

Strategaeth
Hybu'r Gymraeg

Welsh Language
Promotion Strategy

Rhondda Cynon T



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

• Introduction

Developing a 5-year strategy to promote the Welsh language is a statutory requirement relating to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure passed by the National Assembly for Wales in 2011.

The Measure includes:

- giving the Welsh Language official status in Wales meaning that Welsh should be treated no less favourably than the English language;
- establishing the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner who has responsibility for promoting the Welsh language and improving the opportunities people have to use it;
- creating a procedure for introducing duties in the form of language standards that explain how organizations are expected to use the Welsh language and create rights for Welsh speakers;
- making provision regarding promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language and increasing its use in everyday life;
- making provision regarding investigating an interference with the freedom to use the Welsh language.

The Measure gives the Welsh Language Commissioner authority to impose duties on a wide range of organisations to provide services in Welsh, to mainstream the language into policy development, and to develop strategies with regard to increasing the use of Welsh at work.

Along with all other local authorities in Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council received its Statutory Compliance Notice under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 on 30 September 2015. The Compliance Notice is a document that has been issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner outlining

the 171 specific Standards RCT Council will need to comply with in respect of the delivery of Welsh language services.

The combined effect of the Compliance Notice and Standards is that greater compliance will be required by the Council with regards to the delivery of services through the medium of Welsh - whether it is paper based, internet, social media and interactive mediums, or face-to-face/telephone conversations. Failure to comply will leave the Council at considerable risk of incurring civil penalties which can include fines of up to £5,000 per breach.

The Welsh Language Standards are the new framework for extending the use of Welsh and replace the previous Welsh Language Schemes. The duties which come from the Standards apply to the following operational areas:

- Delivering Welsh-medium services
- Policy making that promotes the Welsh language
- Operating through the medium of Welsh
- Keeping records about the Welsh language, and finally
- Promoting the Welsh language.

Standard 145 (Promotion) states that every local authority must produce, and publish on their website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how they propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in their area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters):

- a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in the area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area by the end of the 5 year period concerned;
- a statement setting out how they intend to reach that target; and
- conduct a review of the strategy and publish a revised version on their website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).

The Welsh language promotion standards impose duties on local authorities across Wales to promote the use of Welsh more widely and to support and encourage its use within the communities they serve.

- **Background**

Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council covers an area of the South Wales Valleys stretching from the Brecon Beacons in the north, to the outskirts of Cardiff in the south. It comprises a mixture of urban, semi-suburban and rural communities, situated in mountains and lowland farmland.

Rhondda Cynon Taf is the third largest local authority in Wales, formed in 1996 from the former boroughs of Rhondda, Cynon Valley and Taff Ely (part). The County Borough covers an area of 424 square kilometres with a population of 234,400 (2011). The area has 75 electoral wards, of which 22 are Communities First Areas.

Between 2001 and 2011, the population grew slightly by 1.06%, compared to an increase of 5.5% across Wales. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of children aged 5-14 years old decreased by an average of 14%, with the number of people aged 65 years old and above increasing by nearly 7% in the same period. This is a trend that looks set to continue, with the number of people aged 85 years old and over predicted to double by 2033. Overall, RCT is the third most deprived local authority in Wales, as measured by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2011) and has the lowest healthy life expectancy in Wales.

According to the Office of National Statistics, 73% of residents in Rhondda Cynon Taf are economically active compared with a Welsh average of 75%, however the central and northern valleys have above average levels of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Wales. The employment structure of Rhondda Cynon Taf is dominated by three sectors, namely 'public administration', 'manufacturing' and

'distribution, hotels and restaurants'. Together, these three account for 74% of all available jobs in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The key social trends show that 27% of residents in Rhondda Cynon Taf suffer with a limiting long-term illness compared with a Welsh average of just 23%. In addition, 41% of residents in Rhondda Cynon Taf have no academic qualifications compared with a Welsh average of 33%.

According to the 2011 census figures, 27,779 Welsh speakers live in Rhondda Cynon Taf which represents 12.3% of the total population. A more detailed language profile of the county borough is provided in Section 4 below.

• **Policy Context**

Although the Welsh Language Standards are a fairly recent development, local authorities and other public bodies have been required to produce Welsh Language Schemes since the passing of the Welsh Language Act in 1993 which stipulated that the Welsh language and English language should be treated on the basis that they are equal.

Since the establishment of the Welsh Assembly there has been a raft of policies and strategies aimed at increasing the numbers able to speak Welsh and promoting its use in everyday life. For example, in 2003 the Welsh Assembly Government published a national plan to create a bilingual Wales entitled *Iaith Pawb*. In the introduction to the plan, the First Minister at the time, Rhodri Morgan said – *'[the] Welsh Assembly Government believes that the Welsh language is an integral part of our national identity. The Welsh language is an essential and enduring component in the history, culture and social fabric of our nation. We must respect that inheritance and work to ensure that it is not lost for future generations.'* The introduction went on to say that *'[the] Assembly Government is committed to taking the lead in working to support and promote the Welsh language[and] will do all we can to create the right conditions in which the Welsh language can grow and flourish in all aspects of Welsh life.'*

