

Welsh

Language Standards

Annual Report
2022 - 2023



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



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

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Welsh Language Standards Report

2022 – 2023

Prepared in accordance with the requirements of the
Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
April 2023

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INTRODUCTION: Welsh Language Standards

Rhondda Cynon Taf received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30th September 2015, which outlined the Council's duty to meet 171 of the statutory Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. An application to challenge 14 of the Standards was presented to the Commissioner on 29 March 2016. Following consolidation and further consultation, the Welsh Language Commissioner determined that no action should be applied to 9 of the Standards which were subject to challenge and a variation should be applied to 5 of the Standards, which were subject to challenge. The amended Compliance Notice was presented to RCTCBC on 9th September 2016 and may be viewed in full [here](#)

Vision

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is committed to creating an environment that encourages its residents to use Welsh in their interaction with the Council and supporting staff to use Welsh in the workplace. In addition to working towards full compliance of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, the Council will aim to ensure that it delivers services in line with all key Welsh Government policies and strategies in relation to the Welsh language.

Governance and accountability

In 2022, the Council established the Cabinet Sub-committee for Welsh Language, made up of five Cabinet members. The Sub-committee, which superseded the **Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group**, has been established to ensure an Authority-wide approach in the delivery of services through the medium of Welsh in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011 Measure, specifically the Statutory Standards relating to the Welsh Language. Its membership provides strategic direction in the implementation of the aforementioned legislation / policies and any local policies regarding the Welsh language and support the Welsh Language Services Unit in carrying out its duties. In addition to this, the Council's cross-party Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report and the 5-Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and the progress made in relation to it.

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Council's commitments under the Welsh Language Standards are integrated into the authority's main organisational documents including the Corporate Plan (Making a Difference) and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). In addition, internal policies, such as HR policies, mainstream Welsh language issues, which is more effective than preparing stand-alone policies to address Welsh language matters. The Council's priorities are informed by legislation including the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Well-being Act 2016 that place responsibility on the Council to strengthen the Welsh language. The former Act requires public bodies to work towards seven well-being goals, one of which is 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language,' while the latter requires public service organisations to consider and respond to the linguistic needs of their users when providing care and support services.

Reporting

This year has been the seventh full year of implementing the Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

This report will be published by 30 June in compliance with Standards 158 and 164 and details 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:

- number of staff who have Welsh language skills (Standard 151)
- number of staff who attended training courses listed in Standard 128 if offered in Welsh (Standards 152)
- percentage of the total number of staff who attended any courses listed in Standard 128 (Standards 152)
- number of new and vacant posts that were advertised during the year which were categorised as (i) Welsh language skills essential (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post (iii) Welsh language skills desirable (iv) Welsh language skills not necessary
- the number of complaints received

Welsh Language Services Unit

The Council recognises that the Welsh Language Standards are to be given a high priority due to the risks involved in terms of non-compliance and also because of its commitment to creating an environment that encourages its residents to use Welsh in their interaction with the Council and supporting staff to use Welsh in the workplace. It recognises whole-Council support is needed in order to offer and promote Welsh language services from the first point of contact.

The Council invests in a 21-strong Welsh Language Services Unit which undertakes to support all services and to provide the following:

- advice and support for all service areas on their statutory responsibilities under the Standards
- translation of public facing documents
- in-house Welsh language tutoring
- identification of areas of potential non-compliance
- recording of customer complaints
- reporting on developments to the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group
- simultaneous translation at full Council and at other meetings which are open to Members (e.g. scrutiny committees)
- simultaneous translation support to all other service areas such as legal services, human resources
- attendance at the Fforwm Iaith
- liaison with Welsh-medium community organisations as appropriate
- representing the Council at external meetings and be the main point of contact with the Welsh Language Commissioner and relevant Welsh Government Departments
- cross-departmental support for general promotion of the Welsh language
- co-ordination and liaison regarding matters pertaining the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- co-ordination and liaison regarding the Welsh Government's More than Just Words Strategic Framework
- dedicated support for the National Eisteddfod of Wales due to be held in RCT in 2024
- support as part of the Governing Board for the role of the South-East Wales Regional Welsh-Medium Education Champion, which is funded by the Welsh Government

The Council invests in a Unit as a pro-active response to the statutory environment and the type of work that needs to be undertaken to try to support all Council services to meet the Standards in a more cost effective manner.

A Senior Policy and Compliance Officer and a Compliance Support Officer now monitors the performance of services across the Council and their compliance against the Welsh Language Standards that are relevant to them. Consequently, these roles afford the Council the opportunity to give further mitigating support to service areas on identifying any possible weaknesses about delivering the requirements of the Standards, in addition to continuing with some of the more traditional duties of the former Welsh language officer role. These relatively new positions have, by now, become embedded in the structure of the Welsh Language Services Unit, and wider Council operations. For example, the Senior Policy and Compliance Officer works with the Council's equality officers, data officers and corporate performance officers regularly to assess the impact of policies, develop a comprehensive data set for Council officers to use, and monitor the performance of all Council departments against the Welsh Language Standards. The Compliance Support Officer has also restarted the Unit's auditing work across the Council, which had been paused during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus far, a comprehensive audit of the most popular sections of Council's website has been conducted, and at present an audit of all of the Council's reception areas is underway, to ensure compliance. The Welsh Language Commissioner's Office has again been generous in its positive feedback on the way Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Borough Council exercises its duties with regards to the Standards.

A part-time Welsh Language Tutor organises and delivers Welsh Language courses and sessions for Council staff. In the past, the Council paid external providers (e.g. the University of South Wales's Welsh for Adults Centre) to deliver sessions for internal staff but they lacked the desired success of tailoring the sessions to the relevant service areas. The internal tutor has tutored 73 members of staff, including Members, during 22/23 at various levels. Member participation, being taught alongside council staff, reflects their continued support and commitment making the most of the opportunities afforded to them to learn Welsh. This training in addition to the staff who have completed Level 1 Welsh, which is now an on-line resource. The Council continues to work in partnership with the Welsh Government's Work Welsh project, ensuring that Council staff may access on-line support and tutoring. Additionally, the Council have on a number of occasions supported individuals to undertake weeklong residential courses at Nant Gwrtheyrn and continue to encourage service areas to support learning via community classes. Over the past year, the tutor has taught Welsh to 6 councillors, held Welsh language training sessions for new Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Council committees to increase the amount of Welsh used in meetings. She has also been preparing a Level 1 Welsh language course for the Council's catering staff who do not currently have online access to the online training already made available by the Unit.

The Welsh Language Services Unit's translation staff remain an integral part of the Council's efforts to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, by providing textual and simultaneous translation services to all Council departments as required. The translation team consists of a Principal Translator who is responsible for management of the day-to-day translation and proofreading arrangements, four Senior Translators who are dedicated in the main to translating documents relating to Democratic Services and proofreading, and nine translator posts. In recognition of current and prospective staff's differing expertise, the Council's service requirements, and in order to provide professional development opportunities, translator and senior translator roles in the department now follow two pathways – those who translate text only, and those who translate text and also provide simultaneous translation. Currently, three senior translators and four translators provide simultaneous translation too, and those who do not at present are able to work towards this as part of their professional development if they wish. Two senior translators coordinate this element of professional development for the other staff following their successful completion of a postgraduate qualification in simultaneous translation at the University of Wales Trinity St David's last year. They received the highest marks on their course and were presented with an award from Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru for the most promising students on the programme. They have also contributed towards the Council's work in rolling out the simultaneous translation function in Teams across the organisation, thus increasing the options for holding meetings in Welsh. These developments not

only assist the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligations to offer meetings in Welsh to the public, and in situations such as job interviews, but it also facilitates the use of Welsh in internal meetings, such as WESP meetings where the majority of attendees are Welsh speakers.

