



Welsh Language Strategy

September 2016

This document is also available in Welsh

INTRODUCTION

The council has developed this five year Welsh language strategy in response to the following Welsh Language Standards:

145	You must produce, and publish on your website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how you propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in your area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters) - (a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and (b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target; and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).
146	Five years after publishing a strategy in accordance with standard 145 you must - (a) assess to what extent you have followed that strategy and have reached the target set by it, and (b) publish that assessment on your website, ensuring that it contains the following information - (i) the number of Welsh speakers in your area, and the age of those speakers; (ii) a list of the activities that you have arranged or funded during the previous 5 years in order to promote the use of the Welsh language.

SECTION ONE: EMPLOYEES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of this strategy, it is relevant to reference the work that has been undertaken and is planned by the council to: promote Welsh language in the workplace and improve the Welsh language skills of its employees.
- 1.2 This is important in the context of the council working towards ensuring the provision of language choice in service delivery and within its internal processes.

2.0 CURRENT SITUATION

2.1 Profile of the workforce

- 2.1.1 Employee data is held in the HR integrated system, which categorises skills in Welsh language, i.e. Welsh speaker; Welsh reader; and Welsh writer. These can be recorded as fluent; fairly good, a little and no ability. Employees can also opt for “prefer not to say” as it is not mandatory for employees to provide such data.
- 2.1.2 A report on this data as at 1 September 2016 is set out in [Appendix 1](#). This provides a breakdown by main service area within each directorate. It is important to note that this is based on employees’ assessment of their own skills. Also, whilst this information has been captured for the employees, there are over 40 per cent of employees who have not provided this information.

2.2 Supporting employees to improve Welsh language skills and raising awareness of Welsh language in the workplace

- 2.2.1 During 2016/2017 a range of learning and development resources have been implemented to ensure employees: are equipped to undertake their role; are able to develop their Welsh language skills and have an awareness of Welsh language. In summary this includes:
- Updating the corporate induction programme to include Welsh language awareness
 - Providing face-to-face training for around 400 customer-facing employees
 - Arranging face-to-face training for employees to develop language skills, approximately 46 employees commencing Cwrs Mynediad in Sept 2016
 - Developing and launching e-learning modules for employees: on using Welsh language in the workplace specifically for managers; and to develop an awareness of Welsh language history and culture, understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards
 - Implementing a policy on Using Welsh language in the Workplace
 - Introducing Welsh language champions in all directorates
 - Making web pages available on the council’s intranet to give an overview of the Welsh Language Standards and what they mean

- Providing briefings for all employees to raise awareness of the standards, including a DVD of the Chief Executive
- Asking employees to indicate whether they would prefer to receive future correspondence in relation to their employment with the council in English or Welsh.

2.2.2 All corporate learning and development activities are recorded in the HR integrated system which will enable monitoring of all corporate Welsh language learning and development.

2.3 Recruitment

2.3.1 All recruitment material for applicants is available online in English and Welsh via the council's e-recruitment system.

2.3.2 Managers' guidelines and the e-learning module have been updated to reflect the considerations managers need to make throughout the recruitment process. This starts with determining the need for Welsh language skills for the vacant position through to candidates selecting to use the Welsh language during the selection process.

2.3.3 Records are also maintained on the skills assessments made by managers for each position advertised.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aim

3.1.1 The council is committed to maintaining the percentage of Welsh speakers in the workforce in order to achieve the following principles:

- The council must deliver services in Welsh and encourage the use of the language
- Customers have the right to communicate with the council in Welsh
- Language choice is available for employees when dealing with HR matters
- The quality of service and a positive attitude are important.

3.1.2 One of the main transformation projects for the council is to deliver services online as a matter of course. Whilst new communication channels will be available in Welsh, the introduction of a digital operating model will mean a reduction in a customer-facing staff resource and may impact upon our aim to maintain the level of Welsh speakers.