This was the first time in the nation's long history that a government has committed to the principle of creating a truly bilingual Wales. The vision presented in *Iaith Pawb* is a country - *'where people can choose to live their lives through the medium of either or both Welsh or English and where the presence of the two languages is a source of pride and strength to us all.'*

One of the key policy documents underpinning this vision was the Welsh Government's *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* launched in 2010. Leighton Andrews, the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning at the time wanted to create an education and training system - *'that responds to the growing demand for Welsh-medium education and increase the numbers of learners able to reach fluency and use the language in their communities, families and the workplace.'* The strategy clearly states that – *'Welsh-medium education from the early years, with robust linguistic progression through every phase of education, offers the best conditions for developing future bilingual citizens. Developing language skills is a process that happens over a period of time.'*

In order to develop Welsh-medium education, all local authorities have been required to create a framework through Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) which describe how they will contribute to the outcomes and targets set out in the Welsh Government's overarching *Welsh Medium Education Strategy*. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 aimed to build upon the previous non-statutory WESPs by placing them on a statutory footing. The Act placed a duty upon local authorities to consult on, produce and publish a five-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to be submitted for approval by Welsh Ministers.

In April 2012, the Welsh government published a Welsh Language Strategy called - *'A living language: a language for living 2012-2017'*. The strategy reflects the government's vision for increasing the number of people who both speak and use the language. It builds on the vision outlined in *'Iaith Pawb - A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales'* that was published in 2003.

The document underlines the importance of a strong Welsh-medium education system as a long term basis for promoting the use of Welsh across a variety of social

domains. By the same token, it also notes that the education system alone is not enough to produce Welsh speakers who see value in using the language in their daily lives at home, socially or professionally.

There are two core elements to the strategy, which is first to encourage children and people of all ages to acquire the language, such as encouraging language transmission in the home, ensuring further growth in Welsh-medium education and Welsh for Adults, and secondly, to create opportunities for people to use the language on a daily basis, either socially, at work, when receiving services or when enjoying entertainment and recreation.

The strategy has six aims:

- to encourage and support the use of the Welsh language within families;
- to increase the provision of Welsh-medium activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language;
- to strengthen the position of the Welsh language in the community;
- to increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace;
- to improve Welsh language services to citizens;
- to strengthen the infrastructure for the language, including digital technology.

In 2014 the Welsh Government published a policy statement building on the foundations of the original strategy called – ‘*A living language: a language for living – Moving Forward*’ which sets out the government’s policy objectives for the Welsh language up to 2017. These amendments were informed by a number of developments since the initial launch which included the publication of the 2011 census results and a series of high-level policy discussions and reviews.

In light of this, the government has identified four themes to focus on for the next three years:

- The need to strengthen the links between the economy and the Welsh language that recognises the synergy between nurturing economic growth, jobs, wealth-creation, and the well-being of the Welsh language;

- The need for better strategic planning for the Welsh language by Welsh Government, local authorities and other public bodies;
- The need to encourage more use of Welsh in the community with a particular focus on increasing the number of people who learn Welsh through the education and training system and turning these learners into speakers;
- The challenge of changing linguistic behaviour by being more positive and less negative about the way we talk and feel about the language.

The Strategic Framework *Mwy na Geiriau/More than Words* was drawn up by the Welsh Government in 2012 with the aim of strengthening Welsh language services in health, social services and social care. The framework provides a systematic approach to improving services for those who need or choose to receive their care in Welsh. It recognises that for many Welsh speakers being able to use your own language needs to be seen as a core component of care, not an optional extra. Many service users are very vulnerable, so placing a responsibility on them to ask for services through the medium of Welsh is unfair. Central to the strategy is the challenge of developing the 'Active Offer', namely that staff members offer Welsh language services to patients, rather than wait for patients to request them.

The strategy was updated in 2016 with '*More than just words.... follow-on strategic framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care 2016-2019*'. The ultimate aim of the follow-on strategic framework is to ensure that NHS Wales, social services and social care will have mainstreamed the Welsh language into virtually all aspects of their day-to-day business. This will involve recognition that many vulnerable people, such as older people who suffer from dementia or stroke also lose their second language and many toddlers only speak Welsh. It also highlights the fact that care and language go hand in hand and the quality of care can be compromised by the failure to communicate with people in their first language.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was published by the Welsh government to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being

of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach to sustainability. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals, including – *‘a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.’*

The Act establishes a statutory Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and also establishes Public Services Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales. Each PSB must improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by working to achieve the well-being goals.

Finally, a draft of a new strategy following on from the current strategy – *‘A living language: a language for living 2012-2017’* was launched at the National Eisteddfod in Abergavenny this year with the aim of creating a million Welsh speakers by 2051. In the Foreword to the draft strategy Alun Davies AM, the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language states clearly that – *‘Our ambition as a Government is to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. There is no doubt that this is a challenge, but I believe that we need to set such an ambition if we are to make a real difference where the Welsh language is concerned.....For us to achieve that, we believe that several things need to happen: more children in Welsh-medium education, better planning in relation to how people learn the language, more easy-to-access opportunities for people to use the language, a stronger infrastructure and a revolution to improve digital provision in Welsh, and a sea change in the way we speak about it.’*

The strategy contains six development areas:

- Planning and Language Policy
- Normalising the use of Welsh
- Education
- People
- Support
- Rights

Welsh Government have invited responses to the consultation document by 31st October.