In March 2023, the official launch of the National Eisteddfod of Wales in Rhondda Cynon Taf was held in Treorchy. An estimated 3,500 people attended to get a taste of what's to come in August 2024. Furthermore, a public meeting was held at the University of Wales (Treforest Campus) to begin identifying local people who have an interest in helping with the delivery of the Welsh language festival. With Eisteddfod chairs newly elected to their respective committees, work is well and truly underway with a clear strategy on how they plan to raise the £400k fundraising target. Our Project Officer continues to work closely with Eisteddfod officers to raise awareness of the Eisteddfod amongst local groups/businesses, Council staff and schools.

Guidance documents and resources continued to be produced and disseminated during 2022-2023 (examples below)

Guidance on Awarding Grants and the Welsh Language

At the beginning of the 2022-23 municipal year, our Guidance on Awarding Grants and the Welsh Language was published and disseminated to all Council departments, in line with Welsh Language Standard 94. The Guidance provides information to staff regarding their duties in relation to the Welsh language in the process of administering and awarding grants, in line with Standards 71-75 and 94. The document contains a checklist that staff can use to ensure they have complied with these standards too. The Guidance document issued by RCT has also been used as the basis for similar guidance documents in other county councils across south-east Wales. In order to monitor whether or not the grants the Council advertises and awards comply with the relevant standards, at the request of the Welsh Language Services Unit, the Council's Corporate Performance Team have agreed to include questions about grants and the Welsh language in the Service Self Evaluation questionnaires from 2023. These are completed by all service directors within the Council each year, and form the basis of a challenge meeting with the Chief Executive. They are also made available to the Welsh Language Services Unit to help plan further work with specific departments, and it will therefore be possible to monitor the impact of grants awarded by the Council on the Welsh Language in a more direct way from 2023-4.

Website Audit

In light of complaint CS1050 received from the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding differences between the Welsh and English versions of the Council's website's housing pages, Welsh Language Services responded proactively by conducting an audit of the 8 areas of the Council's website that appear on its homepage and receive the highest volume of traffic (e.g. waste services, education). This was to ensure that there were no breaches in compliance elsewhere on the website. Any breaches found were recorded on a spreadsheet, and by working with the web team, the Compliance Support Officer sent necessary amendments to relevant officers with authorship rights within their departments, along with a compliance reminder and the offer of help from Welsh Language Services if required. Staff were given until 31 March 2023 to make the necessary changes and a second audit to check compliance will be carried out early in 2023-4.

Welsh Language Level 1 – Elected Members

In 2021-22, in collaboration with colleagues in Democratic Services, Welsh Language Services updated the Welsh Language Level 1 training - originally tailored for staff – to be appropriate for

elected members. This training was shared via a global email with all Councillors and will be regularly disseminated during induction periods. The same training was made available again to new Councillors elected in May 2022. In addition to this, Welsh Language Services and Democratic Services developed a further Welsh language training course for committee chairs and vice-chairs, with the aim of increasing the amount of Welsh used in meetings, particularly during standard items such as declaring interest and receiving the minutes. This was rolled out to newly appointed chairs and vice-chairs in June 2022, and Welsh Language Services and Democratic Services are monitoring how much use is made of the Welsh language in meetings following this training.

Newsletter

Welsh Language Services continues to produce a quarterly newsletter, which highlights some of our main areas of work and offers advice regarding compliance with the Welsh Language Standards across the Council. This is following the change in the Council's internal communication methods as a high number of staff continue to work from home more often following the Covid-19 pandemic. Recently, the Newsletter has also been posted on the Council's closed Facebook group for staff in order for it to reach a wider audience and for staff who may have limited access to a computer. Newsletter articles over the past year have included an update on the situation regarding the Welsh language in Rhondda Cynon Taf in light of the 2021 Census results and implications for services, guidance on ensuring web pages comply with the Welsh Language Standards, promotion of the Council's simultaneous translation provision, and notices of local and national Welsh language events.

Learn Welsh Campaign

This year saw the third formal, integrated, campaign to encourage staff to learn Welsh at RCT Council. During summer 2022, our poster and information booklet, which listed all community and virtual provision, was sent to all council staff with the result being that all Council run courses were fully booked in the first few weeks. Following this, all internal Council-run courses were full by the start date in September. Another small campaign was held in January 2023 for further courses that were starting at the end of January and the response was positive again. We intend to launch similar campaigns each year to ensure more people are encouraged to learn – and in a way that they are happy with – online, in a classroom, or independently. The Council's internal provision has opted to provide some lessons face-to-face again, which has been popular amongst learners, and we will review the provision in advance of next year using the feedback we receive.

In addition, the Welsh Language Services Unit have led on many successful projects. Of particular note are the following:

Welsh Language Impact Assessment Framework

Since introducing the framework in 2021-22, the impact assessment process has become embedded as part of the Council's process for scrutinising policy decisions. The Council's investment in additional resources to support this work has allowed compliance officers to work with other departments to help them as they consider the possible effects their prospective policies will have on the Welsh language in the community and the workplace. Additionally, the impact assessment panel, which is held on a monthly basis, is an opportunity for compliance officers and senior officers of the Council to offer further feedback to departments regarding their plans. The two step process ensures that the importance of impact assessments are acknowledged throughout the Council, and amongst the senior leadership too. The Council has received positive feedback from

the Welsh Language Commissioner with regards our new framework and we are in the process of providing them with more information for a best practice case study. We have also updated our impact assessment guidance to reflect the results of the 2021 Census, new reports and strategies regarding the Welsh language that have been published recently, and advice given in the Welsh Language Commissioner's event on impact assessments held in January 2023.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

The unit has continued to support the co-ordination of the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and associated support for preparing the action plan for the first 5 years, and marketing sub-group activities.

A 5 year strategy to facilitate and promote the Welsh Language

Following the evaluation of our 2016-2021 5-year Strategy and action plan in line with Standard 146 (committee report available [here](#)), Welsh Language Services has led the work of preparing the new 5-year Strategy and its associated action plan for 2022-2027, in accordance with Standard 145. The strategy and action plan were produced with the help of a language planning company, Nico Cyf.

On 6th December 2022, the 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language were published. The national picture was disappointing, showing a decline in the percentage of Welsh speakers, contrary to Welsh Government expectations. The situation in Rhondda Cynon Taf, however, is a more promising. Rhondda Cynon Taf was one of only four of local authorities which saw the number of speakers increase, with an increase of 2.8% in the number of Welsh speakers, from 27,779 to 28,556, which is testament to the diligent contribution of members and council staff in working towards achieving local targets. The new strategy aims to build upon the increase seen, and sets a target of a 5% increase in Welsh speakers by the end of the strategy's lifetime. The new strategy was approved at a [meeting of the Cabinet Sub-committee for the Welsh Language in October 2022](#), and the associated action plan was approved at a meeting of the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) in March 2023.

