on creating videos; and adding a step in the video publication process where managers can ensure compliance. On this basis, the Commissioner decided that the Council had breached two Standards but noted that there was no need to carry out an investigation as appropriate steps had already been taken to ensure that this would not happen again.</p>
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<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Highways: The Council received comments on X from a resident who was dissatisfied with 'Coedlan Hunters' as a translation for 'Hunters Avenue'.</p>	<p>A member of the Public (message on X)</p>	<p>Complaint not valid. Officers from Welsh Services provided information regarding their understanding of the translation, namely that 'Hunters' refers to a proper noun (name) and not the English word for 'hunter/hunters', which would be 'heliwr/helwyr'. The Highways department responded to the complainant with this explanation and invited him to share any information or evidence that contradicted this finding. The Council has not heard back from the complainant, therefore the original sign is still in place.</p>
<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Press: Complaint about a post on the Council's X profile containing a photo of staff and councillors holding the official flag for the King's Coronation. The complaint noted that the flag was not bilingual, suggesting that the post should be removed.</p>	<p>A member of the public</p>	<p>Complaint not valid. Officers from Welsh Services contacted the Press department, who confirmed that a post had also been shared in Welsh. In terms of the flag, it was explained that this was the official flag of the Crown, therefore not subject to the Welsh Language Standards.</p>
<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Engagement: The complainant did not want to receive correspondence in Welsh, or</p>	<p>A member of the public</p>	<p>Complaint not valid. Officers responded with reference to Standard 4 which requires the Council to send standard</p>

	wanted to receive correspondence with English appearing first.		correspondence in both languages.
June 2023	Waste and Streetcare: Complaint about the fact that materials promoting changes to waste collections are bilingual. The complainant did not want to receive materials in Welsh.	A member of the public	Complaint not valid. Officers responded with reference to Standard 4 which requires the Council to send standard correspondence in both languages.
July 2023	Highways: Complaint about translating the street name 'Clive Place' into 'Maes Clive'. The complainant believed that 'Lle Clive' was the correct translation.	A member of the public	Complaint not valid. Drawing on standard resources such as the University of Wales Dictionary and the Welsh Academy Dictionary, officers from Welsh Services provided a response, providing rationale and solid evidence for choosing 'Maes Clive' as the most suitable translation in this context.
July 2023	Waste and Streetcare Department: Incorrect sign outside 'The Shed' recycling facility (external partner) in Llantrisant. 'Grab a Bargain' had been incorrectly translated as 'Chrafangia Bargen'.	A member of the public	Valid complaint. Although the site is run by an external partner, the sign includes the Council's logo. The external partner has accepted 'Bachu Bargen' as a correct and suitable translation and has replaced the sign.

July 2023	Press: Complaint about the poor quality of Facebook's automatic translation.	A member of the public	Complaint not valid. Press replied to the complainant to inform them that this is beyond the Council's control.
July 2023	Streetcare: A member of staff responded to a Councillor asking him to send his e-mails bilingually rather than in Welsh.	A Member of the Council	Valid complaint. An apology was sent to the Councillor. The specific member of staff, as well as the department as a whole, were reminded of the Council's policies on correspondence in accordance with language choice, and arrangements for receiving support from the Translation Unit when responding to messages in Welsh.
July 2023	ICT and Digital: Complaint about receiving an English message through the 'Service Update' system. The complainant wanted to receive correspondence in Welsh, but they had completed the registration form in English.	A member of the public	Complaint not valid, but the Council's record of the individual's language choice has been amended to ensure that they will receive correspondence in Welsh from now on. The Council responded to apologise but explained that the Welsh Language Commissioner considers completing a form in English an indication of language choice. This is why the following correspondence was sent in English in this case.
July 2023	The Register Office: Complaint	A member of staff	Complaint not valid. The signs have been

	about signs in Pontypridd Register Office that failed to comply - the English to the left or above the Welsh.		in place since at least 2010, when the service moved to the building in question, and are therefore not subject to the Standards. In accordance with the Council's policy, any new signs that are installed or replaced will be bilingual with the Welsh language appearing first.
August 2023	Parks and Countryside: Complaint about lack of Welsh language service provision in cycling lessons at Cwm Dare Country Park. Staff responded during the lesson by saying that the English-speaking children would feel excluded if the session included Welsh.	A member of the public	Valid complaint. A response has been sent to the complainant apologising for his child's experience during the lesson, stating that the non-compliance was caused by a lack of supervision. Department staff were reminded that they must treat the language choice of individuals with respect and should not treat Welsh less favourably than English, in order to ensure that something like this does not happen again.
August 2023	Press: Complaint that a social media post in Welsh contained different information to the corresponding post in English.	A member of the public	Valid complaint. A response was sent to the complainant explaining the message more clearly. Staff were reminded of the need for clarity in this area moving forward.

October 2023	Public Health: A member of the public did not receive correspondence in Welsh, and the Council assumed that English was their preferred language without asking.	A member of the public	Valid complaint. After discussions with Welsh Services, the relevant department has reviewed its arrangements and reminded all members of staff to respect the client's language choice. The department has also installed a new field on the system which enables the client to specify a language choice.
November 2023	Waste and Streetcare Services: Complaint about English-only sign at Trefforest Recycling Centre.	A member of the public	Valid complaint. Officers in Welsh Services contacted the relevant department to arrange for a new bilingual sign to be installed.
January 2024	Library Services: Complaint about lack of Welsh service provision in Pontypridd library. The complainant claims that they have been to the library on more than one occasion and that service was not provided in Welsh. They also complained that staff do not wear the Iaith Gwaith badge.	A member of the public	Valid complaint. After a discussion with the officers from Welsh Services about the current staffing situation in the libraries, an officer from Library Services responded to the complainant with an apology. They also explained the situation in more detail, namely that Welsh speakers work at the library on a part-time basis, and that attempts to appoint further Welsh speaking staff have been unsuccessful. The response also noted the arrangements in place to provide services in Welsh to

			<p>the public in the absence of Welsh speaking officers, namely that staff can call Welsh speakers who work in other libraries to provide a service over the phone.</p> <p>Officers in Welsh Services emphasised to the Libraries Service that it needs to prioritise recruiting staff who speak Welsh, and that staff need to be reminded to wear a lanyard/laith Gwaith badge where appropriate. The Council's laith Gwaith lanyards were sent to the department in order to meet this requirement.</p>
January 2024	Highways: Complaint regarding the design and text of the signs upon entry and exit to the village of Brynnau Gwynion.	A Member of the Council	Valid complaint. The Translation Unit worked with the relevant department to correct the signs and revise the design. New, compliant signs were subsequently installed.
February 2024	Register Office/Revenue and Benefits: Complaint about the lack of Welsh language service provision by the Registrar Service and the Council Tax Department when trying to register a death	A member of the public	An investigation is underway – a response to the complainant will be drawn up in due course upon completion.

	and close the accounts of the person who had died. Also, the paperwork regarding Council Tax was in English only - undermining the 'Tell Us Once in Welsh' service according to the complainant.		
February 2024	Highways: Road sign misspelled as Heol-y-Mynych instead of Heol-y-Mynach.	A member of the public	Valid complaint. Welsh Service officers contacted the relevant department and a sign was installed with the correct spelling 'Heol-y-Mynach'.

Staff Welsh Language Skills: Standard 170(2)(a)

This section indicates the number of employees/job holders who had Welsh skills as of 31 March 2024. These figures are based on the records that are kept in accordance with Standard 151, based on the requirements of Standard 127.

Year	Staff */**	Type of staff	No skills	% with skills
23-24	7128	Core Council Staff (non-teaching)	3064	42.99
			Fluent	%
			693	9.73
			Welsh Level 1	%
			2744	38.50
			Welsh Level 2	%
			370	5.19
			Welsh Level 3	%
			146	2.05
			Welsh Level 4	%
			158	2.22
			Welsh Level 5	%
			535	7.51

*This number does not represent the number of individual employees - it includes multiple employment, that is, where one individual holds numerous posts. It also includes casual workers.