- **Welsh Language Profile: Rhondda Cynon Taf**

The 2011 census results showed a decline in the number of Welsh speakers in Wales since 2001, which was also reflected in Rhondda Cynon Taf, as the table below shows:

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Welsh Speakers in 2001 and 2011

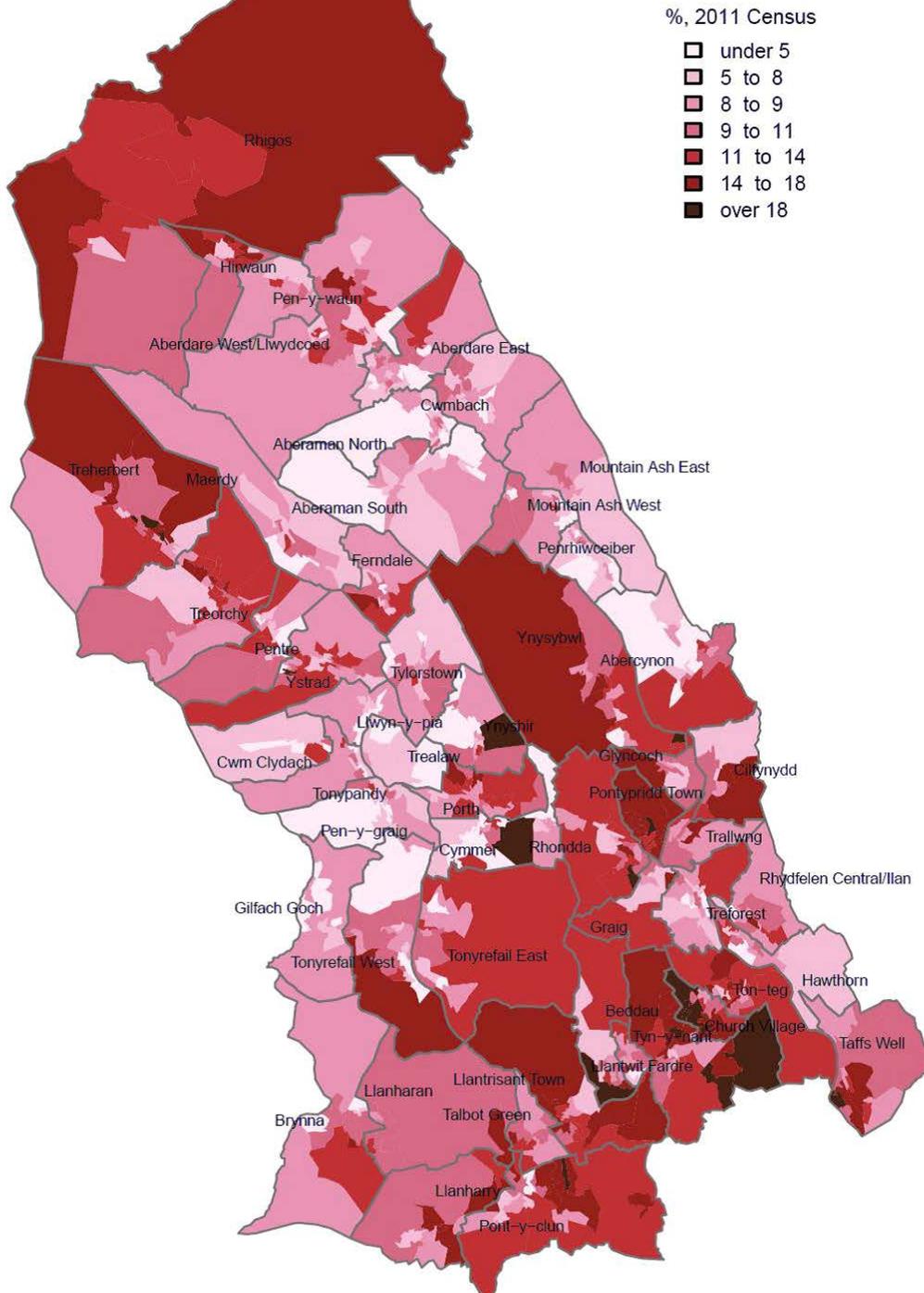
	Number of Welsh Speakers		Percentage of Welsh Speakers	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Rhondda Cynon Taf	27,946	27,779	12.5	12.3
Wales	582,368	562,016	20.8	19.0

The figures show that there were 167 fewer Welsh speakers in the County Borough in 2011 than in 2001; the proportion of Welsh speakers had also decreased by 0.2%. Although the data shows a downward trend, it is slender enough to suggest that the situation overall is quite stable. Although the decline is not as severe as in other parts of Wales, it needs to be urgently addressed to avoid a further weakening of the language base.

Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf recently commissioned a Welsh Language Profile of the area in order for it to plan strategically for language growth and operate as an influential partner in the regeneration process. The language profile includes useful maps and tables showing the geographical distribution of Welsh speakers, their age profiles and patterns of language use. The map below, taken from the language profile, shows where those who are able to speak, read and write Welsh live, with the darker shaded areas showing where the highest proportion of Welsh speakers can be found:

Rhondda Cynon Taf

Table: Welsh language skills
KS207WA0014 (Can speak, read and write Welsh)



The maps show percentages within Census 2011 output areas, within electoral divisions

Map created by Hywel Jones. Variables KS208WA0022-27 corrected

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The map above indicates that the geographical spread of those able to speak, read and write Welsh is fairly even, however it is noticeable that the main areas of language density tend to be in the south and north of the County Borough.