Hybrid Meetings and Simultaneous Translation Services

As the Council increased its use of online/virtual work and meeting platforms in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Welsh Language Services have successfully supported ICT and Democratic Services officers to ensure full compliance with the Welsh Language Standards by ensuring members of the public and Councillors are able to contribute to meetings in Welsh if that is their wish. ICT, through the use of Zoom, have enabled an environment where language channels can be added to Zoom meetings to allow persons to listen in Welsh or the English simultaneous translations depending on their preference. Additionally, with the introduction of hybrid meetings and online streaming services, we've managed a bespoke solution to ensure compliance with the regulations. Members of the Welsh Language Services team, supported by ICT, worked directly with Microsoft to test the new simultaneous translation functionality in Teams. This has since been introduced across the Council and is allowing more staff to use their Welsh in meetings with internal and external colleagues and partners.

Welsh Language Buddy Scheme

The Welsh Language Buddy Scheme was relaunched in 2021-22, and continues to meet every month, in order to give Welsh speakers of all levels across the Council the opportunity to meet and use their Welsh. As well as meeting via Teams, members of the Scheme also meet in person every few months in different Welsh cafés across the County Borough, to support local

Welsh businesses and offer our staff the opportunity to practice their Welsh in a community setting. Furthermore, we're also in discussions with Caerphilly Council's Welsh Language Services regarding the possibility of combining our Welsh Language Buddy Scheme with a similar scheme that they are running. Although discussions are still ongoing, the aim is to begin the joined up scheme early in the summer of 2023.

Culture Campaigns

Welsh Language Services promoted the following Culture Campaigns during 2022-2023:

Dydd Gŵyl Dewi

For St David's Day this year, Welsh Language Services posted across our social media accounts asking our followers to get involved with the celebrations. Internally, for the Council's staff, an article was published on the intranet which highlighted the story of St David. Following on from our 2022 celebrations, our officers again prepared a Welsh themed quiz that was completed virtually by nearly 350 staff members.

Welsh Language Rights Day

Welsh Language Services promoted Welsh Language Rights Day by publishing messages on social media to remind our residents that they can access Council services through the medium of Welsh. We also published an article on the staff intranet to remind staff of their statutory duties, and their language rights at work. The day was also used as an opportunity to share bilingual templates with all Council staff to help them prepare out of office messages and messages about service closures over the Christmas period that were compliant with the Welsh Language Standards.

Eisteddfod yr Urdd

In 2022, Eisteddfod yr Urdd was held for the first time since 2019, and so the Council celebrated all of the local pupils who were competing at the festival in Denbighshire by wishing them luck on social media. As well as preparing the messages, and visiting local schools to take pictures of the pupils who were competing, Welsh Language Services officers also prepared other messages and articles for staff to promote the Eisteddfod and the other important activities the Urdd engages in on local and national levels. These included Welsh-medium swimming lessons, Gŵyl Triban, and providing accommodation to refugees from Ukraine.

Welsh Music Day

Welsh Language Services prepared a suite of social media messages promoting Welsh language music playlists, local Welsh gigs and musical sessions.

Wales at the Football World Cup

Welsh Language Services took advantage of the Wales team's success in reaching the finals of the Football World Cup in Qatar to design a social media campaign celebrating different aspects of Welsh language culture. As well as wishing the team luck, messages were published emphasising the team's connections with the RCT area, and the history of the Welsh National Anthem and its links to Pontypridd. This was also an opportunity to raise further awareness of the Welsh language and Welsh history – e.g. through referring to the lyrics of the song 'Yma o Hyd', messages were posted to encourage the public to use the Council's libraries to find out more about Welsh mythology, whilst also reminding them that Welsh books and services are available at our libraries too.

Other service areas

Many Council services have returned to providing services in ways similar to before the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, a number of departments have acted to improve or adapt their Welsh language provision. Below are some case studies of the good practice that has been established by some departments in 2022-23. In addition to this, all Council service areas resumed their reporting of relevant developments in their Annual Service Self-Evaluations, and the details noted in each of these are at Appendix 1 in accordance with Standards 158, 164 and 170.

Leisure Services

Following the adoption of the new Leisure Strategy in autumn 2022, Leisure Services have been working with Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf and the University of South Wales to try and increase the use of Welsh by instructors in their fitness classes. The Council faces challenges in recruiting trainers who speak Welsh or feel confident to use their Welsh in their work, so it was decided to hold some training sessions to help current instructors incorporate more Welsh in their classes. It is hoped that this will encourage instructors with limited Welsh skills to use some Welsh for the first time. It is also hoped that it will help instructors who can speak Welsh fluently to feel more confident and prepared to hold more sessions through the medium of Welsh in the future, thereby increasing the service's Welsh language offer.

Occupational Health

The Occupational Health Service have introduced a new online referral and counselling tool for staff with mental health concerns, called Wellbeing with Cari. This tool is also available in Welsh – Lles gyda Cari. By ensuring that the tool was also available in Welsh, the service not only acted in line with the proactive offer made in the Council's HR policies for staff to use Welsh in discussions of a sensitive nature, but also emphasised the importance of language choice when requesting and receiving care and treatment.

Corporate Performance – Climate Change Strategy

As part of the Council's new Climate Change Strategy, a new virtual Welsh language platform has been established on Teams, namely 'Gofod Gwyrdd'. Gofod Gwyrdd gives staff the opportunity to discuss matters pertaining to climate change and its impact on their work in the Council through the medium of Welsh. It is also a space to share Welsh language resources about this subject.

COMPLAINTS: STANDARD 158(2) 164(2) 170(2)(d)

The following complaints were received, or continued to be investigated, during/in 2022–2023:

Complaint Date	Nature	Via	Outcome / Response
August 2021 (now closed)	Adult Services: Allegation that a Welsh language assessment was not provided to a client.	Welsh Language Commissioner (CS054)	Following a statutory investigation the complaint was not determined to be valid by the Welsh Language Commissioner. It was found that the Council had complied with the necessary Standards when interacting with the client but the Commissioner recommended 4 action steps in order to improve the experience of service users wishing to use the Welsh language.
April 2022	Highways: Complaint about a bilingual street sign. The complainant claimed that the sign was too big and interfered with the view from the window of their house, and that the increased size was because the Welsh name of the street had been added to it. They also complained that a Welsh name had been added to the English sign while English names were not added to monolingual Welsh street signs, and that the Welsh name 'Coedlan Byron' was an incorrect translation of 'Byron Avenue'.	A member of the public	Complaint not upheld. The Council responded to the complainant by noting its statutory duty in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards to add the Welsh name of the street to the sign when renewing it, and the Council's policy of ensuring that every street has a Welsh name. The response also noted that the new sign was not larger than the previous sign. Referring to resources such as Geiriadur yr Academi, the Council explained that the translation was suitable.
May 2022	Libraries: Complaint about translating 'exhibition space' as 'gofod arddangos'.	A member of the public.	Complaint not upheld. The Council responded by stating that 'gofod' is an appropriate translation

			in this context, referring to resources such as the Geiriadur yr Academi.
July 2022	Registry Office: Complaint about the lack of Welsh language service and an inability to provide a Welsh language registrar to register a death.	A member of the public.	Complaint partially upheld. The Welsh Language Services Unit reminded the department of their statutory duties to provide a registration service through the medium of Welsh, including a reception/telephone service. The member of the public received an apology and the department ensured that a Welsh-speaking registrar was available for the individual to register the death.
July 2022	Communications and Press: Complaint about automatic translation on Facebook.	A member of the public.	Complaint not upheld. The Welsh message on Facebook was correct, but the automatic English translation provided by Facebook was incorrect, and this had given the complainant the impression that the Welsh must also be incorrect. It was explained to the complainant that the Welsh was correct, and that the Council had no ownership over the automatic English translation.
August 2022	General: Complaint about receiving bilingual correspondence. The complainant did not want to receive any correspondence in Welsh	A member of the public.	Complaint not upheld. The Council responded by explaining that in certain situations it has a duty to send correspondence in Welsh in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards, and that it also has a duty to promote the

