

Welsh Language Standards

Annual report 2017/18



This document is also available in Welsh.

1. Introduction

The Welsh Language Standards require Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to produce and publish an annual report by 30 June each year.

This 2017/18 annual report covers the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 and outlines how the council continues to be compliant during this period as well as highlighting any new developments/areas of progress.

2. How the council complies with the Welsh Language Standards

At the time of writing this report the council is still formally under challenge for the following standards: 5,7,29,29A,41,42,52,56,64,67,2,3,21,58,60,76,128 and 129.

The council is therefore not required to be compliant with these standards whilst we await a determination from the Welsh Language Commissioner. These standards may however be referenced in this report to document any progress that has been made towards compliance during 17/18.

2.1 General compliance

- The council continues to have a lead officer which covers the Welsh language
- Employees continue to receive regular updates and information regarding the Welsh language in terms of compliance, access to resources such as training and raising the profile of the language and culture
- Our corporate induction programme has a specific section dedicated to the Welsh language and its importance, which signposts new employees to other information resources
- Although the internal Welsh Language Standards Implementation Board no longer meets face-to-face, we continue to work together to understand and progress the language as well as monitor compliance

- The council is working with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office on progress towards complying with the outstanding standards as identified earlier in this section
- Welsh language continues to remain on the council's risk register in order to help monitor compliance
- Employees continue to be able to access the Welsh Language Champions for support and advice
- Staff intranet pages and the dedicated Welsh email inbox still exist and there are plans in place to review the content on the intranet pages in line with the final determination on the outstanding standards
- The council continues to provide a range of Welsh language training and resources for staff
- Employees are able to access three different Welsh translation contracts in order to ensure we can meet demand as well as access a range of different types of translation support
- We continue to have a [compliance document](#) available which details how we will comply with the relevant service delivery, operational, record-keeping, promotional and policy making standards. Our [complaints procedure](#) is also available on our website as well as previous [annual reports](#).
- We continue to provide information to the Welsh Language Commissioner as requested.

2.2 Service delivery standards

In 17/18 we are continuing to:

- Respond to correspondence received in Welsh where a reply is required
- Issue generic bilingual or separate English and Welsh versions of correspondence, treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English
- Provide a bilingual greeting over the telephone and, where relevant, conversations continue in Welsh until they are concluded or callers are passed to Welsh speaking staff (if available), or to English speaking staff if no Welsh speaker is available and the customer is agreeable to this
- Operate a single main telephone number (01656 643643) for those wishing to speak to someone in Welsh or English. If a Welsh speaking member of staff is not available at the time of calling, callers are advised, in Welsh, when such a service will be available. Those wishing to speak to someone in Welsh can also leave a message in Welsh
- Aim to state on materials that advertise a BCBC telephone number that calls are welcomed in Welsh and English. We continue to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language on the advertising materials
- Have performance indicators for telephone calls that do not treat calls made in Welsh less favourably than those made in English

- Ask people we have invited to a meeting if they wish to use the Welsh language at the meeting and put the necessary arrangements in place to facilitate this. The meeting toolkit that was developed identified that during 17/18, 1673 people attending meetings were offered the opportunity to conduct the meeting in Welsh
- Send bilingual invitations to BCBC public meetings/events (where relevant) and those meetings/events funded by BCBC (50% or more funding). Anyone presenting at meetings will be asked if they wish to use Welsh as well as attendees being advised that they are welcome to use the Welsh language (if we are advised in advance) at the meeting. Materials used for advertising these meeting/events or for display at the meetings/events are bilingual
- Assess the demand for Welsh language education courses that are open to the public and if there is a need, offer the course in Welsh
- Produce public-facing marketing, advertising and publicity materials (including press releases and statements) bilingually. This is also applicable to public-facing corporate documents such as policies and rules as well as consultation documentation. These documents aim to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English. Separate English versions of documents that are available in Welsh (where they are required to be) state this on the English version
- Produce publically available forms bilingually or as separate English and Welsh versions. If separate versions are in place, we state on the English version of the form that the Welsh is available
- Respond to Welsh language social media messages in Welsh where a reply is required
- Replace street, place and direction signs (including temporary signs where applicable) following damage or normal wear and tear, with bilingual signs with the Welsh text appearing first
- Produce official notices bilingually with the Welsh text appearing first
- Have Welsh speaking reception staff and those learning Welsh wearing lanyards to show customers they are able to provide a Welsh language service
- Make bilingual audio announcements with the Welsh announcement first
- Make grant applications (and the process), tenders (and interviews) available in Welsh
- Promote Welsh language services that we have available as required
- Have apps the council uses available bilingually, treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English.