** 111 (1.56%) with no record

Staff Training: Standard 170 (2)(b) and (c)

There has been no change to the situation reported in 2022-2023 in terms of training for Recruitment and Advertising, Performance Management, Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures, Induction, Dealing with the Public and Health and Safety, based on the records that were kept in accordance with Standard 152 which is based on the requirements of Standard 128.

Recruiting to Empty Posts: Standard 170(ch)

The following figures are kept in accordance with Standard 154, based on the requirements of Standard 136. Since September 2017, it is essential that all new jobs require Level 1 Welsh (basic Welsh) with options for recruitment managers to require applicants to possess Welsh language skills at level 2 to level 5 depending on the job.*/** The number of posts at level 1 to 5 is as follows:

Levels of Welsh Skills	L1	250
Levels of Welsh Skills	L2	4
Levels of Welsh Skills	L3	1
Levels of Welsh Skills	L4	0
Levels of Welsh Skills	L5	5

*Following the introduction of a new HR and online recruitment system in the Council, data on this matter is only available from the end of July 2023 onwards. In 2024/25, data will be available for the whole period.

** Following the introduction of a new HR and online recruitment system in the Council, the question regarding what level of Welsh language skills a post requires is no longer mandatory, as the system does not allow this. Recruiting managers are, however, actively encouraged to complete the question, and all posts are reviewed by the recruitment team before publication to try and ensure compliance.

More information

Welsh Language Services Unit
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council,
Garth Olwg Centre for Lifelong Learning,
Church Village,
Pontypridd,
CF38 1RQ.
Telephone: 01443 570001
Email: Swyddoglaith@rctcbc.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Service Self-Evaluations 2023-2024

Adult Services

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation

We continue to respond effectively to the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards and Welsh Government's "More than just words: A Strategic Framework for Promoting the Welsh Language in Health, Social Services and Social Care" - working closely with colleagues in the Council's Welsh Language Team to ensure we are complying with these requirements. We also monitor our external service providers to ensure their compliance. No issues have been identified.

As reported in previous annual evaluations, Adult Services make an active offer of communication in Welsh if it is someone's preference. People who prefer to receive services and support through the medium of Welsh are highlighted in our system. All our publications are bilingual, ensuring compliance with the Standards. Staff are aware of the requirements of the Standards and what it means for how they work. We also train and develop staff to encourage them to learn Welsh and provide briefings and reminders on the offer of services in Welsh.

The total number of new assessments completed for Adult Services during 2022/23 was 8,315. There was evidence of the active offer of the Welsh language in 8,199 cases (98.9 %). The offer was accepted in 46 cases down from 80 in 2021/2022

During 2023 no specific work to develop our Welsh Language offer was completed although an active offer of training for all staff from beginner to improver is consistently circulated

Welsh Language Impact Assessments have been completed for the

- Home Care contract transfer ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Cabinet, 23/10/2023 10:30 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- LD day service review ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Cabinet, 20/11/2023 12:30 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#) LD supported living contract transfer ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Cabinet, 23/10/2023 10:30 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Identified areas for improvement.

With the support of the Council's Welsh Language Team, Review our progress in meeting the More than just words requirements and develop a plan to support performance and improvement for the next 2-4 years.

Regarding the statutory enforcement action from the Welsh language Commissioner regarding compliance with Standard No. 27 adult services will

- Maintain a record of all meetings where invitations were sent to external bodies / persons (which does not relate to the wellbeing of the attendees)

- Of those meetings maintain a record of the offer for attendees to use the Welsh language at meeting
- How people wishing to use the Welsh language at the meeting were supported to do so

Arts, Culture, Libraries and Community Development

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

All staff are trained to a minimum of Level 1 Welsh Language. Staff are Welsh learners or fluent in Welsh. As staff gain additional skills it is the responsibility of managers to update the information to ensure an accurate reflection of Welsh language skills among their teams.

In adherence with the Welsh Language Standards, all public facing documents and digital messages are bilingual.

All websites are bilingual; however, there are challenges in ensuring compliance due to capacity, particularly social media responses.

Where third sector commissions are in place, the Welsh Language Service has played an advisory role in ensuring contracts highlight the specific Welsh Language Standards that they are required to meet. This element of the contract is subject to monitoring by the Commissioning Team.

Service areas are clear on how they contribute to the Council's [Five Year Strategy for the Promotion of the Welsh Language 2022 – 2027](#).

Service areas also feature in the [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032](#) and contribute to its successful delivery.

There are challenges in respect of ensuring access to Welsh language customer services in services where there are multiple delivery locations. This is especially true of the One 4 All and Library Service. Some of this has been addressed through staff attending Welsh language refresher courses and releasing staff for regular Welsh language classes.

In relation to the School Library Service, the appointment of two Welsh speaking staff who can promote the services to Welsh medium schools has contributed to three Welsh language schools joining the service this year.

All staff are aware of the importance of offering a Welsh language service and aware

of the systems in place in their service areas to ensure that they can be accomplished.

The Head of Service is fluent in Welsh. The Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services is also fluent in Welsh.

This provides the capacity to deal with any HR-related issues in Welsh and to actively promote the offer in relation to Standards 101-109 among the wider services' workforce.

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Within the Community Development Team's Community Grant programme, the Neighbourhood Network Fund and Shared Prosperity Community Fund applications ask applicants to consider the use of Welsh Language opportunities within their project, and if so, how.

This approach helps embed our commitment to the Welsh Language practically into our day-to-day delivery.

Within the CAT Business Case Template and Assessment, we ask;

Please detail whether your service will be accessible/available through the Welsh Language. Either:

- *Face to face;*
- *Written Documentation;*
- *Electronic Information.*

Please provide evidence of Welsh Language Policy (if appropriate).

Extent to which the proposed service will be accessible/available through the Welsh Language.

Do they have a Welsh Language Policy?

The Library Service has achieved the Welsh Public Library Standards quality indicator target of 4% in relation to percentage expenditure on Welsh medium books and online resources. This has continued to generate a demand for services in Welsh, although the level of issues has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The Schools Library Service now has 2 fluent Welsh language speakers which has increased the offer through the medium of Welsh to schools and workshops within libraries.

Gartholwg Lifelong Learning Centre is a key provider of Welsh language provision, including adult community learning classes, theatre productions and performances by local Welsh language schools and groups. RCT Theatre's also programme and produce Welsh language provision that is staged at the theatres and tours nationally, as well as providing participatory activities; however, these are all limited by availability of suitable product and facilitators.

All service areas are engaged in supporting the visit of the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol to RCT in 2024 and are considering its legacy as part of the Community Workstream group.

Identified areas for improvement.

Increase provision of Welsh language activity across service areas and encourage across community groups.

Extend opportunities for staff to improve Welsh language skills.

Children's Services

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

Children's Services are equally available to all members of the community irrespective of socio - economic background or protected characteristics. The nature of our business is non-discriminatory, providing information advice and support to all who meet relevant thresholds regardless of ethnicity, culture or language.

As part of our assessment process an active offer of Welsh is made to children and families and their preferences recorded. We continue prior to any meeting held with service users to establish the preferred method of communication that is recorded for immediate and future use.

December 2023 data states the following Welsh language proficiency in Children's Services staff:

- 9.6% of RCT staff reported as being fluent Welsh speakers.
- 38.8% of RCT staff have Level 1 Welsh Language skills.
- 42 members of Children's Services staff have Level 4 or 5 Welsh.
- There are 12 members of Residential staff who speak Welsh.

As part of the implementation of our Residential Transformation Strategy 2022-2025 a [Welsh Language Impact Assessment](#) was completed in January 2023. This was completed with the support of the Welsh Language Service, whose support we utilise as a service as required.

There are currently 11 members of staff within residential settings in RCT that are Welsh speakers. This includes a residential home manager.

The main findings of the Impact Assessment were:

“Overall, the Residential Transformation Strategy will have a neutral impact on the Welsh language, as its focus is to reduce the number of children looked after outside of RCT by enabling them to be looked after within the Local Authority. However, the strategy offers the potential to have a positive impact on the Welsh language. There will be less children looked after out of county, and outside of Wales, as a result of the strategy, meaning there will be greater opportunities for children looked after to both learn Welsh, and develop their Welsh language skills”.