			Welsh language in accordance with local and national policies and strategies. It was also noted that some situations arise where it is possible for the Council to contact a member of the public in English only where it is aware of that individual's relevant language choice.
September 2022 (See another complaint about the same issue below)	Communications and Press: Complaint about the lack of an equivalent message in Welsh for an English message on Twitter regarding the death of Queen Elizabeth II.	A member of the public.	Complaint upheld. The member of the public received an apology for this shortcoming, and an explanation that a Welsh message had been published within a few hours to match the English message.
September 2022 (See another complaint about the same issue above)	Communications and Press: Complaint about the lack of an equivalent message in Welsh for an English message on Twitter regarding the death of Queen Elizabeth II.	A member of the public.	Complaint upheld. The member of the public received an apology for this shortcoming, and an explanation that a Welsh message had been published within a few hours to match the English message.
September 2022	Housing: Complaint about the lack of an option to contact the Housing Options team on the Welsh side of the website, while there were contact options available on the English side.	A member of the public via the Welsh Language Commissioner (CS1050)	After the Council provided further information, and responded proactively by carrying out work to ensure that the relevant web pages were now compliant, the Commissioner decided that there was no need to carry out a full investigation into this case. This was because they were satisfied that there was no systemic failure in terms of the website's compliance, and that this was an isolated

			incident.
October 2022	Highways: A post on a Facebook group drawing attention to a typing error on a street sign in Porth.	Message on Facebook Group 'Arwyddion Cymraeg Gwael'	After the Welsh Language Services Unit informed the Highways department of the post, they proceeded to change the sign in order to prevent an official complaint from possibly being submitted.
November 2022	Education: Complaint about an English-only presentation and resources by the Council given to parents in one of the County's Welsh medium schools. The complaint also stated that the Welsh questionnaire distributed as part of the presentation was 'erroneous'.	A member of the public via the Welsh Language Commissioner (CS1080)	The Council has admitted that it has failed to meet the expectations of the Welsh Language Standards in relation to the presentation given, but noted that it has provided appropriate bilingual resources, and that it has already shared guidelines for organising bilingual meetings with staff in order to avoid failures of this type. Nevertheless, the Welsh Language Commissioner has decided to proceed with a full investigation into this matter - that investigation is currently ongoing.
December 2022	Payments: A page on the Council's Welsh payments website (parking fine) contained sections that were in English only	A member of the public.	Complaint upheld. After considering the matter, the department decided that the page in question was an unnecessary part of the payments process, and it was decided to remove the page from the system on the Welsh and English sides of the website.
January 2023	Highways: Complaint about two English-only road signs and an English-only sign on a green electrical box in Efail Isaf.	A member of the public via the Welsh Language Commissioner (CSG1098)	After the Council provided further information, the Welsh Language Commissioner determined that the

			Council did not have a case to answer. It was found that the Council had acted in accordance with the relevant Standards as the signs in question had not been renewed since at least 2009, and the green box is not owned by the Council.
February 2023	Waste Services: Complaint about a lack of Welsh signs in one of the Council's community recycling centres.	A member of the public.	Complaint upheld. The Waste Services were reminded of their duties to provide Welsh/bilingual signs, and the relevant signs are being changed to bilingual ones, with the Welsh appearing first.

STAFF WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS: STANDARD 170(2)(a)

This section outlines the number of employees/post holders who had Welsh language skills as at May 2023. The figures are based on the records kept in accordance with Standard 151 based on the requirements of Standard 127.

Year	Staff *	Staff type	No skills	% with skills
2022-2023	7230	Non-schools based staff	2985	58.7
			Fluent	%
			692	9.6
			Welsh Language Level 1	%
			2806	38.8
			Welsh Language Level 2	%
			370	5.1
			Welsh Language Level 3	%
			153	2.1
			Welsh Language Level 4	%
			160	2.2
			Welsh Language Level 5	%
			532	7.3

*Staff base is not a headcount, it includes multiple employment i.e. An employee will be counted for every post that they hold. The staff bases also include casual employees.

** 224 with no record

TRAINING FOR STAFF: STANDARD 170 (2)(b) and (c)

There was no change from the 2022-2023 position with regards to training on Recruitment & Advertising, Performance Management, Complaints and Disciplinary procedures, Induction, Dealing with the Public and Health and Safety, based on the records kept in accordance with Standard 152 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. From September 2017 all new posts are designated Welsh essential Level 1 (basic Welsh) with options for managers to recruit on level 2 to level 5 depending on post. The number of posts at level 1 to 5 are as follows:

Welsh Language Skills	L1	485
Welsh Language Skills	L2	9
Welsh Language Skills	L3	2
Welsh Language Skills	L4	0
Welsh Language Skills	L5	9

Further information:

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Appendix 1 Service Self-evaluations

Highway Maintenance and Management

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.

Potential areas for improvement:

Continue to encourage staff to take up learning opportunities in the Welsh language

Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service

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; delivers accredited courses and they are also the main point of contact for all after school provision offered by the service to young people. There were also activities offered throughout the school holidays through the medium of Welsh. 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.

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. The Funding Flexibilities Team are also represented on the WESP subgroup and have actions relating to Flying Start Welsh Medium provision as part of Outcome 1: More nursery/three-year-old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh. In this respect CWRS plays a key part in helping the Council achieve its 10-year vision.

The delivery of Welsh medium play opportunities remains a known gap in 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. The service has an historic SLA with Menter Iaith which is currently being reviewed to ensure the provision effectively meets the requirements of the PSA.

All Talk and Play (TAP) video resources are available in Welsh and English and a number of staff within the team are currently learning Welsh to be able to extend the reach of the service and provide early language support for Welsh. There isn't currently a high demand for service delivery through the medium of Welsh so our one Welsh speaking member of staff is able to sufficiently meet demand. This will be reviewed in line with future demand and as part of future recruitment.

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.

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 compliancy check on the Welsh Language Standards.

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. There are currently seven English medium commissioned childcare settings that do not have a Welsh speaker available

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 Flexible Framework. The introduction of the Flexible Framework 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 of November 2022 the number of approved Welsh Providers has increased from 9 to 19. 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.

To promote the Flying Start childcare bi-lingual offer a leaflet 'The Bilingual Journey' was produced in collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin. The leaflet will now be 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.

Potential areas for improvement:

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

Continue to monitor the take up of Welsh medium Flying Start childcare as a result of the introduction of the approved supplier commissioning approach.

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

ICT & Digital

Through the Digital Strategy we are seeking 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 Subtitles.
- 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

Potential areas for improvement:

Ensuring that new digital service projects fully consider these requirements.