The table below shows in more detail the overall population by Community in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the percentage and numbers of Welsh speakers based on the 2011 Census. The communities are presented in descending order starting with those with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers:

Table 2: Numbers and Percentage of Welsh Speakers by Community

Community	Population over 3 years	Number of Welsh speakers	% of Welsh speakers
Llantwit Fardre	14,587	2,501	17.1
Hirwaun	4,799	788	16.4
Pontyclun	7,730	1,232	15.9
Treherbert	5,503	857	15.6
Rhigos	869	135	15.5
Ynys-y-bwl & Coed-y-cwm	4,484	676	15.1
Taffs Well	3,522	528	15.0
Treorchy	7,465	1,085	14.5
Llwydcoed	1,271	183	14.4
Llantrisant	14,731	2,068	14.0
Llanharry	3,460	482	13.9
Porth	5,764	769	13.3
Llanharan	6,969	909	13.0
Pontypridd	31,538	3,978	12.6
Ystrad	5,652	692	12.2
Pentre	5,035	610	12.1
Ferndale	4,034	478	11.8
Aberdare	14,054	1,625	11.6
Ynys-hir	3,185	361	11.3
Tonyrefail	11,852	1,286	10.9
Cwm-bach	4,229	448	10.6
Pen-y-waun	2,913	305	10.5
Mountain Ash	7,114	740	10.4
Tylorstown	4,368	443	10.1

Tonypandy	3,609	353	9.8
Maerdy	3,046	296	9.7
Pen-y-graig	5,330	497	9.3
Aberaman	9,411	870	9.2
Cymer	4,605	423	9.2
Llwynypia	2,178	198	9.1
Trehafod	678	62	9.1
Abercynon	6,125	552	9.0
Cwm Clydach	2,695	238	8.8
Penrhiwceiber	5,564	491	8.8
Trealaw	3,871	334	8.6
Gilfach-goch	3,315	286	8.6

In contrast to the table above that identified communities with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers, the table below shows some of the communities with the highest number of Welsh speakers according to the 2011 census and the percentage change since 2001:

Table 3: Communities with the Highest Number of Welsh Speakers

Community	Number of Welsh speakers	Percentage of Welsh speakers	% change since 2001
Pontypridd	3,978	12.6	-0.2
Llantwit Fardre	2,501	17.1	+2.6
Llantrisant	2,068	14.0	-0.2
Aberdare	1,625	11.6	-2.4
Pontyclun	1,232	15.9	+1.1

It is clear that these communities along with Tonyrefail and Treorchy, which also have over 1,000 Welsh speakers, have a strategically important role to play as key language hubs in the future.

Table 4: Comparison in numbers/percentages across age ranges – between 2001 a 2011

Age Group				
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All (over 3)	12.5	12.3	27,946	27,779
3-4 years	16.7	20.3	982	1,137
5-9 years	27.4	30.7	4,104	4,028
10-14 years	34.2	34.2	5,606	4,750
15-19 years	27.1	26.5	4,081	3,942
20-24 years	14.3	15.7	2,060	2,541
25-29 years	10.6	14.6	1,514	2,158
30-34 years	7.9	12.5	1,302	1,769
35-39 years	6.6	9.7	1,124	1,413
40-44 years	5.9	6.8	913	1,143
45-49 years	5.8	5.6	834	934
50-54 years	5.4	4.8	880	732
55-59 years	5.3	4.6	723	636
60-64 years	5.0	4.3	586	665
65-69 years	5.3	4.5	560	544
70-74 years	6.3	3.7	592	363
75-79 years	8.9	4.0	747	309
80+ years	14.4	6.9	1,338	715

The above data shows that the age profile of Welsh speakers in Rhondda Cynon Taf varies considerably. Not surprisingly perhaps, the highest percentages are found amongst the younger age groups which underlines the influence of the education system, in particular the growth of Welsh-medium schools in recent years. However, these figures need to be accompanied by a health warning as the proportion denoted as Welsh speakers in 2011 in the 5-9 years age group (30.7%) is much higher than those of the same age group in Welsh-medium education (20%), which is a far more realistic measure of language ability. The inflated figure probably reflects the linguistic assessment of parents whose children study Welsh as a second language and may be over optimistic in terms of their overall language skills.

It is heartening however to note that about a third of 10-14 year olds are recorded as Welsh speakers. However, it is a matter of concern that the bilingual skills acquired at school are not maintained to the same degree in young adulthood. The figures show for example that 34.2% of children in the 10-14 age group in 2001 were fluent Welsh speakers, but only 15.7% of the same cohort, ten years later in 2011 admitted to having Welsh language skills. This again in part reflects the possible over-

optimistic assessment of language skills by parents but it also demonstrates how quickly language skills can become eroded if not actively maintained.

