



# Welsh Language Standards: Action Plan

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established a legal framework in order to place a duty on certain organisations to comply with the Welsh Language Standards through secondary legislation (Welsh Language Standards Regulations). The 171 standards relevant to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council are listed in the 'Compliance Notice - Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011'.

This document was produced in order to comply with the following standards which Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has a duty to comply with - 157, 159, 163, 165, 171.

A copy of the standards presented to RCT County Borough Council, and referenced in this document, are available at [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/WelshServices](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/WelshServices)

## **STANDARDS FOR PROVIDING SERVICES**

These Standards are in relation to promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, or ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language as services are provided to the public.

### **HOW WE INTEND TO COMPLY**

#### **RECORDING LANGUAGE CHOICES**

Individual services are responsible for recording their users' language choice. Some services (e.g. Social Care) record language choices on their own databases. If the service has not recorded a language choice, the service user will receive bilingual correspondence.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

All emails sent by the Council will include the following statement:

*Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd gohebu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi. Rhowch wybod inni beth yw'ch dewis iaith h.y. Cymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.*

New corporate letters will include the following statement in their footnote:

*Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd gohebu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi. Rhowch wybod inni beth yw'ch dewis iaith h.y. Cymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.*

We have published guidance on the RCTCBC Welsh Language Services intranet pages in order to help staff comply with these requirements.

#### **TELEPHONE CALLS**

New guidance on Welsh language telephone calls has been published in order to help staff comply with these requirements.

The vast majority of telephone calls are received by the Council's contact centre, which has a dedicated Welsh language team.

Staff can use a filter on the internal intranet to find every Welsh speaker within their service.

#### **MEETINGS**

New guidance on holding bilingual meetings has been published in order to help staff comply with these requirements.

RCTCBC's Welsh Language Services Unit will facilitate internal simultaneous translation services for all service areas.

#### **DOCUMENTS AND FORMS**

Meetings (41)

Agendas and minutes are updated on the RCTCBC website.

Documents and forms that are not bilingual (i.e. separate Welsh and English forms) will include the following statement in accordance with standards 49 and 50A:

*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh.*

## **SIGNS AND NOTICES**

The Council's Design service, which is responsible for publishing all official signs and notices, will check that the Welsh language comes first on all new signage. Those designing highway signs will follow the same procedure.

Any tenders where Council services require a company to undertake work on their behalf will state the relevant standards that the company must comply with. The service in question will be responsible for monitoring this.

## **WEBSITES AND ONLINE SERVICES**

ICT and the Welsh Language Services Unit continue to inform services that they have a duty to provide Welsh language materials for projects that interact with our customers. After being advised of this, the service is responsible for deciding which elements of any new system should be bilingual and, as a result, holds responsibility for meeting any standards.

The Internet Team and the Welsh Language Services Unit will conduct an audit of every section of [www.rctcbc.gov.uk](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk) in order to ensure that all pages are available in Welsh. This will include checking pages, forms, documents and links etc. A 'Cymraeg/English' link will be created for web pages in order to provide a direct link between the English content and the corresponding Welsh content.

## **RECEPTION SERVICES**

New guidance on providing reception services has been published in order to help staff comply with these requirements.

We will continue to implement the Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, which aims to increase the number of staff with Welsh Language Skills.

There will also be changes to the Council's recruitment/appointment policy in order to ensure that all advertisements for new posts note Welsh Language Skills Level 1 as an essential requirement. The assessment will also ask managers to consider higher levels.

We have appointed a Welsh Language Tutor to be responsible for improving the language skills of our staff, especially those working on the front line. The Tutor provides lessons at convenient times and locations. Additionally, we are also continuing to promote a flexible programme of Welsh language courses through the Welsh for Adults service.

## **AWARDING GRANTS**

The expression of interest forms for Council Grants have been updated to include the following statement -

*Mae modd i chi gyflwyno ffurflen mynegi diddordeb yn Gymraeg a fyddwn ni ddim yn trin unrhyw gais a gaiff ei gyflwyno yn Gymraeg yn llai ffafriol na chais a gaiff ei gyflwyno yn Saesneg*

*An Expression of Interest form may be submitted in Welsh, and will not be treated any less favourable than an Expression of Interest form submitted in English.*

and letters inviting individuals to interviews include the following -

*Mae modd i chi gael y cyfweiliad drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Pe hoffech chi wneud hyn, rhowch wybod erbyn xx/xx/xxxx.*

*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh.*

*Should you wish for the interview to be conducted in Welsh please inform me by xx/xx/xxxx.*

All services administered by the Council include individual criteria, terms and conditions. Where the Council is responsible for these, the appropriate services will update them in order to reflect the requirements of the standards.