As per the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards, all employment opportunities will require candidates to have Welsh essential Level 1 skills before successfully gaining employment within Children's Services. Welsh essential Level 2 to 5 skills will be listed as desirable when creating job descriptions for new roles. The aim will be to increase the number of Welsh speaking staff.

Children's Services encourages and supports staff to take up Welsh language training whilst in employment, to develop their Welsh language skills.

The service utilises social media to connect with residents of RCT e.g. Instagram, Twitter. All social media correspondence is distributed in both Welsh and English.

Work is required to ensure we are meeting the Welsh Language Standards in particular with regard to organising meetings. Meeting with Welsh Language Services required to clarify as guidance is likely to have a significant impact on our daily business.

Identified areas for improvement.

To review the services' compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, develop an action plan in consultation with Welsh Language Services.

To regularly monitor and use data on staff Welsh language skills.

During 2024 -5 we will need to check compliance with Mwynn Geriau.

Communications and Engagement

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

Consultation & Engagement

- All Consultation and Engagement documents are available in the Welsh language. We assist the Welsh language department with their own consultations. The department continues to support staff members who want to learn Welsh to help them with engaging with Welsh speakers at the various engagements, which we deliver.
- We have introduced a new question to be used in surveys, to assess the impact that any change will have on the Welsh language or Welsh speakers, which is line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Act, it is used to inform Welsh Impact Assessments and for service to assist with their decision making.
- We provide a bi-lingual option for online or offline public meetings.
- All consultation responses are used to inform Equality Impact Assessments and Welsh Impact Assessments. The Data Analyst role is to support and provides the research and evidence required by services to take projects/proposals forward.

Cabinet & Communications

- Communications team support the promotion of Welsh language events and awareness days.
- Communications team continue to provide advice to service areas around the use of the Welsh language in their communications.
- A dedicated Welsh language facebook page has been established for Welsh communications. This has been necessary as incorrect automatic translations from Facebook were creating incorrect messages and people disputing the accuracy of translations.

Identified areas for improvement.

Where practicably possible, improving further how we simultaneous publish content in both languages

Community Safety and Community Housing

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

All service areas ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards as below:

- All signs, notices and publications displayed in both Welsh and English (bilingual is preferred).
- Posters are displayed indicating that people are welcome to converse in the medium of Welsh.
- Fluent staff/learners wear an identifiable badge/lanyard.
- There are staff involved in the delivery of the service who are fluent in the Welsh Language or Welsh Learner
- Identified the service is actively promoted through the medium of Welsh.
- Confirmed all certificates, brochures, leaflets, signage, etc. available through the medium of Welsh (bilingual is preferred)
- Verified that all public events /meetings promoted in Welsh Confirmed a translator is arranged if 10% or more indicate they wish to use the Welsh Language **Websites and App**
- English Language page indicate that a Welsh Language page is also available.
- Social Media posts are posted bilingually at the same time and Out of Office and Email signatures are bilingual.

Despite the above we will ensure all managers constantly review their Welsh language responsibilities to ensure we are complying with the national standards and better understand the number of Welsh speakers in each service area.

The new Allocation Scheme when completed will also require a Welsh Language Impact Assessment to be undertaken in due course:

Identified areas for improvement.

- The new RCTCBC Allocation Scheme will require a Welsh Language Impact assessment to be undertaken as part of this process.
- Introduce an annual evaluation of Welsh Speakers within the Service area to clearly measure the extent of Welsh Language skills present in the Service to support delivery in the Welsh medium.
- Work with the Welsh Language Service to understand better the requirements of Standard No. 27 and create service specific guidance to support staff to deliver effectively against this.

- Ensure all Managers are aware of the detail of the Welsh Language Act and their responsibilities to keep their service areas under regular review to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards

Community Services

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

Since the introduction of I-Trent, the Council has experienced ongoing issues with obtaining Welsh Language Skills information for staff. More recently, information on staff skills levels has been able to be reported but as yet has not been made available to individual service managers. As and when these reports become available Community Services will record improvements to staff skill levels in future on an annual basis.

This year, eight members of staff from the Work and Skills service have taken up the offer to attend WL courses at varying skills levels. These courses are delivered over a one year period and should be completed by the end of the academic year in June 2024.

The Work and Skills service has recently introduced a number of Welsh Language Taster sessions to encourage engagement of residents across the County Borough. There has been low up take of some of these sessions, however, provision offered in Garth Olwg LLC has proved successful with learners wanting to continue onto a beginners WL course. The service will continue to offer and embed WL provision into programme delivery and as part of our pre-employment training programmes. Actions for the service are included in the [WL Promotional Strategy Delivery Plan](#) and will be reported against on a quarterly basis.

Welsh Language has also been recognised as a potential priority sector regionally with the opportunity to deliver provision in the medium of Welsh being explored and becoming part of a regional commissioning framework being led by Torfaen.

Adult Community Learning has again entered into a Service Level Agreement with Menter Iaith RCT this year for the delivery of Welsh medium courses and taster sessions. They also regularly attend the ACL Strategic and Operational group meetings and support discussions and planning of WL provision across RCT with partners.

We have implemented a process across the service this year to recharge translation costs to grant funded programmes.

Staff are clear in respect of the requirement to identify an individual's language of choice and to respond to any communication received in the language of choice. Information on clients WL skills continues to be recorded as part of the registration process for clients on to our grant funded programme provision through ACL and Work

and Skills services.

All written documentation and publicity comply with the relevant Welsh Language Standards. All social media posts are bilingual and changes to website pages are sent for translation so that any changes are available in both languages simultaneously.

There have been no official complaints in relation to the Welsh language offer of Community Services, however, as there has recently been a small number of complaints received for other service areas across the Council, all staff have been encouraged to attend the programme of Bite Size training sessions being offered by WLS.

The Procurement exercise undertaken for commissioning of external provision for SPF Multiply included WL provision ability and requirements to adhere to WL standards set out as part of the contract requirements. The Council's WLS advised on what standards were applicable to the tender process.

All tutors continue to be encouraged to use a 'Welsh word of the day' into their sessions.

The service is represented on the community workstream group set up to support the National Eisteddfod coming to RCT in August 2024. Staff will support with promotion of the event, including opportunities for volunteering, fundraising and sponsorship to clients and employers across the County Borough.

Identified areas for improvement.

- Further promotion to Community Services staff of opportunities to improve WL skills level and monitor skills level of staff across the service.
- Explore opportunities to further expand Welsh medium provision in grant funded programmes of delivery.
- Monitor staff attendance at WL training sessions to ensure staff compliance knowledge with WL Standards is improved.
- Nominated staff members to become WL champions for the service.

Community Wellbeing and Resilience Services

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

The Service continues to strive to provide its services through the Welsh language and comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language standards.

All written material available to the public, including online information and applications are available bilingually and all initial points of contact with the public are bilingual. Children and Family Centre receptionists as well as the central Business Support Team answer all phones and greet members of the public bilingually.

Language skills are strengthened through recruitment where possible, although it is not always possible to recruit individuals with the necessary skills for the post who also have the necessary Welsh Language skills. When engaging with services, families are always asked for their language preferences and Welsh language speakers assigned to work with individual families.

All new staff across the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service are supported to complete the LA's Introduction to Welsh training and fully supported to complete any further training in work time.

The Youth Engagement and Participation Service has a dedicated Welsh speaking Youth Engagement Officer in each of the 4 Welsh secondary schools. The YEO offers support to young people to improve their resilience, as well as being the main point of contact for all after school provision offered by the service to young people. There is also a Welsh speaker in every YEPS role, which ensures all young people can access a Welsh speaking youth worker across all areas of the service, e.g. Transitional Support/Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Additional targeted Welsh language provision has been offered for Welsh speaking young people this year; these activities have been staffed solely by Welsh speaking staff to ensure that over 200 young people are able to participate through Welsh. These activities have been delivered during the school day, during after school provision and during the school holidays. The majority of after school Welsh language activities were well attended; some examples include robotics in Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun had 29 attendees, and 25 at dance sessions at Ysgol Llanhari. Young people were also offered weekly lunchtime drop-in sessions at the 4 Welsh medium schools where young people could receive information, advice and guidance these sessions were well attend with 17 at Rhydywaun, 23 at Garth Olwg, 25 at Llanhari and 23 at Cwm Rhondda. Even though most activities have been well attended, it has been identified that further work needs to be done for young people to have an opportunity to use the Welsh language away from the school site, as many see it as a 'School language'. There are plans in place to run a joint activity in February half term for young people from the four Welsh medium schools to come together and socialise with peers through the medium of Welsh.