Democratic Services and Communication

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.

Potential areas for improvement:

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

Adult Services - Outstanding

Public Protection and Regulatory Services

- Managers are supporting staff to undertake Welsh language training. This year, Welsh language training is being provided to 2 people from the Food and Health and Safety Team, one from Registrars and two from Trading Standards. There are several fluent Welsh speakers throughout Public Health and Protection this currently meets the demand from the businesses and residents
- All Food and H&S information leaflets sent to businesses are bilingual.
- The food hygiene inspection reports captures if business want correspondence bilingually, this information sits within the Civica system to inform other teams.
- Social media messaging is provided in English and Welsh.
- A number of births and death registrations this year have been conducted in the medium of Welsh, at the request of the customer; similarly, ceremonies are offered to be conducted in the medium of Welsh and whilst this is infrequent, one is booked for 2023. The demand this year has increased, although it remains representative in relation to the number of appointments made. It will be subject to ongoing review in relation to ensuring sufficient Welsh speakers are available within the service area. It is noted that having several staff able to speak Welsh within a service area does make it easier for competence to be maintained as staff are recommended to use the language on a day-to-day basis
- The Stopford system in Registrars is being programmed with English and Welsh e-mail confirmations and reminder notifications. These same messages can also be pushed out from telephone appointments.
- The scripts used in the TTP service includes an introduction of asking the citizen in which language this wish to conduct the call. There are a number of Welsh speakers available should they be required. We also send all messaging and letters bilingually.

Potential areas for improvement:

Continue to identify and implement opportunities to where the Welsh language can be used across all service areas

Streetcare & Waste Services

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 2020/21. Colleagues from customer care assisted us during this process. 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.

Potential areas for improvement:

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

Community Services

Since the introduction of I-Trent, the Council has been unable to obtain Welsh Language Skills information for staff. The relevant information is being recorded on the system, however, there is currently no way of getting the information out. Discussions with Payroll are ongoing, and it is hoped that a major upgrade that is due to be implemented in Q4 will address the problem. The figures are required to be included in our WLS annual report which has to be published in June each year.

There is also a requirement for services to complete a Welsh Language Impact Assessment (e.g. WL Promotional Strategy Impact Assessment) for any decisions that are made around service or policy changes which need to be published. The WLS works closely with Legal and Democratic and Communications Services to ensure that all Council services are compliant.

The WLS team is available to offer support to all service areas across the Council, however, due to a small number of issues being raised by the WL Commissioner and updates received on compliance with some WL Standards, it is felt that more awareness raising and promotion needs to take place with managers and staff to encourage the improvement of their WL skills. As such, in the new year the WLS will reconvene a meeting of key service officers that was originally set up when the WL Standards were reintroduced, to support the development of WL skills across service areas. Currently there are 40+ staff on Welsh Language learning sessions as well as some members also taking up the opportunity to improve their WL skills.

Employment support grant funded programmes continue to offer WL sessions as part of our pre-employment training programmes, however, take up to date has been very low. The service will look to further embed this provision and explore opportunities to develop a Welsh Language employment route in the new employment support programme from April 2023. The WL sector has also been identified as a priority sector across the region by the Cardiff City Regional Skills Partnership.

Adult Community Learning has recently entered into a Service Level Agreement with Menter Iaith RCT to trial delivery of Welsh medium courses and depending on the successful implementation, has the potential to be continued and expanded in the next financial year. They have recently become a partner member of the ACL Strategic and Operational groups. We will also seek opportunities to recharge translation costs to grant funded programmes this year and in the future.

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 is recorded as part of the registration process for clients on to our grant funded programme provision through ACL and Employment support.

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, there has recently been a small number

of complaints received for other service areas across the Council. These have been dealt with swiftly with the help of the WLS team and to date have not resulted in a full enquiry by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

However, it has prompted discussions about additional support, awareness raising for managers and staff across the Council. It is likely that a working group of key officers from across the Council that was set up previously to look at compliance with WL Standards, will be reinstated. This will assist the promotion of the use of the WL across the council as well as raising awareness of legal requirements.

As previously mentioned in this document, the Council's Five Years Strategy for the Promotion of the Welsh Language 2022-26 has been developed and an action plan is also now in development as the new Census data has been published in detail. A WLIA was also undertaken recently as part of this process and was presented to panel, and along with the report to SLT and the WL Cabinet Sub-Committee in September. The draft action plan is due to go to Scrutiny in March 2023.

There have been ongoing challenges in relation to recruitment of Translators that highlights the importance of recruiting fluent Welsh speakers, wherever possible across service areas, so that they can provide information bilingually without the need to call upon the translation service.

There will be increasing opportunities to promote the Welsh Language to both staff and residents as part of the Eisteddfod, which will be held in RCT in 2024. The Council has invested in the creation of an Eisteddfod officer post to support engagement in the Eisteddfod which sits in the WLS, but support will also be given from across the other service areas in Communities Services.

Potential areas for improvement:

Expand the opportunities for RCT staff to improve Welsh language skills and explore in work support funding opportunities through SPF

Embed and expand Welsh medium provision in grant funded programmes of delivery

Seek opportunities to recharge translation costs to grant funded programmes

Raise awareness for Managers across Service Areas regarding compliance with WL Standards.

Leisure, Parks, Countryside & Bereavement Services (LPC&B), Visitor and Heritage Attractions

- 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'.
- Approximately 10% of staff have knowledge of the Welsh language.
- Welsh Language Services audited Leisure Services social media posts. The report advised that not all posts were bilingual. There is now an understanding and agreement that in some cases due to the urgent nature of some posts at site level translation is not possible. We do have a suite of statements e.g. pool closed due to unforeseen circumstance that can be used. Where we are unable to provide the Welsh translation we state this in the post.

- Welsh Language Services are supporting Leisure Services to identify and build confidence in Welsh speakers to assist with the social media posts.
- Most front-line staff and all new employees have completed 'Cwrs Cymraeg Lefel 1' as part of the job specification essential criteria.
- 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.
- In partnership with the Urdd deliver Welsh language swimming lessons in Llantrisant Leisure Centre and Rhondda Sports Centre
- Leisure Services are currently advertising to recruit Welsh speaking swimming instructors and fitness coaches to be able to provide an enhanced Welsh language service.
- Within 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.
- The service needs to work to identify Welsh speaking medical referees.
- Within Heritage Services a review of existing historic signage currently taking place to ensure that current bilingual standards are met.
- Supporting Community Centre committees to understand and implement the council's Welsh language policies

Potential areas for improvement:

Sport and Physical Activity Services (including Leisure Services, Sport and Health RCT)

Work with Welsh Language to enhance the number of pre-translated social media posts available for centres.

Work with ICT to ensure that all staff have access to a PC and log in ensuring completion of Welsh Language and other council core training.

Identify staff who are fluent in Welsh to assist with social media posts. Work with Welsh Language Services to develop confidence classes for these staff.

Recreation Managers to ensure that all fitness class details are uploaded bilingually via the MIS system.

Explore the demand for Welsh language activities.

Heritage Service & Visitor Attractions

Continue to work with Welsh Language to enhance the number of pre-translated social media posts available for sites.

Undertake review of all existing website content to ensure it meets with current Welsh language standards.

Bereavement Services

Work to identify Welsh speaking medical referees.