### **AWARDING CONTRACTS**

The Council's Procurement Unit specifications have been updated in order to reflect the new requirements. The Invitation to Tender document is published bilingually on the Etender Wales website (which is also bilingual) and includes the following statement -

*Rhaid cwblhau'r tendrau yn Gymraeg a/neu'n Saesneg. Fydd tendrau a gaiff eu cyflwyno yn Gymraeg ddim yn cael eu trin yn llai ffafriol na thendrau a gaiff eu cyflwyno yn Saesneg.*

*Tenders must be completed in Welsh and/or English. Tenders submitted in Welsh will be treated no less favourably than a tender submitted in English.*

The website also sends out a message to inform individuals that a new document has been uploaded. This message is bilingual, as is the letter inviting people to interviews. The letter includes the following statement -

*Mae modd i chi gael y cyfweiliad drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Pe hoffech chi wneud hyn, rhowch wybod erbyn xx/xx/xxxx.*

*Should you wish for the interview to be conducted in Welsh please inform me by xx/xx/xxxx.*

The RCTCBC Welsh Language Services Unit will provide/facilitate a simultaneous translation service and any contract specifications will adhere to the following advice, which has been produced internally -

*Rhaid i fanyleb y contract nodi holl ofynion y contract, gan gynnwys manylion unrhyw Safonau'r Gymraeg sy'n berthnasol i'r contract, a'i weithredu ar gyfer cyfnod y cytundeb.*

*The contract specification must set out the entire requirements of the contract, including details of the Welsh Language Standards applicable to the delivery of the contract throughout the contract term.*

The Council has also produced a guide for commissioned partners, in order to help them comply with relevant standards when operating on behalf of the Council.

### **COURSES PROVIDED BY A BODY**

The Community Learning Service will implement a proactive offer as people register and use the data to assess whether or not the course needs to be provided in Welsh.

## **STANDARDS FOR PROVIDING SERVICES**

### **SUPERVISING, PROMOTING AND FACILITATING**

The Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group on Welsh Language Affairs supervise strategic developments, consider reports from relevant sections relating to the Welsh language, present recommendations to the Council's Cabinet and monitor developments across the Council. The Steering Group is responsible for assessing the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Action Plan, by monitoring the Council's progress as it attempts to meet the Welsh Language Standards.

Additionally, we have established a Working Group, which includes Chief Officers, in order to ensure that the operational changes required are implemented, along with a co-operative method of working to help services deal with any areas for improvement.

The Council invests in a robust Welsh Language Services Unit which includes 14 (2017/2018) employees. This includes a Welsh Language Compliance Officer who thoroughly audits the work of Council service areas. The Unit strives to support all of the Council's services by doing the following:

- providing advice and support to all services in relation to their duties under the Standards.
- translating documents for the public
- identifying potential areas of non-compliance
- referring formal complaints regarding non-compliance to the Council's Complaints Officer
- recording informal complaints from customers and producing six-monthly reports for the Welsh Language Working Group
- reporting on developments to the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group and the Welsh Language Working Group
- facilitating staff committees, e.g. the Welsh Language Working Group (the Working Group)
- maintaining a presence on the Language Forum
- working with Welsh language organisations in the community as appropriate

## **STANDARDS FOR PRODUCING POLICIES**

These Standards make it a requirement for bodies to consider the effect of their policy decisions on people's ability to use the language and on the principle of not treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

### **HOW WE INTEND TO COMPLY**

The Council's commitments under the Welsh Language Standards are an integral part of its planning documentation, including the 2015 Improvement Plan, the Council's Strategic Equality Plan, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020 and the 2016-2020 Corporate Plan. The Council's priorities are also guided by recent legislation, which includes the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Care and Wellbeing Act 2016, which places a duty on the Council to strengthen the Welsh language.

A human resources working group has been established in order to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Human resources policies are being reviewed in order to mainstream Welsh language issues, and are also being translated.

The Council's Senior Leadership Team has insisted that all services undertake a Self-Assessment which includes a section on how they have successfully complied with the relevant standards.

RCTCBC has an Equality Impact Assessment template, which asks specific questions about any negative or positive impacts that policy decisions will have on the Welsh language.