YEPS continues to support RCT Welsh Language events, ensuring young people are provided with as many opportunities to develop the Welsh language as possible; the service supported and provided activities at Parti Ponty in the summer, additionally, as the National Eisteddfod is coming to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2024, 5 young people from the youth forum, accompanied by YEPS staff, attended this year's event in North Wales. It was an opportunity for young people, some fluent Welsh speakers and some non-Welsh speaking young people to experience the event for the first time. They were tasked with gathering information and create a [short video](#) to share with other young people in RCT in order to promote the Eisteddfod and increase the interest and knowledge about the Welsh language. These 5 young people will take in active role in trying to encourage young people from RCT to attend the Eisteddfod when it's in Pontypridd next year. The Youth Service Manager is also part of the newly established Eisteddfod 2024 – Community Workstream, so YEPS will continue to play a prominent role in this event in the 4 coming year.

YEPS is playing a lead role in the [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) 2022-2032](#) **Outcome 5:** More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school. The Youth Service Manager is attending regular meetings and has a key role in formulating, implementing and evaluating the progress of WESP in relation to YEPS' role in schools and youth clubs.

YEPS also actively support and promote third sector Welsh language youth provision; Menter Iaith are an approved provider of RCT and successfully bid to deliver a joint project with Urdd Gobaith Cymru. This project aims at engaging Welsh speaking young people to participate in further Welsh language provision. They are given the opportunity to develop their own after school provision at the 4 Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT and the local college. Some of the older young people attending these sessions will also have an opportunity to become volunteers and gain formal qualifications based on their volunteering. This project will also link with YEPS project such as the County Youth Forum to ensure that Welsh language provision is not delivered in isolation to other provision. YEPS have also supported two Menter Iaith staff complete their youth and community qualifications. This support included access to free training, mentoring, supervision and session observations for the Menter Iaith staff.

The delivery of Welsh medium play opportunities remains a known gap in open access play provision as a result of limitations in the external market. This is due to a lack of play providers that can confidently deliver through the medium of Welsh. Consequently, a Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been submitted to as a revised proposal to strengthen the offer of Welsh language within existing provisions. [welshlanguageimpactassessment OAP September 23 V2.docx](#)

To aid consistency across the Play-Youth contracts, a revised Quality Assurance and Compliance framework has been devised, which includes quarterly monitoring of compliance with the relevant Welsh Language standards; this is being piloted with Play Providers during Qtr 4 and will be rolled out across all Play-Youth commissioned provision throughout 2024-25. A priority across Play and Youth from 24-25 will also be to implement an annual Welsh Language Standards audit across all commissioned services.

Each childcare setting has a Welsh Language Champion who promotes and encourages the incidental use of Welsh. The Benefits of Bilingualism booklet is circulated within all LA Childcare settings for staff to share with parents.

All Flying Start childcare settings use observational and assessment monitoring tool scores for the Welsh language element of the tool. Those identified as not having adequate conversational Welsh skills will be referred for additional Welsh Languages courses. The Benefits of Bilingualism booklet is circulated within all FS commissioned and LA Childcare settings for staff to share with parents.

As part of the LA nursery transfer a [Welsh Language Equality Impact Assessment](#) tool was completed.

All commissioned partners have to comply with The Welsh Language Standards as appropriate to the service being delivered. The Flexible Funding Team identifies which

of the 170 Welsh Language Standards are relevant to the contracted service and these are listed within the service specification prior to tender. The Monitoring Officers undertake quarterly monitoring visits to ensure contract compliancy including an annual [compliance check](#) on the Welsh Language Standards. The Welsh Language compliance check list has been reviewed this year following concerns raised by Providers and the Funding Flexibilities and Quality Assurance Team has met with the Welsh Language Team to discuss the standards. To support the Flying Start Providers, the Quality Assurance and Funding Flexibilities Team have each identified a Welsh Language lead and the QA Team will be developing a suite of bi-lingual forms that will be made available to settings to support with translation costs.

A separate [Welsh Language Standards Audit](#) is undertaken with providers on an annual basis by the Monitoring Officers. The findings from the audit are reported back to providers as part of their annual performance review meeting and any non-compliance is identified as requiring urgent action. There are not many projects that have a fluent Welsh speaker that can deliver a fully Welsh medium service upon immediate request. The majority of providers are compliant in respect that literature and materials that go out to the public are bilingual and that they have mechanisms in place that upon request another Welsh speaking member of staff can either pick up the call or ring back and then undertake assessment/ support etc.

The [Welsh Language Standards Audit](#) is a quality assurance framework to ensure the monitoring of all local authority-managed childcare settings and commissioned providers against the elements of childcare that are providing impact for children. Flying Start also contributes towards Outcome 1 of [the 2022-2032 WESP](#) – ‘More nursery / three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh’.

In response to meeting the targets within outcome 1 of the WESP - To increase the take up of Welsh medium places, the Funding Flexibilities team have reviewed the commissioning arrangements by introducing a new Approved Providers List. The introduction of the Approved Provider list has offered the opportunity for any Welsh medium childcare providers (subject to meeting predetermined QA standards) the opportunity to become a FS approved provider without having to go through a competitive tendering process. The team worked in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin to promote the opportunity with its members and as at November 2023 the number of approved Welsh Providers was 18 with 2 pending approval. This offers more choice to parents and better geographical spread across RCT and this will in turn increase the take up of Welsh medium FS places, leading to an increase in parents choosing Welsh medium education for their child.

Working in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin has resulted in a setting who had previously been reluctant to deliver Flying Start, to make an application. The [application form](#) for placements has been revised to capture parents that may not have a strong language preference. Where a parent ticks ‘Dont mind’ the aim will be to offer a Welsh language placement. The partnership continues to review areas of improvement, including ways in which to increase incidental Welsh within English language settings.

To promote the Flying Start childcare bi-lingual offer a leaflet ‘[The Bilingual Journey](#)’ was produced in collaboration with Mydiad Meithrin. The leaflet is sent to all Flying

Start eligible parents with the childcare registration form when the child is 18 months old. The leaflet is intended to remind parents that the Flying Start Offer is also available through the medium of Welsh.

is also part of the newly established Eisteddfod 2024 – Community Workstream, so YEPS will continue to play a prominent role in this event in the 4 coming year.

YEPS is playing a lead role in the [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) 2022-2032 Outcome 5](#): More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school. The Youth Service Manager is attending regular meetings and has a key role in formulating, implementing and evaluating the progress of WESP in relation to YEPS' role in schools and youth clubs.

YEPS also actively support and promote third sector Welsh language youth provision; Menter Iaith are an approved provider of RCT and successfully bid to deliver a joint project with Urdd Gobaith Cymru. This project aims at engaging Welsh speaking young people to participate in further Welsh language provision. They are given the opportunity to develop their own after school provision at the 4 Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT and the local college. Some of the older young people attending these sessions will also have an opportunity to become volunteers and gain formal qualifications based on their volunteering. This project will also link with YEPS project such as the County Youth Forum to ensure that Welsh language provision is not delivered in isolation to other provision. YEPS have also supported two Menter Iaith staff complete their youth and community qualifications. This support included access to free training, mentoring, supervision and session observations for the Menter Iaith staff.

The delivery of Welsh medium play opportunities remains a known gap in open access play provision as a result of limitations in the external market. This is due to a lack of play providers that can confidently deliver through the medium of Welsh. Consequently, a Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been submitted to as a revised proposal to strengthen the offer of Welsh language within existing provisions. [welshlanguageimpactassessment OAP September 23 V2.docx](#)

To aid consistency across the Play-Youth contracts, a revised Quality Assurance and Compliance framework has been devised, which includes quarterly monitoring of compliance with the relevant Welsh Language standards; this is being piloted with Play Providers during Qtr 4 and will be rolled out across all Play-Youth commissioned provision throughout 2024-25. A priority across Play and Youth from 24-25 will also be to implement an annual Welsh Language Standards audit across all commissioned services.