Community Centres

Support the committee to better understand and implement the council's Welsh language policy.

Encourage staff to undertake the to attend 'Cwrs Cymraeg Lefel 2'.

Education & Inclusion Service

- The co-constructed WESP has been widely consulted upon and scrutinised, and there is a clear mandate for delivering on the WESP from 2022 to 2032. There has been clear communication with all senior managers to ensure that the WESP will be embedded within every existing policy decision going forward. All SMT members are leading on each of the seven outcomes of the WESP and partners are heavily involved in the co-construction and delivery of the plan to ensure effective outcome delivery.
- Welsh Language Impact Assessments (WLIAs) are written and formally scrutinised for all policy changes including all school reorganisation proposals.
- As a Council we continue to ensure swift access to Welsh medium publications and communications, the development of Welsh language skills in the workplace and the expansion of Welsh medium provision across the county borough.
- The £252M Band B investment programme includes numerous proposals for enhancing Welsh medium provision, in addition to significant investment already completed in the Cynon Valley. Capacity across Welsh medium settings are regularly reviewed in line with WESP priorities.
- RCT has the highest number of seven-year-olds across the region attending Welsh medium education, and the ambitious plans for further investment will hopefully ensure further growth. However, a slight decline in the number of learners accessing Welsh medium pre-nursery and nursery placements was evident during 2021/22 and will require careful monitoring.
- The Council has developed new purpose-built childcare and early years settings and adapted school buildings to meet demand for Welsh medium provision on key strategic sites. Transition rates from key phases in the Welsh medium sector, remain generally high in RCT but further work is needed to improve transition from nursery to reception and from key stage 4 to 5 at secondary.
- The Council has maintained its drive to support the Welsh language through this difficult period, continuing to meet the needs of learners and providing continuity of the language and accessibility throughout.

- There are significant workforce pressures in our schools, particularly in the secondary WM sector but also in the primary phase. This is deeply concerning particularly as schools are also struggling to recruit supply staff. The workforce pressures are significant locally, regionally and nationally.
- The Education Directorate continues to work progressively to deliver our WESP, which shows a strong commitment to developing and improving the number of places for pupils to be taught through the medium of Welsh. The new WESP for 2022-2032 has been co-constructed with key partners, widely consulted upon, pre-scrutinised by Scrutiny Committee and approved by both Cabinet and approved by Welsh Government. To ensure that the WESP is high profile across all areas in the Directorate, a steering group has been established which is chaired by the Education Director. Each member of SMT leads on each of the WESP's seven outcomes, and each chair the sub-committees that have been tasked with co-constructing the actions to be delivered during the first five years of the delivery plan. There is good representation in meetings, and both English and Welsh medium schools in attendance. To ensure the effective co-ordination of the WESP, a new graduate has been appointed to co-ordinate this work.
- Welsh Language Impact Assessments (WLIAs) are written and formally scrutinised for all policy changes including all school reorganisation proposals. This has most recently been the case for the new Education and Inclusion Service's Strategy as well as the WESP. Welsh Language Services are heavily involved in the developing and scrutiny of the WLIAs for all relevant proposals and provide effective support and challenge.
- The Council maintained its drive to support the Welsh language through the COVID-19 pandemic, continuing to meet the needs of learners and providing continuity of the language and accessibility throughout. We continued to communicate and provide services bilingually throughout the pandemic, including guidance for schools, parents and carers, new school signage and all social media posts.
- Welsh language provision was available in our childcare hubs during lock down and in our school summer holiday clubs and SHEP provision. This provided much needed opportunity for children to interact and communicate in Welsh.

Welsh Medium Provision

- There are sufficient surplus spaces in Welsh medium settings across the county borough to meet potential future growth, and pro-active steps have been taken to enhance capacity in two schools where this was needed. Capacities of all Welsh medium schools are reviewed regularly and the surplus capacity within Welsh medium settings requires further reduction to meet the WESP priorities.
- The Band B funding envelope has been significantly enhanced and the £252M investment programme include numerous proposals for enhancing Welsh medium provision, including proposals for a new all through school for Ysgol Cwm Rhondda and to deliver extensive new facilities for Ysgol Llanhari.

- There has been significant investment in Welsh medium education in the Cynon Valley with improvement works recently completed. In the primary sector a £3.69M investment has been completed this summer 2022 for YGG Aberdâr that has increased Welsh medium places. The new facilities include four new classrooms, an extension to the existing school hall, a new flexible learning resource area, new outdoor areas and increasing parking capacity. The overall project also includes a new on-site childcare facility via the Welsh medium Capital Grant. In the secondary sector, an investment of £12.1M is nearing completion as part of Band B of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and has increased Welsh medium places provided at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun by a total of 187 (from 1,038 to 1,225). Works include a new eight-classroom block with community rooms, drama and music facilities, along with a new school reception, sports hall, fitness suite and changing rooms. The community will also be able to access some of these facilities as part of the development. Works to remodel and refurbish the existing school building are ongoing.
- A new Welsh medium primary school in Pontypridd/Rhydyfelin as part of wider school organisation proposals is under construction. This will see an increase in Welsh medium primary school capacity by 93 pupil places and will significantly improve the Welsh medium offer in the locality. The new headteacher for the school has been appointed.
- Significant improvements are planned for the Welsh medium sector in Dolau Primary School that will not only improve facilities but also significantly increase Welsh medium capacity in the south of the county borough. The new extension at Dolau Primary School is progressing, to meet the capacity demands created by significant housing developments. This extension will provide additional capacity for Welsh medium pupils thus serving the wider community and the new housing development. This increase in numbers will also support Ysgol Llanhari to increase pupil numbers in the secondary phase.
- The Council has developed new purpose-built childcare and early years settings and adapted school buildings to meet demand on key strategic sites. Welsh medium early years' provision has been expanded and funded by the Welsh Government's Welsh Medium and Childcare Offer Capital Grant funding streams. Over the last three years many projects have been completed including YGG Ynyswen, YGGG Llantrisant, YGG Evan James, some sites have had brand new childcare provisions established including Dolau Primary, YGG Abercynon, with YGG Aberdâr the most recent to open in September 2022.
- Under the new Flying Start commissioning model, Welsh medium places are now spot purchased as and when they are required. There are currently 16 settings available to deliver services through the medium of Welsh but changes to the commissioning process will mean more Welsh medium Flying Start childcare places will be available to those families that choose it.
- A decline in the number of learners accessing Welsh medium pre-nursery and nursery placements was evident during 2021/22 – from 597 to 561. This will require careful monitoring.
- RCT has the highest number of seven-year-olds across the region attending Welsh medium education, and the ambitious plans for further investment will hopefully ensure further growth.

Despite these statistics, numbers have remained relatively stable over time as demonstrated on the WESP tracker. However, an increase of 0.1% was seen in the number of learners attending Welsh medium primary schools in RCT in 2021/22.

