

# Welsh Language Standards

## Annual report 2019/20



*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 2019/20 annual report covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 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**

The council is no longer under challenge for any standards and any changes to compliance dates, extensions or circumstance for the previously challenged standards can be viewed in the council's amended compliance notice.

#### **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 e-learning module has a specific section dedicated to the Welsh language and its importance, which signposts new employees to other information resources
- Our manager induction e-learning module has a specific section dedicated to the Welsh language and its importance, which signposts new managers to other information resources
- As part of the manager induction programme the officer who is responsible for Welsh Language does a presentation on the Welsh Language Standards and what this means in practice for managers so ensuring their understanding of the council's obligations and their management responsibilities.

- Welsh language remains 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 ([WLS@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:WLS@bridgend.gov.uk)) still exist. Many of the intranet pages have now been updated but there is still some work to be completed.
- The council continues to provide a range of Welsh language training and resources for staff
- The council now support staff to attend community courses on Welsh language training
- Employees are able to access the NPS framework to access 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 19/20 we have continued 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
- 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
- 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 19/20, 559 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 a Welsh form 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 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
- We continue 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 continued to develop bilingual content and functionality on the website as required (standard 52 and 56)
- Continue to post bilingually on social media and respond to Welsh queries received in Welsh, where a response is required. We do not post bilingually in circumstances where there is an emergency or urgent communications need to be issued.

#### New developments for 19/20:

- We have worked on the functionality of the central citizen language database and have been working to ensure that My Account subscribers are manually

input into the central system. This system assists us to record and act upon people's language preference

- We have issued guidance to staff to help them to comply with standard 1, when dealing with correspondence received in Welsh
- We have ensured that with the exception of parking machines (extension until August 2021) all self-service machines are fully functional in Welsh
- We have changed the IVR system on the main telephone line so callers now select their language preference rather than it defaulting to English

### **2.3 Policy-making standards**

In 19/20 we have continued 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 19/20:

- We have continued to develop our EIA process internally, ensuring that we are able to accurately monitor and record the EIAs completed annually and assess impact on Welsh Language
- As a result of the learning taken from seminars that were held during 2018 by the Welsh Language Commissioner we have ensured that relevant wording in relation to adverse and positive effects on the language exists consistently in every policy making consultation and ensure the outcomes of the adverse/positive impact is recorded in the consultation.

### **2.4 Operational standards**

In 19/20 we have continued to:

- Enable employees to access the complaints procedure and process in Welsh including relevant documentation
- Enable 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, and provide training (e-learning) in Welsh in recruitment and interviewing, performance management, Induction and using Welsh effectively in meetings, interviews and complaints and disciplinary procedures (standards 128 and 129)
- Have bilingual signage in place at our main reception area (Civic Offices), with Welsh appearing first
- Report on the [five year strategy](#) at our Cabinet Equalities Committee on an annual basis.

#### New developments for 19/20:

- We have reviewed our bilingual signage in place at our main reception area (Civic Offices), in line with Welsh Language Commissioner best practice workshops
- We have reviewed, updated and issued a revised Welsh in the Workplace policy to staff
- As part of our digital transformation programme, we've developed a bilingual Chatbot for residents to communicate with us in both Welsh and English on our website. The Chatbot has been programmed with automated responses to questions that have been asked by residents and it also learns more answers the more it is used over time. Residents are directed to the relevant pages on the website or a member of the customer services team can intervene and help with queries in the residents chosen language.
- In order to 'identify the capacity in service areas to deliver services in Welsh' and to 'Assess language skill requirements for posts within service areas' (initially focussing on those that have direct contact with customers eg reception areas). We have used the Linguistic Assessment Tool for evaluating the linguistic needs of posts within the main reception areas of the council, this has been completed within Civic Offices, Bridgend Resource Centre and Trem-y-Mor. As a result of this, these service areas

have a training plan identified for Welsh Language Skills Training to ensure they have the capacity to deliver services in Welsh.

- We have made progress in the development of the Welsh Medium childcare settings across the County Borough, a steering group made up of childcare professionals and third sector colleagues has been established and meets regularly to ensure effective delivery over the next three years
- We have produced a Welsh Medium Education booklet to promote Welsh Medium Education to parents and have worked with health visitors, midwives and other professionals to deliver the booklets to parents at an early stage in their child's life

## **2.5 Record-keeping standards**

In 19/20 we have continued 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
- Record the number of Welsh interactions that take place over a number of channels (telephone, face to face and digital) within the customer services contact centre

## **3. Complaints**

- The Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public on 30 March 2019. The complainant alleged that: The page for changing direct debit details under the 'My Account' tab on the Council's website does not function fully through the medium of Welsh. An allegation that the complainant did not receive a full response to Welsh medium correspondence that he sent to the email address [talktous@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:talktous@bridgend.gov.uk). He received a message stating: "Diolch i chi am eich e bost, rydym wedi anfon ei ymlaen i'r adran berthnasol ar gyfer eu sylw."
- The Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public on 4 July 2019 regarding an allegation that the complainant received correspondence in English from the Council through Bro Ogwr Primary School. The complainant also noted that there was not an option to select a language preference for the course that is the subject of the letter
- The Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public on 16 October 2019 regarding an automatic email the complainant received from the Council acknowledging a council tax payment. The email was sent from the email address [AUTOMAILER@E-PAYCAPITA.COM](mailto:AUTOMAILER@E-PAYCAPITA.COM) and the same email

template was the subject of complaint CSG616. The complainant alleged that the Welsh version contained errors.