Each childcare setting has a Welsh Language Champion who promotes and encourages the incidental use of Welsh. The Benefits of Bilingualism booklet is circulated within all LA Childcare settings for staff to share with parents.

All Flying Start childcare settings use observational and assessment monitoring tool scores for the Welsh language element of the tool. Those identified as not having adequate conversational Welsh skills will be referred for additional Welsh Languages courses. The Benefits of Bilingualism booklet is circulated within all FS commissioned and LA Childcare settings for staff to share with parents.

As part of the LA nursery transfer a [Welsh Language Equality Impact Assessment](#) tool was completed.

All commissioned partners have to comply with The Welsh Language Standards as appropriate to the service being delivered. The Flexible Funding Team identifies which of the 170 Welsh Language Standards are relevant to the contracted service and these are listed within the service specification prior to tender. The Monitoring Officers undertake quarterly monitoring visits to ensure contract compliance including an annual [compliance check](#) on the Welsh Language Standards. The Welsh Language compliance check list has been reviewed this year following concerns raised by Providers and the Funding Flexibilities and Quality Assurance Team has met with the Welsh Language Team to discuss the standards. To support the Flying Start Providers, the Quality Assurance and Funding Flexibilities Team have each identified a Welsh Language lead and the QA Team will be developing a suite of bi-lingual forms that will be made available to settings to support with translation costs.

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Identified areas for improvement.

- Continue to support staff wishing to develop their Welsh language skills.
- Continue to recruit Welsh Approved childcare providers and actively encourage the take up of Welsh medium Flying Start childcare
- Continue to monitor compliance with Welsh Language Standards of commissioned providers
- Continue to seek to stimulate the market to increase the delivery of Welsh medium play opportunities
- Continue to provide opportunities for young people to socialise through the medium of Welsh outside of the school environment

Council Business Unit

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

- Welsh Language provision - The service continue to take forward a positive approach to the provision of the Welsh language as required by the Welsh Language Standards through the provision of bilingual agenda's / minutes and the provision of translation at Committee meetings where needed. Members were surveyed on their language preference for correspondence and for the purposes of conducting meetings through their preferred language. 90% stated that English was their preferred language with 10% preferring to converse/receive information through the medium of Welsh. Moving forward, in order to directly support our Welsh speaking Members in meetings, the simultaneous Welsh translation service has now been provided specifically for those committees where the membership includes Welsh speaking Members. This will also be offered where Democratic Services has been informed in advance of any public speakers wishing to converse through the medium of Welsh. 16% of Members are currently learning Welsh. In order to promote the Welsh language and increase the confidence of new learners, the Council Business Unit in conjunction with Welsh Language Services will be offering all Members the opportunity to undertake bespoke and dedicated Elected Member Welsh classes. Information on these free sessions led by the Council's Welsh Language Tutor have recently been provided to Members.

- In addition to the above, through the [Leaders Scheme of Delegation](#) the Welsh Language Cabinet Sub Committee has now been made into a decision-making Body, to reflect the importance of the Welsh Language. This Committee allows Members and Officers to look at policy development and service trends to strengthen Welsh language across the Council for the benefit of Members.
- Council meetings that are webcast provided the audience with the choice of an English or Welsh audio channel.
- The Council took forward the use of the Zoom platform to take forward their virtual Committee meetings due to the bilingual opportunities within the software, therefore ensuring the Welsh Language Standards were continually met. Recordings to the virtual meetings are available on the council website with a choice of English or Welsh translations available.
- A dedicated translation booth is available within the Council Chamber which assists both translators and Members and provides a better experience for those Members using the translation provision.
- Assisting in the creation and formation of the Impact Assessment Review Panels which looks to strengthen impact assessments for the benefit of the community and its residents, amending the cabinet and committee reporting style to reflect the statutory required socio-economic duty as well as the Welsh language impact assessment requirements.
- Publishing of agenda within the required Statutory guidelines with all agenda's being bilingual as in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards.
- Dedicated translation team who work closely with the Council Business Unit
- Dedicated Welsh language classes for Elected Members with the Council's Welsh Language tutor
- Specific Welsh Language training for Chairs and Vice Chairs as part of the Members Induction Programme to promote Welsh Language etiquette within Committee settings
- Bi-lingual correspondence with all elected Member via email
- Interaction of staff within the Council business unit to use Welsh in the workplace through the AFRER project.
- Utilising the Modern Gov app, allowing Members to have a language preference when accessing Committee papers.

Identified areas for improvement.

- Working with translation to see if further documents i.e. – non decision Committee meetings can take forward bilingual materials (Minutes). This is constantly open to review by the Council Business unit and translation team.
- Work may need to be taken forward with the translation Unit in respect of the receipt of E-petitions through the Modern Gov system has previously indicated – although we are aware of a wider review being taken forward by Welsh Government.
- Working with the translation unit with the production of e-learning modules to ensure that they are available bilingually to Members.
- Review of the democracy pages within the Council website to ensure the Welsh language standards are complied with in all areas.

Education and Inclusion Services

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

Services in the Welsh language

- The Estyn inspection of January 2023 identified that improving provision for Welsh, for example through late immersion opportunities, specialist ALN provision and improving the outcomes for Welsh in English Medium schools, is at an early stage of development. The report recommended: **R2 Strengthening approaches to Welsh Medium Education, for example by improving access and support for learners with additional learning needs and providing opportunities for late immersion for learners.**
- RCT's 'Taith Iaith' (late immersion scheme) was introduced in September 2023. The scheme provides opportunities for non-Welsh speaking pupils in Years 2–6 to be immersed in the language, with the support of the immersion team. The demand for provision in its first term has exceeded expectations with 11 pupils across 7 different schools currently accessing support. An [Overview of Taith Iaith](#) provides further detail on positive engagement with schools and improvements of Welsh language skills for the first cohort of pupils. If the demand for the service continues to increase, we will need to discuss next steps with Welsh Government to identify suitable funding streams to support the growth of the scheme.

Welsh language impact assessments

- Welsh language impact assessments (WLIA) are written and formally scrutinised for all policy changes which includes school reorganisation proposals. RCT Welsh Language Services support us with completing and scrutinising WLIA's for all relevant proposals. WLIA's have been prepared for the following proposals:
 - [Proposal to develop a new special school](#) in RCT: The [WL Impact Assessment](#) outlines that although the new special school will be English medium, the use of Welsh in the new curriculum will be promoted and the school will be encouraged to achieve the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter, a programme which supports English medium schools in promoting Welsh and a 'Welsh ethos' in schools. All current special schools and units in RCT have signed up to the charter through CSCJES, with 3 having achieved the bronze award within the first year. This proposal will assist with delivering the WESP targets, namely an increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with ALN.
 - Proposal for a new school in the Glyn-coch area – this proposal involves the closure of 2 existing English medium primary schools (Cefn Primary and Craig yr Hesg Primary) and the creation of 1 new English medium community primary school on the existing site of Craig yr Hesg and the adjacent land. Although the school will be English medium, it will include a Welsh medium childcare and early years setting on the school site and any parents/carers of pupils accessing this provision will be made aware of the journey into Welsh medium education and supported through this journey if they wish to do so.
 - Proposal to establish two new Welsh medium primary phase LSCs in the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin – this will be the first Welsh medium provision of its type in RCT and will widen opportunities available to learners with ALN to learn the Welsh language. Learners accessing this provision will have access to a range of additional extra-curricular activities in line with their

peers, through the medium of Welsh. This supports the delivery of our WESP targets by increasing the Welsh medium provision available to learners with ALN.

- Proposal to close Rhigos Primary School – although this proposal relates to an English medium school, this could have a positive impact on the Welsh medium primary school in the area (YGG Penderyn) as the school currently sits within YGG Penderyn’s catchment area. The school building at YGG Penderyn is relatively new and the school has surplus capacity. Since the consultation process for this proposal began, 3 pupils have already made the switch to YGG Penderyn and are currently being supported by RCT ‘Taith Iaith’ late immersion scheme team.