New developments for 17/18:

- As part of working towards compliance with standards 2,3,5,7 and 21 we have developed a central citizen language preference database which is accessible to employees via the staff intranet. This will help us to record and act upon

people's language preference. From April 2018 onwards the council will also be recording language preference via its My Account platform which feeds into the central citizen language database

- In January 2018 we started to produce our agenda and minutes for Cabinet and committee meetings bilingually (standard 41). These are available on our website
- During this period we have been developing a brand new bilingual website for the council which was launched in May 2018. Work to populate the website with relevant English and Welsh content is ongoing (standard 52 and 56)
- During the period, we carried out an audit of social media accounts held and relevant Welsh language/bilingual social media accounts were made available by the end of 2017.

2.3 Policy-making standards

In 17/18 we are continuing to:

- Use our equalities impact assessment (EIA) process to ensure consideration is given to the Welsh language when policies are revised or developed
- Ask those taking part in consultation, engagement and research activity for their views on whether a policy decision (if applicable) could impact on the use of the Welsh language
- Consider the effects that awarding grants may have on the use of the Welsh language

New developments for 17/18:

- We have done further work to develop our EIA process internally. This has included updating our toolkit and improving our central record of completed EIAs.

2.4 Operational standards

In 17/18 we are continuing to:

- Have a policy on using Welsh within the workplace available on our intranet for staff to access
- Allow employees to access the complaints procedure and process in Welsh including relevant documentation
- Allow employees to access the disciplinary procedure and process in Welsh including relevant documentation
- Provide access to computer software for staff to check spelling and grammar
- Ensure the relevant sections/interface of our intranet are accessible in Welsh and have a dedicated Welsh section on the intranet as a resource for staff.
- Assess the Welsh language skills of our employees on an ongoing basis
- Have 'meet and greet' training and Cwrs Mynediad courses available for staff

- Have e-learning packages available for staff on Welsh language awareness and culture as well as on the Welsh language standards
- Provide access to bilingual email signatures and out of office messages. Welsh speakers and Welsh learners are encouraged to identify themselves as such on their email signature (using the relevant recognised logos)
- Assess the Welsh language skills for new and vacant posts. A breakdown of this information is included in section five
- Ensure the job applications process and documentation is available in Welsh and that the Welsh language process is treated no less favourably than the English. This also includes contracts of employment
- Check language preference of employees to provide correspondence relating to their employment, and various employment related forms in Welsh as required
- Ensure relevant HR policies are available in Welsh
- Have bilingual signage in place at our main reception area (Civic Offices), with Welsh appearing first
- Have a [five year strategy](#) in place which we report on at our Cabinet Equalities Committee on an annual basis.

New developments for 17/18:

- Development of an assessment tool to help managers further understand the linguistic skills and development needs of their team so future training can be more targeted. This was piloted in customer services during 17/18
- Work towards compliance has been done in relation to the training standards 128 and 129. For example, we ensured relevant e-learning is available in Welsh; we extended our training policy to support employees to access training externally and reviewed training provision in response to employee needs
- Work to develop our five year strategy is ongoing including looking at partnership opportunities and different ways of measuring the effectiveness of public-facing activities.

2.5 Record-keeping standards

In 17/18 we are continuing to:

- Record any complaints received relating to our compliance as part of our corporate complaints system
- Monitor and record the number of employees accessing training courses through the medium of English and Welsh - see section four for further details
- Record Welsh language skills of employees and assessments of new and vacant posts – see section five for further details

3. Complaints

- In 2016/17 an action group complained to the Welsh Language Commissioner that the council did not offer all swimming lessons in Welsh. The Commissioner suspended the investigation to allow the council to obtain counsel's opinion. An action plan was developed and approved by the Welsh Language Commissioner during 17/18 and implementation is ongoing.
- A complaint was received by the Welsh Language Commissioner in April 2017 in relation to the award of the council's telecare contract. The Welsh Language Commissioner concluded that there would be no further investigation
- An informal complaint was received by the council in January 2018 regarding incorrect highways signage and availability of Welsh speaking staff. The complaint was responded to and concluded in January 2018.
- There were no complaints received under the policy making standards.