3.2 **The key objectives** to achieve the desired outcome of having sufficient capacity within the workforce to deliver services, as required, in Welsh, are set out below along with identified actions:

3.2.1 **Objective one: Identify the capacity in service areas to deliver services in Welsh**

Actions:

- Take actions to increase the level of employee data held in the HR integrated system
- Assess language skill requirements for posts within service areas, initially focussing on those that have direct contact with customers, e.g. reception areas
- Audit the language skills of employees within service areas
- Assess language skills capacity within service areas based on recognised qualification and assessment frameworks
- Undertake skills analysis based on identified gaps.

3.2.2 **Objective two: To provide appropriate learning and development solutions at various levels to meet identified needs within budget allocation**

Actions:

- Raise awareness of Welsh language in the workplace
- Provide training for staff to meet and greet customers
- Develop a training programme for employees to access training based on linguistic assessment which may include entry level, level one to four and proficiency training
- Develop a range of resources for employees who wish to improve skills
- Signpost community-based services for employees
- Promote learning opportunities for employees.

3.2.3 **Objective three: To establish arrangements in recruiting to positions where Welsh language skills are essential**

- Assessing and recording the Welsh language skills requirements for all vacancies, taking account of service and skills assessments
- Identifying a range of recruitment advertising methods which target Welsh speakers
- Developing assessment tools in the selection processes relating to Welsh language skills.

4.0 **MEASURING SUCCESS AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES**

4.1 The outcomes of the actions outlined above will be identified and monitored by HR/OD Manager.

4.2 **Objective one: Identify the capacity in service areas to deliver services in Welsh**

This objective will mainly involve working with managers of customer-facing services to gather information about service needs and employee skills.

Specific measures will include:

- monitoring the level of employee data held in the HR integrated system
- providing reports on skill levels based on the above
- providing specific service reports on service needs and employee skills.

4.3 **Objective two: To provide appropriate learning and development solutions at various levels to meet identified needs within budget allocation**

Outcomes will be measured through reporting on:

- internal and external training courses provided
- the number of attendees
- training evaluations
- take-up of e-learning modules
- e-learning evaluations
- the range of resources provided and communication activity.

4.4 **Objective three: To establish arrangements in recruiting to positions where Welsh language skills are essential**

This measure will be assessed by:

- reporting on language requirements for vacant positions
- monitoring outcomes of recruitment for Welsh language posts

SECTION TWO: THE PUBLIC

1.0 CURRENT SITUATION

1.1 In 2011 the census confirmed (for Bridgend County Borough) that 9.7 per cent of respondents (13,103 people aged over three) answered yes to the question 'Can you speak Welsh?' The age range of these respondents is broken down in the table below:

Age band	Number	% of total in band
3 – 4	473	15.3
5 – 9	1843	24.3
10 – 14	2450	29.3
15 – 19	1740	20.7
20 – 24	937	11.4
25 – 29	803	9.5
30 - 34	663	8.0
35 – 39	698	7.6
40 – 44	589	5.6
45 – 49	445	4.2
50 – 54	430	4.6
55 – 59	386	4.5
60 – 64	363	4.0
65 - 69	323	4.3
70 – 74	272	4.4
75 – 79	247	5.2
80 - 84	201	6.1
85+	240	7.9
Total	13103	

1.2 In summary, prior to the introduction of the Welsh Language Standards the council promoted and facilitated the use of the Welsh language to the public in the following ways:

- Developed a Welsh Language Scheme for the authority which improved access to a number of council services through the medium of Welsh e.g. telephone, webpages and promotional materials. We added to this with various guidance documents for specific areas such as signage
- Developed promotional and advertising materials bilingually
- Developed and implemented a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) which focuses on children of all ages being able to access Welsh-medium education. This involves working closely with key partners
- Developed provisions in key areas such as sport and play and cultural services
- Promoted and raised awareness of Welsh language events and activities that we were aware of albeit in an adhoc way e.g. Shwmae Shwmae day and Welsh holiday programmes.

1.3 Since the introduction of the Welsh Language Standards we have built on this work and strengthened the public-facing services available in Welsh listed above. Additionally, we have:

- Adapted our processes and procedures for meetings and public events so Welsh speakers can use Welsh if required
- Adapted our process for handling and recording bilingual correspondence
- Developed and or reviewed some of our public-facing policies such as complaints, tenders, grants etc.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 **Aim:** to maintain the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough.