Compliance with Welsh language standards

- To ensure we provide the appropriate level of services in Welsh, all members of the service must complete ‘Welsh Language Standards – Compliance Awareness’ e-training module when they join the service. Additional to this, in recent weeks all members of staff in the service area have been encouraged to undertake further training provided by Welsh Language Services to ensure everyone is aware of the actions to take when dealing with correspondence, impact assessments, recruitment, arranging meetings and translation in line with the Welsh language standards. Some training sessions have already been delivered and further sessions will continue to be delivered through to the spring term.

Grant funded projects and proposals

- There is currently 22.8% surplus capacity in Welsh medium primary schools and 27% surplus capacity in Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT so there are sufficient surplus places to meet potential future growth. There has been significant investment in Welsh medium education across the county borough:
 - In the Cynon area, £4.7M was invested in YGG Aberdar to increase capacity at the school through providing four new classrooms, an extension to the existing school hall and new outdoor areas. The project also included a dedicated onsite childcare facility invested via the Welsh medium capital grant.
 - YG Rhydywaun also benefitted from an investment of £12.1M to increase the number of places available at the school and to deliver brand new, improved facilities.
 - The works for the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin on the existing site of the dual language Heol y Celyn Primary School have completed. The school is currently going through the transition from dual language to Welsh only and will be YGG Awel Taf from September 2024. This project has increased school capacity by 93 pupil places and will significantly improve the Welsh medium offer in the locality.
 - A brand new £18M Welsh medium school is currently being constructed in the Rhondda area for YGG Llyn y Forwyn. This will be the first ever new-build Welsh school in the Rhondda area. This project will deliver significantly improved learning environments for pupils in this area of the county borough. The project is on track for the school to open to learners from September 2024. This project will also include an onsite dedicated childcare facility to support the continuum of Welsh medium education through a seamless transition into Welsh medium primary education.

- Following challenges faced with recruitment of specialist staff, the new Welsh medium LSC provision at Ysgol Garth Olwg is now established. The provision opened to learners from September 2023 and 4 learners are currently accessing the support. The Access and Inclusion team are actively promoting the opportunities available to learners who wish to remain in Welsh medium secondary education.
- In July 2023, a Capital Childcare Grant was put forward for 3 separate proposals, 2 of these being for Welsh medium provision. Approval has been received for the project at Penderyn and following an appeal against the decision, verbal approval has been provided for the £1.5M project at Castellau. Once formal approval has been received, we will move forward with these projects. Both proposals will deliver improved facilities for Welsh medium childcare settings which supports us to achieving our WESP outcomes.

WESP Progress Updates

- The Education Directorate continues to work progressively with partners internally and externally to deliver our WESP targets which highlights the strong commitment to developing and improving Welsh language provision in our schools and childcare settings. In July 2023, the WESP Annual Review Report was prepared and returned to Welsh Government for consideration. The report provided overall summaries of progress against each outcome and potential risks and mitigating actions were identified. The feedback received by Welsh Government was positive and it was highlighted that the in-depth analysis which we undertook provided valuable insights into many areas of concern. As a result, we have been asked if the Outcome 7 section of the report can be shared more widely as an example of good practice.
- Under the new Flying Start commissioning model, Welsh medium places can be offered to those who are eligible for provision. There are currently 18 settings who have become approved providers and can provide Welsh medium childcare places. The Flying Start team and Mudiad Meithrin continue to work on increasing the number of providers who are approved providers and are in talks with 3 further settings to join the approved provider list. Since April 2023, of the 563 places offered, 90 (18%) opted for Welsh medium provision which is an increase on the previous term and a positive step forward towards increasing the numbers accessing Welsh medium Flying Start provision.
- In 2022-2023, the number of year one learners accessing Welsh medium education decreased by 3 learner places from 524 (2021-2022) to 521. However, the number of three-year-olds accessing Welsh medium pre-nursery and nursery has slightly increased from 561 (2021-2022) to 569 (2022-2023). In order to achieve our WESP targets, this needs to increase significantly. We will continue to work with partners across the region to market and promote the Welsh medium provision offer in RCT and will continue to monitor carefully.
- Transition rates between each key stage of education remain fairly stable with high levels of transition rates from foundation phase through to key stage 4. The transition from key stage 4 to key stage 5 is the lowest, however this is the same for English medium schools. We will continue to work with WESP partners and Welsh medium secondary schools to promote the post-16 offer at schools to encourage retainment in Welsh medium education.

- All Welsh medium primary schools and Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT are engaged with the Siarter Iaith programme. All Welsh medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award and 5 schools have gone on to achieve the gold award. 2 Welsh medium secondary schools have achieved the bronze award and 1 has achieved the silver award.
- All English medium primary schools have now engaged with the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme. A total of 44 have achieved the bronze award, 23 have achieved the silver award and 2 have achieved the gold award. Of the 11 English medium secondary schools in RCT, 2 have yet to engage with the programme. 4 schools have achieved the bronze award. All special schools and units in RCT are engaged with the programme and 3 have achieved the bronze award.

Marketing and promotion

- A social media campaign was launched in October 2023 across the Council's corporate social media platforms. The campaign will run for 10 weeks and includes videos prepared by Mudiad Meithrin and Welsh Government which promote Welsh medium early years, Welsh medium education and late immersion. Our WESP officer is part of a working party with local authority officers across the region for a regional approach to marketing and promoting Welsh medium education. A dedicated Welsh medium promotional champion has been appointed in Cardiff Council to support this project.
- A National Eisteddfod Schools working party has been established to raise awareness and raise funds towards the National Eisteddfod which is being held in RCT in August 2024. The group has had the initial meeting where officers from the Eisteddfod team attended to provide an update. Information leaflets have been prepared in Welsh and English and shared with all schools with the encouragement to share these with parents/carers through their communication channels. The education team are currently working on a school engagement strategy which should be ready to share with schools by the end of the term in preparation for the new year. A range of activities have already been held throughout the county borough and this will only increase as we near the Eisteddfod.

Workforce – local authority officers

The table below contains most recent data on local authority staffing figures and specifically numbers within the Education department with Welsh language skills.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority Staffing Figures	Total No. of Staff	Excluding Catering Staff
The total number of staff in the local authority	10,676	
The total number of staff who are fluent in Welsh	832	
The total number of other staff who have any skills in the Welsh language	1,145	
Total number of staff in the Education Department (not teachers)	3,601	2,990
The total number of those staff who are fluent in Welsh	283	264

The total number of other staff in the Education Department who have any skills in the Welsh language	476	447
The total number of jobs advertised as "Welsh Essential" in 2022-2023	Not captured	

Workforce – Teachers/school based staff

The table below 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 the 2022-23. 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.

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%

- Data available from SWAC 2022 demonstrates:
 - 52% of teachers in English medium schools in RCT have proficient Welsh language skills.
 - A total of 501 teachers in Welsh medium schools have proficient Welsh language skills.
 - Of the 115 schools in RCT with an ALNCo, a total of 20 have proficient Welsh language skills (12 of these work in Welsh medium schools, 12 have advanced skills (4 of these work in Welsh medium schools) and 13 have intermediate skills.
 - Across all schools in RCT, a total of 17 ALN support staff have proficient Welsh language skills (11 of these work in Welsh medium school), 9 practitioners have intermediate and 5 have higher Welsh language skills.

Workforce – professional learning opportunities

- In 2022-2023:

- 2 RCT practitioners undertook the Welsh in a Year Sabbatical scheme via CSCJES.
- 4 undertook the one and two term sabbatical schemes.
- 7 practitioners undertook Welsh language professional learnings courses.
- 5 practitioners undertook the leadership of Welsh in English medium schools course.
- 2 Welsh medium candidates achieved NPQH.
- 1 primary and 1 secondary school practitioner undertook the Aspiring Headteachers Programme.
- 1 primary school and 7 secondary school practitioners undertook the Middle Leaders Development Programme.
- 1 all through school practitioner and 1 secondary school practitioner undertook the Senior Leaders Development Programme.