- Transition rates from key phases in the Welsh medium sector, remain generally high in RCT but further work is needed to improve this from nursery to reception and from key stage 4 to 5 at secondary.
- The change in a neighbouring local authority's transport policy has adversely affected numbers in two Welsh medium schools in RCT. Nevertheless, RCT continues with a transport policy that is supportive of cross regional arrangements.
- All WM primary schools are actively engaged in Siarter Iaith and have achieved at least the bronze award in Siarter Iaith. 29.4% achieved a bronze award, 58.8% have achieved a silver award and 11.7% achieved a gold award. Bronze and silver awards were also in 25% of Welsh medium secondary schools respectively.
- There is good engagement in Cymraeg Campus in 90.7% of EM primary schools and 46.1% of English medium secondary schools. The bronze award has been achieved in 15.8% of primary schools and the silver in 10.5% of schools. In the secondary English medium sector, the bronze award has been achieved in 7.7% of English medium schools.
- The regional service has recently piloted a new Cymraeg Campus framework for the special school sector and the bronze award has been achieved in 25% of special schools.
- ALN Welsh medium provision has been established in 2022/23 in Ysgol Gartholwg and there is a commitment to seek Cabinet approval for a proposal to establish ALN provision in the Welsh medium school planned for Rhydyfelin.
- The LA has recently established a Welsh medium Marketing Group to ensure that there is growth in the Welsh medium and Welsh language sector, this work is at early stages of development. Access to digital information about Welsh medium education has improved.
- A Welsh language grant-funded immersion proposal has been submitted and approved by Welsh Government and plans are in development to establish a peripatetic provision in the county borough. The new posts required to deliver this provision, a teacher and two teaching assistants, are currently out to advert.

Workforce

- The School Workforce Annual Census for 2022 suggests that we have 104 advanced/proficient Welsh speakers in schools who are able to teach and work in Welsh but are not doing so currently. This aspect needs to be explored further to ensure that we are pro-actively tackling the gaps in the Welsh medium sector whilst also upskilling existing staff in the EM sector.

	No Skills	Entry Foundation Intermediate	Advanced Proficient	Not Obtained
Teaching/working in Welsh in current post	0	10	461	0
Able to teach/work in Welsh but not doing so	0	44	104	0
Unable to teach or work in Welsh	445	443	1	3
Teaching Welsh as a subject only	0	532	102	13

- Welsh language development PL for practitioners: Since April 2021, 323 practitioners from RCT have attended various levels of the Welsh language development professional learning aligned to the Welsh Language Competency Framework.
- Leadership of Welsh programme: 14 senior leaders from 14 English medium schools have attended the programme with a further two registered in autumn 2022. The programme is designed to support senior leaders to develop the Welsh language and culture on a whole school strategic level.
- Welsh oracy professional learning: 35 Welsh medium practitioners and 23 English medium practitioners have registered to attend new PL on developing Welsh oracy and synthetic phonics programme 'Tric a Chlic'.
- CSC has provided Gyda'n Gilydd with £10,000 funding in 2021/22 and an additional £10,000 in 2022/23 to work alongside WJEC to develop Welsh medium Level 3 vocational qualifications. Qualifications are currently being created for business, tourism, public services and sports.
- CSC has worked in partnership with Cardiff University's School of Welsh to develop and publish a new Welsh reading test for years 1-11 in Welsh medium schools. Nearly all practitioners who attended the associated professional learning state that they have a clear understanding of how to implement the new standardised Welsh reading test.
- CSC has provided governor training on Welsh in Education during 21/22 aimed at supporting governors to challenge and support school leaders. 13 governors attended and are now better equipped to challenge and support school leaders appropriately and report that it will impact on practice/behaviour.
- 15 teachers from RCT have attended the Welsh in a year sabbatical since 2017 including the two practitioners out of seven regional places attending in 2022/23. During 2022/23 a new two-term sabbatical programme is running with four teachers from RCT attending. CSC provides strong post sabbatical support which includes network meetings, sharing of good practice and resources, leadership of Welsh short course, bespoke 1:1 session with development officers and support to disseminate their knowledge and skills with other practitioners.

- LA data also suggests that there has been an increase in the number of staff who are able to teach Welsh as a first language from 8.8% (2020-21) to 14.1% (2021-22).
- Guidance in relation to the completion of the SWAC data has been provided by CSC to schools to ensure accurate completion.
- Funding provided for Gyda'n Gilydd (Welsh Medium Secondary Headteachers Association) to develop bespoke provision for the sector and work alongside WJEC to develop Welsh medium L3 vocational qualifications.

Potential areas for improvement:

Draft action plan for the delivery of the 2022-2023 WESP to be implemented and updated once feedback has been received from Welsh Government. .

Provision for Welsh language immersion to be progressed and staff appointed.

Continue to further develop and improve Welsh medium childcare and school environments, including through Band B sustainable communities for learning.

Develop an effective Marketing and Recruitment Plan to enhance growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language sector.

Improve transition rates into Welsh medium education, particularly from nursery into statutory education, and from key stage 4 to 5.

Undertake a robust data analysis of the workforce in Welsh medium sectors and English medium sectors in RCT so as to inform a strategic plan in partnership with HR to address the workforce pressures in the Welsh medium sector and grow the next generation of teachers and future leaders in this sector (Outcome 7 of the WESP).

Prosperity and Development

The Service has continued to work closely with the Welsh Language Unit in ensuring it complies with Welsh Language Standards. All documents and services are available bilingually including all correspondence and publications. The Service also has a number of staff who are able to communicate with service users through the medium of Welsh. The Service has also worked alongside the Welsh Language Unit to ensure all web pages and social media updates are bilingual.

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.

Advice has been sought from the Councils Welsh Language Department with regards to the completion of Welsh Language Impact Assessments for projects/reports delivered by the service.

The Planning Policy section engage the Welsh Language team in the Council to ensure that the multiple elements of work are translated as appropriate. This included formal documents, reports and also the existing and evolving website pages. This also includes the various and occasional consultations we undertake. Furthermore, the statutory LDP preparation process requires a

Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of each formal stage of its preparation and end document. We have determined to evolve this process by 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 Welsh Language is a running theme through the 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 **Design and Marketing** teams continue to work very closely with the Council's 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.

As we prepare for the arrival of the National Eisteddfod to RCT in 2024, marketing are working with the Eisteddfod team to find new, unique and appealing ways to bring common Welsh language words and phrases into marketing and digital comms.

Potential areas for improvement:

With the National Eisteddfod of Wales due to be delivered in 2024, there is greater emphasis on how events can be delivered in Welsh, but also supported with a warm Welsh experience. Focus needs to be given not only to including Welsh acts/artists/suppliers, but also technology/equipment so that Welsh led events can be understood and interpreted by non-Welsh speaking visitors, thus improving engagement.

Children's Services

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 or culture.

We operate 24/7 365 days a year. Emergency Duty Team provides an out of office hour's response.

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.

The service takes advantage of social media to connect with residents of RCT i.e. Face book, Twitter.

Equalities Impact Assessments are undertaken prior to any strategic developments.

Access to the Services is through a single point which allows for a multi-agency response and consistency of approach.

Human Resources

The service continues to support staff to learn and practice welsh in the workplace. We ensure that all communications are available bi-lingually and that where there is sufficient demand training is provided in welsh or translated. An example of this is providing interview skills to a school using translation.

During the Influenza Programme 2022-we established an issue with the medical consent being bilingual following a complaint from a member of staff. This was discussed with Welsh translation team and we have now raised this to the standards commissioner for clarification (* consent forms the basis on which a nurse will administer the vaccine)

Carefirst Impact assessment- there was an issue with the website translation agreed by NPS so we facilitated a meeting between Welsh translation services and care first to rectify the Welsh translation issues.