- The Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public on 14 January 2020 regarding the Welsh text on the bottom of the voting card sent to the electorate for the General Election of 12/12/19. The complainant was of the opinion that “*Os rhoi dychwelyd i'r*” was not correct translation of “*If undelivered return to*”. The commissioner also stated that it appeared that the address for returning the card is in English only (Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB). The council have provided a response to the Commissioner stating that the council is not the responsible body for maintaining the Register of Electors or sending polling cards to registered voters. These functions are the responsibility of the Registration Officer and the Returning Officer whose roles are independent of the council.
- There were no complaints received under the policy making standards

#### 4. Employee skills and training

Welsh language skills as at 31 March 2020:

Description	Schools				All other services			
	Female	Male	Total	%	Female	Male	Total	%
<b>Total headcount</b>	<b>2,494</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>3,011</b>		<b>2,352</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>3,065</b>	
<b>Welsh speaker</b>								
'A little'	345	64	409	13.58%	341	105	446	14.55%
'Fairly good'	73	14	87	2.89%	40	7	47	1.53%
'Fluent'	135	18	153	5.08%	98	24	122	3.98%
'No'	351	71	422	14.02%	1,169	373	1,542	50.31%
No response	1,590	350	1,940	64.43%	704	204	908	29.62%
<b>Welsh reader</b>								
'A little'	354	62	416	13.82%	368	115	483	15.76%
'Fairly good'	82	15	97	3.22%	54	16	70	2.28%
'Fluent'	135	19	154	5.11%	97	22	119	3.88%
'No'	333	71	404	13.42%	1,129	355	1,484	48.42%
No response	1,590	350	1,940	64.43%	704	205	909	29.66%
<b>Welsh writer</b>								
'A little'	318	54	372	12.35%	295	72	367	11.97%
'Fairly good'	74	16	90	2.99%	48	13	61	1.99%
'Fluent'	125	17	142	4.72%	84	19	103	3.36%
'No'	386	80	466	15.48%	1,221	402	1,623	52.95%
No response	1,591	350	1,941	64.46%	704	207	911	29.72%

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 their Welsh language skills.
- The skill levels identified are based on individual self-assessment.
- 226 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 2019 and 31 March 2020:**

- 20 employees have attended 'Cwrs Mynediad' training in 2019/20, enabling them to develop their language skills further. This included those undertaking year 1 and year 2, each based on two hours per week over 30 weeks.
- 6 employees have been supported to attend Welsh Language courses in the community. These courses included Foundation, Sylfaen Part 1 and Sylfaen Part 2.
- Business Welsh training was also provided to 8 individuals over 10 weeks.
- There were no requests for face to face training materials to be made available in Welsh during the year.
- There were 71 Welsh language e-learning module completions
- There have been 161 e-learning completions for Welsh Language Awareness e-Learning and Welsh Language Standards e-Learning
- 595 new employees completed the corporate induction e-learning module and 92 new starters completed it via a workbook. Total completions 687. Corporate induction includes a section on the introduction to Welsh Language, the Welsh Language Standards and links to the Welsh Language E-Learning Modules and Welsh Language Training Opportunities.
- 22 new managers completed the manager induction e-learning module. Manager induction includes an introduction to Welsh Language and the Welsh Language Standards and links to the Welsh Standards E-Learning Module and the Welsh Language Awareness E-Learning Module.

**5. Recruitment and selection**

Number of new and vacant posts advertised during 2019/20 where Welsh language skills were:

Essential: 15	Desirable: 588
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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 2019 and 31 March 2020:

Face to face interactions in Welsh	5
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Total visits	16,190
Welsh requests as % of total interactions conducted	0.03%

Demand for Welsh services in the Telephone Contact Centre between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020

Volume of calls during normal working hours (Welsh and English)	117,687
Volume of calls received out of hours (Welsh and English)	9,004
Total calls received (Welsh and English)	126,691
Volume of calls in Welsh	67
Welsh requests as a % of total calls	0.06%

Face to Face interaction reduced dramatically last year from 30,989 down to 16,190. With that said, 5 welsh requests were received face to face compared to 4 the previous year. Although the volume is fairly consistent, there is an increase in percentage of Welsh communication, due to the overall reduction of face to face interaction.

Telephony requests have reduced significantly from 161,483 down to 126,691. This is due to some initiatives, such as creating more functionality with our online platforms and working on changing our telephony system, to only receive calls meant for our service and attempting to remove the volume of switchboard calls received.

## 7. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

Eight 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 2019 and 31 March 2020:

- St Dwynwen's Day;
- New Welsh paybyphone service;
- BridgendFEASTival local Welsh food and entertainment;
- Brand new Welsh school @calonycymoedd was officially open;
- Calon Y Cymoedd Welsh provision for children with autism;
- Welsh Language play scheme (Menter Bro Ogwr);
- Welsh Language sports camp with @Urdd;
- Free taster session! Urdd little footballers 3 - 6 years old;

- Eisteddfod;
- Shwmae Sumae day;
- Welsh Medium Education booklet;
- Welsh Language Rights day;
- Celebrate 70 years of #Welsh Medium Education in the Llynfi Valley;
- St David's Day;
- Bridgend Business Forum St David's Day;
- Welsh Medium Education advice event;
- Online Welsh materials for children;
- Coity castle conservation work - jewel of Welsh history;
- The Welsh rockabilly fair.

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 Committee Equalities in November 2020.