Links:

[WESP Annual Review Report Year 1](#)

[WESP Annual Review Report - Appendix A - SWAC Data](#)

Identified areas for improvement:

1. Evaluate the success of the immersion scheme following its first term of service and continue to monitor demand for the service. If demand continues to increase, we will need to discuss possible future funding streams with Welsh Government to support expansion of the scheme in RCT.
2. All members of staff in the Education Directorate to undertake the training sessions to ensure compliance with the Welsh language standards.
3. Continue to invest in Welsh medium childcare and education through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme to deliver improved facilities.
4. Continue to work with the regional promotional network to develop RCTs own marketing and promotional strategy, in co-ordination with neighbouring authorities and key partners.
5. Develop and implement a school engagement strategy for the National Eisteddfod to raise awareness of the festival and encourage engagement with all schools and activities in the lead up to the event.
6. Continue to work with Welsh medium secondary schools to improve transition rates between key stage 4 and 5.
7. Undertake robust data analysis of SWAC data and other sources of data which are available to inform a strategic succession plan to address current and anticipated future workforce pressures.
8. Actively ask attendees in external meetings with public bodies whether they require translation services.

Highways Maintenance and Management

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

The Highway Maintenance and Management Service continues to embrace the Welsh Language Standards and accordingly has expanded the services it provides through

the medium of Welsh.

Following recruitment there are now a number of members of staff (10+) within the Service who have a reasonable knowledge of spoken and written Welsh and staff are encouraged to attend courses to learn the language.

When we undertake residents consultations or when there are '[letter drops](#)', all communications are undertaken bilingually i.e. through the medium of English and Welsh. As part of any public exhibitions there is always the presence of Welsh speaking staff to answer / converse in Welsh with the public if so required.

During the routine maintenance of [sign or street nameplate renewal](#), all replacement signage is now bilingual. Provision of new street names is now Welsh only, thus further promoting the Welsh Language.

Identified areas for improvement.

- Continue to encourage staff to learn Welsh where appropriate.

Human Resources

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

EET

EET Team issued with a Welsh Language standards enforcement investigation. Liaising with Welsh Language Service Manager to provide evidence to meet Welsh Commissioners requirements.

50% of staff delivering the Education programme in schools are fluent Welsh speakers. Group and 1-1 Sessions are delivered in in RCT Welsh -secondary and primary schools.

Occupational Health proactive work:

As part of our EQI and Welsh Language impact assessment for Viv up we identified an issue with 3rd party suppliers for support not being in Welsh, although this is not required as part of the national procurement framework, we sourced a new Welsh app called Cwtch and wellbeing website with Welsh content. We then negotiated with Viv up to add them to our EAP portal to enhance Welsh wellbeing support initiatives in Welsh as well as English. See our website <https://vivup.yourcareap.co.uk/UK/EAP>

We are fully compliant with Welsh Language Standards -Inform, Internet, RCT Source, Facebook, posters and events—all adhere to the standards

All staff use a bilingual introduction message when answering calls and our voice messaging service is in Welsh.

WLIA has been completed for Viv up and your care.

All of our appointment letters are bilingual and fully comply with the standards.

Participants on wellbeing bitesize and support sessions are asked for their language preference prior to attending the sessions, Welsh language unit has agreed our

wording for these sessions.

OH clients are asked for their language preference as part of the appointment letter, we have 1 Welsh speaking clinician in the team, but we have sourced a number of other Welsh speaking clinicians through the Occupational Health Services framework and our counselling preferred list.

Diversity and Inclusion:

- All internet pages/published documents are fully compliant – amends were made following instructions from the Welsh language team in 2022/23.
- A WLIA has been completed for the SEP with advice being sought from the Welsh Language team.
- Team members have attended presentations from Welsh Language Commissioner relating to judicial reviews/compliance issues – relevant due to team's role on the Review Panel.
- External Disability Forum members are asked their language of preference on membership forms.
- Team members attending recent bitesize sessions to ensure we are complaint when hosting events/awareness sessions.
- The team is proactive in advising service areas that they need to complete a WLIA as well as an EIA, signposting to the Welsh Language team.
- Unfortunately, no current team members are Welsh Language speakers, though we have one learner.-

Employee Relations

We work closely with the Welsh Language service to ensure that all policies are compliant with the Standards.

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Employee Relations

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-Currently working with the WLS to introduce a requirement for a Welsh language Impact assessment on the management of change document via a short version as an appendix.

-Also working with the WLS to introduce a guaranteed interview scheme for any candidates who meet the basic criteria for the role and have Welsh level 3 or above. (MoC and Appendix 4)

Workforce Development

- The Workforce Development Team adheres to Welsh Language standards.
- The staff survey and Individual Performance review are available bilingually. The staff survey is available in Welsh; the online and postal reply options are bilingual and the telephone option has Welsh language provision. All staff annual Individual Performance Review guidance and templates are available bilingually and guidance states that if a member of staff would like their review in Welsh this request must be realised and guidance around this is available. All global email communications are also bilingual.
- For recruitment marketing; material and content is available bilingually and the Graduate Officer who undertakes this function is a fluent Welsh speaker.

- Global emails, posters and flyers for the promotion of staff benefits such as cycle to work, mobile phones and technology are all bilingual.
- A thorough Welsh Impact Assessment was also undertaken for the HR Strategy and Council Workforce Plan (both 2023-28). The most recent version is attached, the impact assessment will be updated as part of the annual strategy and workforce plan review.
- The team is in regular contact with Welsh Language Services in terms of work streams, Welsh translation requests and for general advice and guidance on adhering to Welsh Language Standards and promoting the Welsh language.
- Within the Workforce Development Team, one member of staff is a fluent Welsh speaker and another is at level 4.

Identified areas for improvement.

Provide refresher information to teams returning to the office on use of Welsh language to comply with the standards.

ICT and Digital Services

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

Through the Digital Strategy we seek to ensure that services are fully inclusive of the Welsh Language. A Welsh language impact assessment was undertaken at the outset of the Digital Strategy development to ensure robust consideration of:

- The principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

The Service provides its services and complies with Welsh Language requirements, in accordance with the standards and with the Welsh Language Measure. We provide or support the following:

- Offer Contact Centre assistance in both the medium of English & Welsh;
- Offer Service Desk assistance in both the medium of English & Welsh;
- Support Welsh Medium Schools in the provision of ICT;
- Support the procurement of Welsh language Systems and software;
- Digital & IM Bulletins are bilingual
- All published data protection guidance and key documents are bilingual.
- All Data Protection Privacy notices are bilingual
- Bilingual email footers, out-of-office messages.
- Offer Welsh Language Translation software tools (Cysill) that can be deployed to staff as needed;
- Provide Global Email Messages to all staff, members and Schools bilingually;
- Deployed Welsh Language Interface tools through MS Office (Cysgair) to all staff within the Council.
- Provide the ability to have Welsh Language MS Office full functionality;
- Staff attendance at Welsh Language Courses.
- Applying Welsh Language questions to our procurement process for tendering

- Welsh Translation software available through the introduction of M365
- Webcasting (Committee Meeting) providing Welsh translation.
- Bilingual website and splash page- website bilingual for all information and transactions
- Online forms bilingual
- Worked with the Welsh Language Unit to ensure that key social care documentation in WCCIS captures the preferences of service users & their carers in relation to the use of the Welsh language
- Welsh Language narrative added to MS Teams meeting notices – available in 2024

Identified areas for improvement.

- Update MS Teams to allow for Welsh Language within a meeting notice

Integrated Transport Unit

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

Our residents use transportation Services, irrespective of their first language. The Service ensures that the Learner Travel Policy, Information and Arrangements are fully compliant with the latest Welsh Language Standards. The Welsh Language is no less favourably treated than the equivalent Service provision in English. Standard letters for wide audiences are bilingual and roadside bus timetables, as well as all the material that promotes the Service's activities on the Council's website are in Welsh and English.

All parents can communicate with the Service in Welsh and records are kept. There are three Welsh speakers within the Service with a working knowledge of spoken and written Welsh. During 2023 the Service received no requests for correspondence or telephone calls from residents wishing to converse in Welsh. Again, there were no complaints about the Service's use of the Welsh Language during this period.