Potential areas for improvement:

Ensure continued compliance with Welsh Language Standards.

Fleet Services

The Welsh Language Standards is considered in recruitment and Welsh Language requirements have been incorporated into the latest version of the Service's job descriptions.

Any new member of staff joining the team have been required to complete their Level 1 – Welsh Language Skills. One member of the team has continued their Welsh development by enrolling on the RCT Welsh language course

Although Fleet Services have little to no dealings directly with the public, any correspondence received in Welsh, is duly answered in Welsh.

At times, requests are made for bilingual vehicle graphics and dual language instructions in the wheelchair accessible vehicles. (This is quite a unique feature).

Moreover, all signage in and on vehicles, (where legislatively allowed), is bilingual. Should documentation be required for public use, this is also bilingual

Potential areas for improvement:

More staff “buy in” to learning Welsh

Future recruitment will focus on recruiting Welsh speakers to increase face-to-face Welsh language service provision

Ensure compliance of Welsh standards with regards to vehicle signage etc.

Accountancy and Performance Management Service

Seeks advice from the Council's Welsh Language Service in term of bilingual requirements for the publication of statutory documents (with the Council's Statement of Accounts and Corporate Performance Report produced bilingually);

Has operational guidance in place to assist staff (e.g. central repository to capture the language preference of customers);

Has not received any customer complaints around non-compliance with Welsh Language Standards; 6 officers have linguistic skill level 4 or 5; and

No officers have undertaken Welsh Language training within the service during the past 12 months.

Council Wide

Welsh language provision is an integral part of the Service Self-Evaluation framework, helping to demonstrate the corporate commitment to the use and promotion of the Welsh language. The collection of information via the self-evaluation process also helps Welsh Services to identify where specific support may be required across the Council and informs statutory reporting requirements.

Welsh Language is considered as part of the Council's annual Self-Assessment Report.

Potential areas for improvement:

Continue to offer opportunity for team members to undertaken Welsh language training.

Corporate Estates

- The Service remains committed to the Welsh Language Standards and ensure that all relevant documentation is translated in a timely manner.
- Workplace signage and external signage is monitored by the Service.
- Training has been offered to staff and a member of the Property Information team has taken up this offer.
- The Service has not received any complaints.
- The recent Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy process engaged fully with the Welsh Language teams and took on board comments during the production of the strategy and accompanying report. The strategy and report were then considered by the (New) Equality and Welsh Language Board (E&WLB) and received a very positive response.
- The Service engaged with the Welsh Language Unit as part of the development of the Office Accommodation Strategy and took on board comments raised. The Strategy was considered by the Welsh Language Panel and the suggestions made by the Panel were incorporated into the Strategy, such as using the office accommodation to promote the use of the Welsh language by the use of Welsh speaking Hot desks where staff can communicate in the medium of Welsh and learners can practise speaking Welsh in the office environment.

Potential areas for improvement:

A representative from the Welsh Language Unit will be invited to future meetings of the Asset Management Working Group (next meeting Qtr 4 22/23) to advise on any Welsh language implications in the management of the property assets.

Pensions, Procurement & Transactional Services

Revenues & Benefits:

- Full review of webpages and online services/systems to ensure compliance with key protocols identified by the standards
- Case files updated with indicator where there is a preference for Welsh language contact/communication to ensure this is provided, although demand is limited
- Standing agenda item on Management Team Meetings

Pensions

- Pension documents and publications are available bilingually
- Website and Member Self Service bilingual

Payroll & Payments

- Payroll staff updates provided in bilingual format
- Payslips / P60's are bilingual (iTrent recruitment module will be bilingual on release early 2023)

Procurement:

- The Procurement Service has a positive working relationship with the Welsh Language Standards (WLS) Team & Translation Service.
- Requirements are embedded within the procurement process at all levels and advanced initiatives to promote and enhance the WLS standards within the supply chain are actively supported via the promotion of the 'Commissioning Partner Guide'

We've also worked with the WLS to create a manual for use by contractors. The manual has been created to help and support Council staff and Contractors to comply with the relevant Welsh Language Standards requiring bilingual signage.

Potential areas for improvement:

Continue to identify and record, customer 'language of choice'

Continue to offer opportunities to learn Welsh

Transportation Services

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 2021 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 two years, there has been a slight 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, and from 3,388 to 3,229 in 2022/23 academic year – although indications are that the number of pupils attending Welsh Medium or Dual Language Schools is not falling.

An Equality Impact Assessment in June 2016 considered that the impact of the Learner Travel Policy, Information and Arrangements was substantially positive in its effects on the Welsh language community, eligibility to school transport was consistent and equitable. Several anomalies in delivery were removed from September 2018, but there have been none since that date.

Potential areas for improvement:

Encourage more staff to learn Welsh.

Legal Services

Legal Services as a non-front facing service has little contact with residents and members of the public. However, Legal Notices, Orders, road closure adverts and co-opted Member vacancies are all published bilingually as is Member Attendance. All Election declarations and announcements at the Count venues are made bilingually.

The service has a number of Welsh speaking staff which includes legal advocates and senior managers and as such the Service offers the opportunity to correspond with the Service, be it face to face, written or by telephone through the medium of Welsh as well as the conduct of both civil and criminal proceedings in Welsh. This ensures that those persons wishing to conduct their business through the medium of Welsh receive the same level of service as those who speak English which in turn ensures that the Council continues to meet the requirements set out in the Welsh Language Standards (WLS).

The service has received no complaints or investigations by the Welsh Language Commissioner during the period covered by this report and it continues to support the Council in its adherence to the Welsh Language Standards and assists officers from other services in dealing with complaints they may receive from the Commissioner as well as providing legal advice on the application of those Welsh Language Standards. It is clear there is correlation between the work of Legal Services and the Welsh language Unit as regards ensuring compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and the promotion of those standards across the Council. Close working relationships between the teams have aided this objective.

Potential areas for improvement:

Provide opportunities for non-Welsh speaking staff of the Welsh language courses run by the Council annually in an attempt to increase the numbers of staff who are comfortable with conversational Welsh.

Work more closely with the Welsh Language Unit to aid them in their interaction with the enforcement approach currently being adopted by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Community Safety and Community Housing

Housing Solutions Team

An audit of the Housing Solutions web pages during Autumn 2022 following a complaint by the Welsh Language Commissioner resulted in a comprehensive review meaning that these are now fully compliant and up to date. No further action was pursued by the Commissioner given the Service's prompt response to resolving the issues identified (letter do be added in due course).

Homefinder Team

The Housing Service page on RCTCBC has been reviewed and updated to ensure Welsh Language compliance.

Homefinder has worked with Linguaskin this year to complete the full translation of the Homefinder RCT website, including the application process. This will be fully implanted in 2023/24

Cabinet Report

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment was completed as part of the Housing Support Grant Programme Strategy Strategaeth y Rhaglen Cymorth Tai (RCT) 2022-26

All provider contracts for support services also require our support providers to have Welsh Language policies in place and comply with the Welsh language standards relevant to the contract

Potential Areas for Improvement:

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

Implement Abritas Welsh Language IT Module in 2023/24

Consider Web page Chatbot functionality which can be delivered in over 100 different languages will further allow our customers who wish to engage in the medium of Welsh an enhanced opportunity to do so using this function