2.2 **Objective one: To raise the profile of the Welsh language, culture and local activities and events organised by the council and our partners in a structured way.**

2.2.1 Actions:

- Develop a rolling calendar of Welsh language activities and events taking place within Bridgend County Borough, linking in with partners accordingly
- Include national Welsh cultural events such as St David's Day
- The council's Communications, Marketing and Engagement team will manage and update the calendar on an ongoing basis
- The team will use the calendar to raise the profile of these activities and events through its various corporate communications and marketing channels, such as social media, press releases, internal communications etc.
- The team will be targeting citizens, schools, local businesses etc with these communications as required.

2.3 **Objective two: To increase the promotion and awareness of the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) particularly in relation to objectives one, two and four of the plan, which are:**

- *More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh*
- *More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school*
- *More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh*

2.3.1 Actions:

- **School modernisation programme:**
 - Review and consider our options to deliver Welsh medium education and increase numbers

- Review and consider Welsh medium schools' future provision covering ages 3 – 16 or 3 – 19 years
- Map the provision of Welsh medium additional learning needs support
- **Flying Start programme:**
 - Extend provision within identified communities across Bridgend County Borough, targeting children 0 – 4 and their families

2.4 Objective three: To explore (and implement where possible) any new activities which will support the use of the Welsh language more widely within the county borough, promoting these accordingly.

2.4.1 Actions:

- Explore (and implement where possible) a mystery shopper function to provide feedback that can then be used to improve services for the public
- Explore (and then implement if the demand is there) a series of informal Welsh language courses which the public can sign up to
- Explore linking in with Menter Bro Ogwr to support the Ogi Ogi Ogwr festival which aims to raise the profile of Welsh within the county borough.

2.5 For all of these objectives, we may develop some of these activities in partnership.

3.0 MEASURING SUCCESS AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

3.1 This section will cover measuring success in terms of percentage of Welsh speakers in Bridgend County Borough as well as measuring the success of individual activities undertaken which aim to maintain the numbers of Welsh speakers.

3.2 Objective one

Success will be measured by:

- Collecting data on the activities on an ongoing basis
- Reporting annually on the promotional activity undertaken and where applicable the return on investment
- Including data such as number and type of promotional activities, level of reach (social media), number of people attending events etc.

3.2.1 We will create a separate communications plan for the Urdd Eisteddfod 2017.

3.3 Objective two

Success will be measured by:

- Collecting and analysing performance data against the targets set for objective one, two and four of the WESP
- Including targets and annual data (also reported to Welsh Government) for the number of seven year olds being taught through the medium of Welsh, the number of learners improving their skills from primary to secondary school and the number of learners 16-19 studying in Welsh in either school, college or work.
- Reporting, at the multi-agency WESP Forum, on promotional/awareness activities such as the use of the Welsh Medium education/marketing materials, which have been used to help meet the target figures.

3.3.1 Ongoing progress towards achieving the objectives within the WESP will continue to be discussed at the termly WESP board meetings.

3.4 Objective three (if implemented):

Success will be measured by:

- Collecting feedback as a result of the mystery shopper exercises and reporting annually on how this information has been used to improve services where relevant
- Reporting on public Welsh course attendance, sign ups, feedback etc.
- Reporting on the activity and number of people attending the Ogi Ogi Ogwr event.

3.5 Percentage of Welsh speakers in Bridgend County Borough

3.5.1 The next census is due in 2021, depending on the timing of release of that data and the timing of reporting on this strategy, we will report on and compare 2021 data against the 2011 data in section 1.1. This will help us to understand and evaluate how the number of Welsh speakers and their ages has changed during the 10 year period and the five year period of this strategy.

3.5.2 We will also use the data that will come out of our population assessment, (required by April 2017) as an interim indicator on the number and ages of Welsh speakers within Bridgend County Borough. It is not compulsory however for people to respond to this survey so it is unlikely to give a full picture.

REVIEW

We will aim to publish a revised strategy three months before the end of the current strategy term (September 2021).

Information that we collect and report on annually for both employees and the public will be included in the council's annual Welsh language report (due June 30 each year). This will also be reported to the council's Cabinet Equalities Committee.