In the last three years, there has been a fall in the number of learners transported to Welsh Medium or Dual Language Schools, from 3,577 to 3,388 in the 2021/22 academic year, from 3,388 to 3,229 in the 2022/23 academic year, and from 3,229 to 3,139 in the 2023/24 academic year – although indications are that the number of pupils attending Welsh Medium or Dual Language Schools is not falling.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) was prepared for the proposed changes to Home to School Transport policy and was published alongside the cabinet report on the Council's website together with a consultation document that outlines the proposal in further detail and in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The initial WLIA exercise identified that there is a possibility of impacts on the Welsh language in respect of the proposal as there is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools, in favour of nearer English medium catchment schools, with

a greater risk at the primary school level. However, the WLIA will be updated using the feedback received together with any additional data/information to further assess the impact on the Welsh language and assist Cabinet in reaching any final decisions on the proposal.

Identified areas for improvement.

Encourage more staff to learn Welsh.

Leisure Sport and Parks including Bereavement Services and Visitor Attractions

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

Leisure, Sport, and Parks

All Welsh language policies are implemented. All digital platforms, signage and hard copy marketing is bilingual. Staff are supported to attend 'Cwrs Cymraeg Lefel 2' and most front-line staff and all new employees have completed 'Cwrs Cymraeg Lefel 1' as part of the job specification essential criteria.

In partnership with the Urdd deliver Welsh language swimming lessons in Llantrisant Leisure Centre and Rhondda Sports Centre

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 22-27 where the assessment was deemed to have a positive impact on the Welsh language.

Bereavement Services

All onsite signage is bilingual and RCT paperwork is also bilingual. However, some of the statutory paperwork (medical forms) is not bilingual. RCT are not able to change this, it would need to be a directive from Welsh Government. Welsh language services are offered by the funeral directors.

Heritage and Visitor Attractions

All Welsh language policies are implemented. All digital platforms, signage and hard copy marketing is bilingual.

The service is key in developing plans for the successful delivery of the Eisteddfod 2024 being held in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park in the summer of 2024. The event is a celebration of Welsh culture and will leave a legacy in the county borough.

Identified areas for improvement.

Leisure, Sport, and Parks / Bereavement Services / Heritage and Visitor Attractions

- Continue to support staff to attend Welsh language courses.
- Continue to ensure that all Welsh policies and standards are implemented.
- Bereavement Service e to work to identify Welsh speaking medical referees

Prosperity and Development

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

The Service has continued to work closely with the Welsh Language Unit in ensuring it complies with Welsh Language Standards.

The Service actively promotes Welsh in the workplace through encouraging staff to learn and speak Welsh. In addition, staff who have secured promotion within the Service are required to attend a Welsh Language course.

We currently have 10 fluent Welsh speakers with one further being supported in Level 2 Welsh Language training. This is currently sufficient for our Service needs.

The Service have ensured that Welsh Language Impact Assessments are carried out when developing new strategies and policies such as the development of the Empty Homes Strategy [Empty Homes Strategy Welsh Language impact Assessment October 2022.docx](#) and the development of the ECO 4 Flex scheme [Eco 4 Flex Welsh Language Impact Assessment 2023.docx](#). The Eco 4 Flex Scheme will have a positive effect on the Welsh Language, Welsh speakers and Welsh learners, the scheme delivery will comply with the Welsh standards and will actively promotes the opportunity to communicate/engage with the Council in Welsh. It is envisaged that this work will also have a positive impact on the other core business activities that installers undertake while working both within RCT and Wales as a whole by raising their understanding of what is required and where to access support, including training resources for their own staff who may be keen Welsh learners. The Scheme will assist some of the most disadvantaged households in the county borough and allow them to engage with the Council through the medium of Welsh both in terms of advice and support services provided and through the grant application process by ensuring all information is produced bilingually along with promoting training and developing Welsh language skill of staff.

The Service has engaged the Welsh Language Service to ensure that the multiple elements of work on the Revised Local Development Plan are translated as appropriate. This included formal documents, reports and the existing and evolving website pages. This also includes the consultations we undertake. Furthermore, the statutory RLDP preparation process requires an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of each formal stage of its preparation and end document. We are incorporating the elements of the Welsh Language Act and Equalities Act into this LDP assessment process. This is known as an Integrated Sustainability Assessment.

Planning application publicity - press notices/site notices are all bilingual, in accordance with Welsh Language policy requirements.

Planning & Development Committee front agenda sheets and minutes are provided

bilingually. Welsh translation services are available at all Planning & Development Committee meetings for both Elected Members and members of the public/third parties.

The Service has also received planning applications in the medium of Welsh and this has not led to a delay.

The Welsh Language is a running theme through the Tourism Strategy Delivery Action Plan, including promoting Welsh language training and translation, encouraging local businesses to use bilingual greetings and phrases, and promoting a warm Welsh welcome.

The Service continues to work very closely with the Welsh Language Unit ensuring all our design work complies with Welsh Government Language Standards. All documents, publications and digital media produced by us is bilingual. We also advise service areas, stakeholders and external partners about their responsibilities to meet these Welsh Language Standards.

Further Evidence:

[Welsh Language Impact Assessment Tool](#)

Identified areas for improvement.

Increased collaboration with Welsh Language organisations as there are opportunities to identify and develop cultural tourism projects for the benefit of visitors (USP) and residents (skills).

Public Protection and Regulatory Services

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

- There is a new Welsh learner within TS, and three fluent officers. Within the Registrar Service there is one learner and three fluent casual officers (one new this year): the learner will be working alongside the fluent officers in ceremonies to improve confidence. As the delivery of the function is very prescriptive, and based on scripts for delivery this lends itself to an easier delivery of the function and will give learners more confidence to use their new language skills outside the delivery of the script.
- A number of birth registrations and ceremonies have been conducted in Welsh, or bilingually this year.
- Corporate 'Being Bilingual in RCT' leaflets are being placed within birth registration packs and on display in the Registrar reception.
- Translations have been finalised on all documentation to be sent automatically from the Stopford appointment system, the system will also capture preferred language.
- Social media messaging is published in Welsh and English.
- Encouraging and supporting staff to undertake Welsh language training. There are 4 Officers in the Environmental Protection & Housing Standards Team currently attending training courses and several fluent Welsh speakers are also in the team.

- The Environmental Protection & Housing Standards Team are in process of updating standard template letters in Flare to produce bilingual versions for Officer use.
- All staff were emailed to offer the opportunity of attending Welsh classes. 3 people from the Food and Health and Safety Team are undertaking classes.
- Leaflets/communications etc sent to the trade are bilingual.
- CTM PHSS – 2 team members are fluent Welsh speakers, have good written skills and are able to translate small documents or sentences as and when required. Another team member has recently started a Welsh Course which has been organised internally. The team are aware and compliant with Welsh Language Standards – any initial correspondence or advisory/update communications with service users are done bilingually with the aid of the Welsh Language Translation Department. Any Training Resources shared Regionally or Nationally are provided bilingually (see link within question 2 to our hand hygiene resource pack).

Identified areas for improvement.

Continue to support staff wishing to develop their Welsh language skills.

Streetcare and Waste Services

How well is the service delivering Welsh language provision and promoting the Welsh Language?

Evaluation:

The service is reviewing and working towards full compliance with the Welsh Language Standards in terms of policy documents, correspondence, face-to-face contact (including on signage and equipment) and website information with the public. The service did not receive any complaints from the Commissioner and have not had to deal with any service requests through the medium of Welsh in 2023. Colleagues from customer care assisted us during this process.

All documentation regarding the 3 weekly collections and Winter Green bookings, including digital channels, were produced bi-lingually.

Grant funded projects through Keep Britain Tidy to tackle Chewing Gum in town centres were delivered with bilingual signage and awareness campaign materials.

The Waste web pages were also refreshed in 2023 in line with the new changes and campaigns. Both Welsh and English pages were simultaneously updated.

Staff are advised on induction on our service requirements under the Welsh Language Act and the services will strive to continue to encourage staff who wish to learn the language or support staff who wish to receive information in Welsh.

Identified areas for improvement.

- To offer staff who deal with members of the public on a daily basis Welsh Language training.