The graph below highlights this clearly by showing that the pattern of language decline amongst the post-16 age groups is fairly consistent according to the most recent decennial census results. The peaks at the age of 10-14 can clearly be seen in 2001 and 2011, followed by a dramatic decline in language use in subsequent age groups until a small surge becomes evident again amongst elderly speakers, although this is not as apparent in 2011 as it was a decade earlier. Unfortunately, this recurring pattern of language decline has been in existence for too long and needs to be addressed by language planners as a matter of priority so that the investment in Welsh-medium education yields better long term results in terms of community usage.

Graph 1: Percentage able to speak Welsh according to age groups based on 2001 and 2011 census figures

The graph above is stark evidence of a worrying, cyclical trend of lost opportunities. Clearly, hundreds of young people who had bilingual skills a few years ago have allowed those skills to become eroded to a point where they are no longer actively functional. This inevitably leads to a lack of confidence in using those skills and a perception by users that they have no further value or merit. This is unquestionably deeply disappointing for those involved in language promotion; on the other hand trying to re-engage these young adults with Welsh so that they could somehow regain their language proficiency would be a worthwhile and rewarding challenge. In one sense, this would be a far simpler process than teaching someone to speak Welsh from scratch. By targeting these lapsed speakers, the potential for increasing the number of Welsh speakers and encouraging greater use of the language in the community and workplace is enormous. This targeted approach will be looked at in greater detail later on.

In addition to the education system, the most effective way of acquiring Welsh is by introducing the language as a mother tongue at home. Unfortunately the analysis commissioned by Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf shows that language transmission in the home is lower in the local authority area than across Wales and lower than the regional average. On a national level, in households where both parents speak Welsh, 82% of children aged 3-4 years also speak the language. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, where both parents can speak Welsh, only 67% of children aged 3-4 years speak Welsh. In 2001 the comparable transmission rates were 76%. In households where only one parent can speak Welsh, the transmission rates recorded in Rhondda Cynon Taf in the 2011 Census are 46% which is a slight decrease from the 2001 figure of 47%.

This considerable decline in mother tongue transmission has a significant effect on language sustainability and undermines the process of re-establishing Welsh as the language of the home, which is probably the most influential domain of language reproduction. After about three generations of Welsh-medium education, encouraging greater use of Welsh as a home language is proving to be a stubborn nut to crack. According to Professor Joshua Fishman, who, until his recent death was one of the world's greatest authorities on language planning, the family is the most common and inescapable basis of mother tongue transmission and language acquisition. He stressed that - *'The road to societal death is paved by language activity that is not focused on intergenerational continuity i.e. that is diverted into efforts that do not involve and influence the socialization behaviours of families of child-bearing age'*. Identifying ways to promote greater levels of language use at home will be one of the key priorities of this strategy and will be dealt with in later chapters.

Graph 2: Language Transmission in the home

Table 5: Language Transmission to children in the home

Rhondda, Cynon, Taff: % of children aged 3 to 4 who can speak Welsh



	Couple household: Two or more adults can speak Welsh	Lone parent household: One adult can speak Welsh	Couple household: One adult can speak Welsh	Households w/o an adult who can speak Welsh	All households
2001	71	59	47	11	17
2011	67	48	46	14	20

[Source: Welsh Language Commissioner/Statiath]

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Another way of acquiring Welsh is by learning the language as an adult. The Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre based at the University of South Wales, Pontypridd provides courses during the day and in the evening in various locations across Rhondda Cynon Taf. As well as the once weekly courses (2 hours or 3 hours), the centre also provides intensive courses (9 hours and 4 hours a week), day schools, taster sessions and summer courses for adults at different levels of proficiency. They also provide Welsh in the Workplace courses for a range of different employers in the area.

Although the Census is the key source of information for the number of people who are able to speak Welsh, other sources also offer useful data. One important source of information is the Welsh Language Use Survey which was commissioned by the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner. The survey was conducted over a period of two years between 2013 and 2015. The previous Welsh Language Use Survey was carried out by the Welsh Language Board between 2004-06.

The most recent survey shows that the number of fluent Welsh speakers has decreased in over half the local authority areas (12 out of 22 areas) between 2004-06 and 2013-15, mainly in the traditional Welsh-speaking areas of north and west Wales. However, there was an increase in the number of fluent Welsh speakers in several local authority areas in south-east Wales, with the biggest increase in Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The number denoted as being fluent in Rhondda Cynon Taf has increased from 11,200 to 16,600 between 2004-06 and 2013-15, which is an increase of 5,300. The number of Welsh speakers who were not fluent also went up from 12,500 to 21,300 – an increase of 8,700. As well as the rise in the number of people who say that they can speak Welsh in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Language

Use Survey also shows that the percentage of people in the area who speak Welsh every day has increased from 35% to 43%.

• **Key Language Planning Areas**

In order to maintain and increase the number of Welsh speakers over the next five years the Borough Council and its partners need to prioritise some key policy areas for action, which include:

- Expanding Welsh-medium education from pre-school to post-16
- Improve language transmission in the home
- Increase the number of adults learning Welsh
- Extend opportunities for children, young people and families to use Welsh in the community and in leisure activities
- Expand the use of Welsh in the workplace

Welsh-medium Education

Early Years Provision

Mudiad Meithrin is the main provider of Welsh-medium early years education in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Currently they provide 13 Cylchoedd Ti a Fi (parent and toddler groups) and 25 Cylchoedd Meithrin (nursery groups) in the county borough; many run in conjunction with Flying Start.