4. Employee skills and training

Welsh language skills as at 31 March 2018:

Description	Schools				All other services			
	Femal	Mal	Total	%	Femal	Mal	Total	%
Total	2,610	537	3,14		2,425	676	3,10	
Welsh speaker								
'A little'	327	58	385	12.23	339	99	438	14.12
'Fairly good'	55	15	70	2.22%	39	7	46	1.48%
'Fluent'	137	20	157	4.99%	91	14	105	3.39%
'No'	300	62	362	11.50	1,068	315	1,38	44.60
No response	1,791	382	2,17	69.05	888	241	1,12	36.41
Welsh reader								
'A little'	323	57	380	12.07	358	102	460	14.83
'Fairly good'	62	15	77	2.45%	48	17	65	2.10%
'Fluent'	139	21	160	5.08%	91	13	104	3.35%
'No'	295	62	357	11.34	1038	303	1,34	43.24
No response	1,791	382	2,17	69.05	890	241	1,13	36.47
Welsh writer								
'A little'	294	53	347	11.03	269	72	341	11.00
'Fairly good'	57	13	70	2.22%	48	12	60	1.93%
'Fluent'	131	20	151	4.80%	79	10	89	2.87%
'No'	336	69	405	12.87	1,140	340	1,48	47.73
No response	1,792	382	2,17	69.08	889	242	1,13	36.47

Please note:

- The 'Schools' category covers employees directly employed by governing bodies. Inclusion staff are included under the 'All other services' category
- The 'No response' category covers employees who have not provided details of Welsh language skills
- The skill levels identified are based on individual self-assessment
- 248 employees hold a school position and an 'All other services' position and are counted once in each category.

Number of employees who attended training courses in Welsh between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018:

- Welsh language 'Meet and Greet' training was provided to 24 attendees (two sessions during 2017/18)
- 37 employees have attended 'Cwrs Mynediad' training, enabling them to develop their language skills further. This comprised of two year 1 classes and one year 2 class, each based on two hours per week over 30 weeks
- There were no requests for face to face training materials to be made available in Welsh during 2017/18
- There were 11 Welsh language e-learning module completions during 2017/18. These were for the violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) e-learning module.

5. Recruitment and selection

Number of new and vacant posts advertised during 2017/18 where Welsh language skills were:

Essential: 21	Desirable: 613
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6. Reception services: contact centres and telephone contact centres

Demand for Welsh services in the Customer Contact Centre between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018:

Face to face interactions in Welsh	5
Total visits	26,578
Welsh requests as % of total interactions conducted	0.02%

Demand for Welsh services in the Telephone Contact Centre between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 (telephone customers requesting a Welsh service do so by choosing option 7 on the opening bilingual message):

Volume of calls during normal working hours (Welsh and English)	160,528*
Volume of calls received out of hours (Welsh and English)	N/A**
Total calls received (Welsh and English)	160, 528
Volume of calls in Welsh	301
Welsh requests as a % of total calls	0.19%

*Please note: we now experience a lower number of incoming calls as result of recycling and waste enquiries being handled directly by our partner Kier.

*In 2017/18 our telephony systems changed and as a result our ability to report on calls (English and Welsh) made outside of office hours has changed. We will need to find a new solution for reporting on this in 18/19.

7. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) carried out between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018

Four full EIAs were carried out and considered the impact of the policy/strategy on people's opportunity to use the Welsh language in a positive or negative way and treat both languages equally. No impact was identified and as a result, no amendments were made to the proposed policies/strategies assessed.

8. Promoting and raising awareness of the Welsh language and Welsh culture

The council promoted the following events and activities between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018:

- Commonwealth Games (Welsh team);
- St Dwynwen's Day;
- Internal emails about the citizens language preference database;
- Shwmae Sumae Day;
- St David's Day;
- Urdd & Urdd 7s;
- BCBC Welsh language social media accounts;
- Welsh culture/language fairs and festivals;
- Welsh medium education.

The detail of these promotional activities will be documented as part of our reporting process for our Welsh language strategy. This period will be reported on at our Cabinet Equalities Committee in November 2018.