All of the grants operated by the Council have individual criteria, terms and conditions. Where the Council is responsible for these, the appropriate services will update them in order to reflect the requirements of the standards.

Whenever the Council holds a consultation or conducts research relating to policy decisions, the Council will consider the potential impact on:

- people's ability to use Welsh and whether or not Welsh and English are being treated as equals;
- increasing impacts on people's opportunities to speak Welsh; and
- introducing the policy in such a way that it has no negative impact (or has a less negative impact) on people's opportunities to use Welsh.

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## **OPERATIONAL STANDARDS**

These Standards deal with the use of the Welsh language within organisations for example, ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language with regards to employment, welfare and training matters and ensuring that all members of staff have the opportunity to learn Welsh.

### **HOW WE INTEND TO COMPLY**

#### **99 New Posts**

Contracts are currently offered to new employees in Welsh or English, depending on their language choice.

#### **100**

Human Resources will send a letter out to all members of staff asking about their language choice.

#### **101-103 Training, Performance and Career Planning Documents**

Corporate documents relating to training, performance or career planning needs are prepared bilingually.

#### **104**

The corporate documents recording annual leave, absences from work or flexible working hours are produced bilingually.

#### **105-111 HR Policies**

The policies noted in standards 105-111 are available bilingually.

#### **112 -119 Complaints and Discipline**

Policies dealing with staff complaints or the disciplinary process have been updated in order to inform staff and managers of the rights of staff who wish to receive information/follow processes in Welsh.

#### **120 Software**

Cysgliad is available for all members of staff who have a computer. Staff are made aware that this is available through staff guidance documents and training. Staff can request a copy of this through the ICT Service Desk.

#### **122-126 The Intranet**

RCTCBC's ICT and Welsh Language Services will be working together to ensure that the Council fulfils its duty to create a bilingual intranet for staff within the compliance dates that have been specified.

#### **127 Assessing language skills**

An audit letter is sent to all members of staff in order to record their Welsh language skills.

#### **128-132 Training**

Booking forms for courses specified in the standards will ask staff whether or not they wish to receive training in Welsh (128).

Potential opportunities to work with other Local Authorities in South-East Wales to arrange Welsh medium training are being explored.

The Council has invested in a Welsh Language Tutor who supports and tutors staff to use their Welsh language skills when communicating with the public. This is done through Confidence

Building courses.

The Tutor also organises free courses for all RCTCBC staff (frontline staff are prioritised) at times and locations that are suitable and convenient for them. These courses vary from ones for complete beginners to fluent speakers.

The Language Awareness course is available online on our electronic training website.

The course aims to help staff:

- Understand the importance of the Welsh language in terms of providing Council services in Wales.
- Understand staff roles and responsibilities when providing Welsh language and bilingual services.
- Assess how they are currently providing Welsh language services and identify areas for improvement.
- Understand and use simple Welsh words and sentences which could be useful when dealing with Welsh speaking service users.

### **133 New Staff**

The Corporate Induction presentation includes a section on the Welsh language and all new members of staff attend Level 1 Welsh language skills training.

### **134 & 135 E-mail signatures and logos**

Staff guidance, which is also available on our intranet, explains how to access these logos and translations in order to meet these standards.

### **136 Linguistic assessment requirements for all empty posts**

A change in the Council's recruitment/appointment policy means that all new posts will require Level 1 Welsh Language Skills as an essential criterion. A further electronic assessment will require managers to consider higher levels of proficiency.

All new members of staff will be assessed by our Welsh Language Tutor in terms of their Welsh language level, and appropriate training will be provided if required. This training will be free.

### **137 – 139 Application Forms**

All Council recruitment information is available online bilingually and application forms will be updated to meet these new requirements.

Electronic and automatic letters that invite candidates for an interview also state the following - *Rhowch wybod i ni os dymunwch ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfweiliad. Byddwn ni'n darparu gwasanaeth cyfieithu at y diben hwnnw os oes angen.*

*Please let us know if you would like the interview to be undertaken in Welsh. If necessary, we will provide a translation service for that purpose.*

### **140**

Letters informing individuals of a decision relating to an application for a post are available in Welsh and English and are sent in accordance with the individual's language choice.

### **141 - 143 Signs displayed at the organisation's workplace**

A new guidance note has been published on signs and notices in order to ensure that staff are aware of these requirements.

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