Cylchoedd Ti a Fi are provided in the following locations:

Aberdare

Beddau

Efail Isaf

Church Village/Tonteg

Rhydyfelin

Taff's Well

Ynysybwl
Bronllwyn
Llanharri
Nant Dyrys (Ynyswen)
Porth
Thomastown
Treorchy

Cylchoedd Meithrin are available in the following locations:

Aberdare
Beddau
Cilfynydd
Den y Gryffalo (Glyncoch)
Efail Isaf
Evan James (Pontypridd)
Llanilltud Faerdref
Penderyn
Church Village
Rhydyfelin
Seren Fach (Mountain Ash)
Sêr Sardis (Pontypridd)
Taff's Well
Ynysybwl
Bronllwyn
Llanharri
Nant Dyrys (Ynyswen)
Pontyclun
Porth
Thomastown
Treorchy
Ynyshir + Wattstown

Mudiad Meithrin is hoping to open cylchoedd Ti a Fi in Gilfach Goch and Penygraig in the near future.

Primary Provision

Rhondda Cynon Taf at the moment has 13 Welsh-medium primary schools and 3 dual language primary schools:

Table 5: Welsh-medium primary schools, number of pupils (2015) and capacity (not including nursery places)

School	Pupil Numbers (2015)	Capacity	No. in nursery
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon	299	355	41
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar	370	378	55
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bodringallt	142	171	21
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bronllwyn	212	242	35
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castellau	206	265	36
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James	295	392	48
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg	294	315	45
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llantrisant	330	334	39
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn	271	272	42
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn	168	198	38
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton	222	301	43
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail	216	273	31
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen	232	326	49
Ysgol Llanhari (Primary)*	30	201	36

In September 2012, Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari was re-designated as a Middle School, and is now able to admit pupils aged between 3 and 19 years. The Primary department of Ysgol Llanhari has the capacity to admit 240 pupils aged between 3

and 11 years and this provision can be expanded in future years if the demand for places increases.

It appears from the data noted above that there is sufficient capacity in most RCT primary schools to cater for any increased demand for Welsh-medium education in the future.

Table 6: Dual-language primary schools, number of pupils (2015) and capacity

School	Pupil Numbers (2015)	Capacity	No. in Nursery
Ysgol Dolau	177	442	20
Ysgol Heol y Celyn	111	414	22
Ysgol Penderyn	150	231	26

Based on 2015 data, there were approximately 3,725 pupils receiving Welsh-medium education in the primary sector (including nursery places) which equates to about 20% of the total cohort. This is an increase of 144 pupils since 2010.

According to the latest Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) report, the percentage of seven-year-old children taught through the medium of Welsh has remained fairly stable over the past five years. The percentage figure for 2015 was 19.5% compared to 20% in 2011.

In terms of the future development of Welsh-medium education, there are proposals in the Council's 21st Century Schools Programme to increase Welsh-medium provision in areas of the county where pressure on places currently exists. These include the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Tonyrefail to the current Tonyrefail Primary School site, which will increase capacity by at least 60 places and Ysgol Gymraeg Llwynceilyn extending to the adjacent Llwynceilyn Infants site, which will increase capacity at that school by at least 100 places. The new development at Ysgol Llanhari has also added sufficient Welsh-medium primary education capacity to meet current, and future forecasted demand in the south-west of the County Borough where plans are under way to support large-scale housing developments in the area.

Should there be an increased demand for Welsh-medium education in future years in other parts of the county, the local authority has appropriate plans in place to respond positively to ensure there are sufficient numbers of places available.

Secondary Provision

Rhondda Cynon Taf has 3 Welsh-medium comprehensive schools and a Welsh - medium Middle School:

Table 7: Welsh-medium comprehensive schools, number of pupils (2015) and capacity

School	Pupil Numbers (2015)	Capacity	6 th form
Ysgol Garth Olwg	818	1,114	134
Ysgol Rhydywaun	986	1,022	222
Ysgol Cymer Rhondda	773	1,025	164
Ysgol Llanhari (secondary)	412	951	69

In January 2012, 3,258 pupils received secondary education through the medium of Welsh, or 19% of the total secondary school population. In January 2015, the total had fallen slightly to 2,944 which represented 18.4% of the total secondary school population.

Transition rates between Key Stage 2 and 3 have been consistently high over recent years with more learners seeking to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school. The transfer rate in 2015 was 97.3%. In 2015, at the end of KS3, 19.2% of the Year 9 cohort in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council was assessed in Welsh First Language compared to 17% in 2011.

20% of the whole Year 11 cohort studied 5 or more qualifications through the medium of Welsh in 2011 but this figure had fallen to 17% in 2015, with new

developments at Bridgend College and Ysgol Llangynwyd attracting pupils to study outside of the county mainly from Ysgol Llanhari that has seen a decline in 14-19 age pupils from 510 in January 2011 to 176 in January 2015.

Whilst there is sufficient capacity at the moment in both Ysgol Cymer Rhondda and Ysgol Llanhari to accommodate an increase in numbers, pupil projections up to 2020 suggest that Ysgol Rhydywaun by then will be over capacity. The authority is already looking at proposals to expand the number of pupil places at the school.

Further Education

Coleg y Cymoedd informs all Welsh speaking students at induction that they may submit written work through the medium of Welsh subject to awarding body guidelines. Students are also encouraged to maintain and develop their speaking skills through attending informal activities at the College. They are also made aware of bilingual support available.

In 2014-15, 306 students followed Welsh-medium/bilingual modules across all campuses of Coleg y Cymoedd. In 2014-15, 10 new bilingual modules and 4 new Welsh-medium modules were made available to learners at Coleg y Cymoedd in Childcare and Education, Customer Care (Catering) and Customer Care (Health and Social Care).

The College has plans to increase its Welsh-medium provision over the coming years by introducing 'Iaith ar Waith' units in Customer Care in the following subjects – Tourism, Business, Creative Arts, Engineering and Construction.

Language Transmission in the Home

As noted above, where both parents can speak Welsh in Rhondda Cynon Taf, only 67% of children aged 3-4 years speak the language. In 2001 the comparable

transmission rates were 76%, which is a marked decline over a period of 10 years. This is lower than the all-Wales average of 82%. In households where only one parent can speak Welsh, the transmission rates recorded in Rhondda Cynon Taf in the 2011 Census are 46% which is a slight decrease from the 2001 figure of 47%.

The main scheme in Wales concerned with increasing the number of bilingual families who transmit the Welsh language to their children was the TWF project which was established in 2001 by the Welsh Language Board, but was disbanded by the Welsh Government earlier this year to be replaced by a scheme called 'Cymraeg i Blant'. The main focus of the TWF project was to highlight the value of the Welsh language and bilingualism to parents, prospective parents and the general population; and to encourage families to raise their children to be bilingual.

Although it was never operational in Rhondda Cynon Taf, an evaluation of the project showed that within the home, a number of factors influence language transmission, including high levels of parental Welsh language fluency and confidence in using Welsh, together with positive attitudes towards bilingualism. A strong sense of Welsh identity had a similar affirmative influence. Family and friends and childcare provision were also shown to affect the language patterns of families with small children.

As a matter of interest to the Rhondda Cynon Taf area, the language profile of a community and the status afforded to the Welsh language were both shown to be critical indicators of language transmission in the home. Where Welsh is perceived to have a strong presence in a community or a desirable language for social networks or activities, parents are more likely to express intentions to transmit Welsh to their children.

Since April this year, the TWF project has been replaced by the 'Cymraeg i Blant' scheme. Its aims are broadly similar with the main focus being on persuading parents to speak Welsh to their children or at least send their children to *cylchoedd meithrin* and then Welsh-medium schools. The main activities include setting up baby yoga and baby massage groups and 'stori a chân' (story and song) sessions. The aim is to provide opportunities for parents and families to learn about caring

techniques and parenting skills and to share information with them about the advantages of bilingualism and the benefits of Welsh-medium education.

'Cymraeg i Blant' sessions are currently held in the following locations and are supported by a full-time project officer working for the scheme in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

Aberdare

Pontypridd

Treorchy

Pontyclun

Porth

Gartholwg

Welsh for Adults

Following a major review of Welsh for Adults by ELWa in 2005, six Welsh for Adults Centres were established in order to bring together the broad range of Welsh language provision that existed at the time of the review with the intention of increasing numbers learning Welsh and raising standards. Prior to this structural change, Welsh for Adults courses had been an integral part of adult education provision offered by a range of providers, including local education authorities, further and higher education institutions and community and voluntary organisations.

The six Welsh for Adults centres which were established in 2006 were responsible for planning and delivery within their regions. A further review of Welsh for Adults by Welsh Government led to the publication of a report in July 2003 entitled [Raising our Sights: Review of Welsh for Adults](#). Some of the key recommendations of the report included the establishment of a National Centre for Learning Welsh, disbanding the Welsh for Adults Centres and reducing the number of providers through a competitive tendering process. The National Centre for Learning Welsh came into being in April 2016 and is responsible for all aspects of the Welsh for Adults education programme, from curriculum development and resources for tutors to research, marketing and e-learning.

Following the recent restructuring of providers, the Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre, which is based at the University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd has been awarded the contract to continue with the delivery of courses in the Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil area. These include intensive, residential and weekly courses aimed at the general public and more targeted learners like – parents/families and those wishing to learn Welsh in the workplace. The type of provision also varies from the traditional classroom delivery to e-learning and blended learning, which combines face to face classes with e-learning methods, and also informal learning which are non-structured activities in which learners take part outside the class, either alone or with a group.

According to figures received by the Welsh for Adults Centre, 696 learners attended the Centre's courses across Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2015/16 with 51% on starter courses. However, 49% were on intermediate courses or higher, and therefore have the potential to develop into confident Welsh speakers who can contribute to the development of the language in the community.

The target for 2016-17 is to increase the overall numbers attending Welsh for Adults courses to over 900.

Children, Young People and Families

Census results show that Rhondda Cynon Taf has seen a considerable increase in the number of children and young people able to speak Welsh over the last thirty years. Although these figures are very welcome, they need to be treated with some caution, as it appears that about half of these are second language learners who are unlikely to retain their language skills into young adulthood.

In addition to second language learners, the challenge of maintaining language skills to young adulthood is also true for those who have received Welsh-medium education and have left school with a good level of fluency. The reality is that for many Welsh-speaking children from homes without Welsh-speaking parents/carers, school provides them with one of the few opportunities to use the language. As a result, evidence shows that a lack of opportunities to use the language leads to a

lack of confidence and erosion of language skills. It is obvious therefore that the school setting alone is not enough; the child or young person needs to be supported at home (if possible) and encouraged to participate in wider social and cultural activities through the medium of Welsh to retain fluency in the language. There is also evidence that suggests that the language of interaction with friends is closely linked to the language the child or young person speaks, and that this also influences their attitudes towards either or both languages.

It has long been acknowledged by the Welsh Language Board during its existence and lately Welsh Government that we need to provide children and young people with a wide range of opportunities to use their Welsh outside school, so that they associate the language not only with education, but also with leisure and cultural activities and, above all, with fun and entertainment. It is hoped that by increasing the provision of Welsh-medium activities it increases the use of the language in the community and instils a sense of enthusiasm amongst children and young people and a positive attitude towards the language.

A great deal of work has already been done in the local authority area to provide children and young people with opportunities to enjoy activities through the medium of Welsh. This has been achieved by a number of organisations, some of which, like the Urdd and Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf are entirely focused on increasing the use of Welsh in the community and during out of school hours. The activities and proposals set out in this Promotions Strategy seek to build on this foundation and take advantage of the growing number of opportunities to use social media and communication technology to share information and knowledge and create vibrant networks of language users.

Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf already provide after-school care clubs in conjunction with the Welsh-medium primary schools and holiday play schemes during school holidays. They are also responsible for organising Language Forums in all the Welsh-medium secondary schools which provides young people with opportunities to discuss issues that affect them, to plan activities to promote the Welsh language and to receive information about possible career paths or apprenticeships that require bilingual skills.

The Urdd also provides a range of activities aimed at children and young people, including sports clubs like gymnastics, football, rugby, swimming along and keep-fit. They also run Welsh-medium community clubs in Pontypridd, Rhydywaun, Aberdare, Rhondda and Bro Taf.

Welsh in the Workplace

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council like all public bodies in Wales have been required to prepare Welsh Language Schemes since the passing of the Welsh Language Act in 1993 which gave the Welsh and English languages equal status in public life. The Act placed a duty on the public sector to treat both languages equally when providing services to the public. The schemes explained which services they would provide in Welsh and how an organisation would respond to phone calls, letters or emails from Welsh speakers. They also described how the Welsh language would be used on signs, forms and publications and how they would promote and facilitate the use of Welsh in the delivery of services.

The Borough Council produced and implemented three Welsh Language Schemes altogether between 1994-2016. Responsibility for monitoring compliance with the schemes lay with the Welsh Language Board up to 2014 and latterly with the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The Welsh Language Standards which have replaced the Welsh Language Schemes were prepared under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measures 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 which came into force on 31st March 2015. The Measure created a procedure for introducing duties in the form of language standards that explain how organisations are expected to use the Welsh language and support the Welsh Government's aims of:-

- increasing and improving Welsh language services for the people of Wales;
- ensuring greater clarity and consistency in terms of the services that can be expected in Welsh;
- giving the people of Wales rights in terms of receiving services through the medium of Welsh.

The Measure gives the Welsh Language Commissioner authority to impose duties on a wide range of organisations to provide services in Welsh, to mainstream the language into policy development, and to develop strategies with regard to increasing the use of Welsh at work.

The authority's action plan which outlines how it intends complying with the standards imposed by the Welsh Language Commissioner was approved by Council in June 2016. The Council's commitments under the Welsh Language Standards have already been integrated into the authority's planning documents including the Improvement Plan 2015, the Council's Strategic Equality Plan, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and recent Welsh Government legislation - Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Care and Well-being Act, 2016.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is committed to creating an environment which encourages residents to use Welsh in their interaction with the Council and supporting staff to use Welsh in the workplace. In order to achieve these aims, the Council established a Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group as a sub-committee of the Council's Cabinet in 2014. It is a cross-party group with community representation. The Steering Group oversees developments, considers reports from relevant departments on Welsh language issues, makes recommendations to the Council's Cabinet and monitors council-wide developments. It has recently assumed responsibility for assessing the Welsh Language Action Plan, monitoring the Council's progress as it seeks to meet the Welsh Language Standards and also for developing the required 5-year Promotion Strategy.

A Chief Officer Working Group has also been established to ensure that the required operational changes are implemented and monitored in addition to securing a collaborative approach that will support services to address any areas for improvement and to record and respond to customer complaints.

Strategic support is also provided by a wide range of partners through the Fforwm Iaith (Welsh Language Forum) who mainly focuses on community based activities and Pwyllgor Strategaeth y Gymraeg mewn Addysg (Welsh in Education Strategic Committee) who monitor progress on the development of Welsh-medium education and teaching Welsh to Adults.

A draft policy to promote the Welsh language in the workplace has already been drawn up for approval by Cabinet and badges and lanyards denoting ability to speak Welsh have been distributed to staff. Posters (*Hapus i siarad Cymraeg*) which encourage visitors to use Welsh have been put up in all Reception areas and a number of promotional materials have been produced helping staff to access an on-line translation service, a mouse mat with simple Welsh greetings and a booklet entitled *Being Bilingual*.