

# Welsh Language Standards

## Annual report 2021/22



*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 2021/22 annual report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 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 21/22 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.
- 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 21/22:

- We have continued to improve and develop our online platform My Account, enabling subscribers to report issues such as pest control and street lighting via the platform through the medium of Welsh.
- We have appointed a Welsh Language Officer, who will support the lead officer to monitor compliance and deliver the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.

## **2.3 Policy-making standards**

In 21/22 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 21/22:

- We have continued to monitor our EIA process to ensure that we assess the impact of any policy, practice or strategic decision on the use of Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably.
- Awarding Grants Policy has been written by Grŵp Deddf and will be taken shortly to Corporate Management Team for discussion and adoption. Once approval has been given the policy will be shared with officers who administer grants.

## **2.4 Operational standards**

In 21/22 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 21/22:

- The council has asked residents from across Bridgend County Borough, schools, Members and other stakeholders to share their views by taking part in a public consultation on the draft Welsh Language objectives. The public consultation went live on 10 May 2021 and closed on 18 June 2021. The new Welsh Language Strategy and action plan for 2021 to 2026 was published on the Council's website on 1 September 2021.
- The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) consultation was launched on 27 September 2021. This consultation invited views on Bridgend County Borough Council's WESP 2022-2032. The consultation aimed to seek the views of residents, our workforce, elected members and stakeholders on the proposed WESP for 2022-2032. The results from the consultation were used to inform the final WESP which will be implemented in September 2022. The consultation closed on 19 December 2021, and results were presented to Cabinet in January 2022.
- We have continued to make 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 worked with partners to promote our Welsh essential jobs, allowing us to recruit additional Welsh speakers to improve our Welsh offering.

## **2.5 Record-keeping standards**

In 21/22 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 15 March 2022 regarding Awen Cultural Trust, who are responsible for delivering services on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council, including libraries, community centres and Bryngarw Country Park.

In the complaint it was identified that Awen Cultural Trust were not fully aware of the requirements upon them under the Welsh Language Standards and it appeared that there were no adequate arrangements in place to ensure that the trust was aware of which standards are applicable to them and therefore what is required to ensure compliance.

BCBC has submitted evidence to the commissioner to evidence Awen's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. At the time of the report, BCBC had not received a response to the evidence it had submitted to the Commissioner.

- There were no complaints received under the policy making standards

### 4. Employee skills and training

Welsh language skills as at 31 March 2022:

Description	BCBC excluding Schools			
	Male	Female	Total	%
<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>2217</b>	<b>2919</b>	
<b>Welsh Speaker</b>				
'A little'	123	386	509	17.44%
'Fairly Good'	10	40	50	1.71%
'Fluent'	23	87	110	3.77%
'No'	368	1169	1537	52.66%
'Not Declared'	178	535	713	24.43%
<b>Welsh Reader</b>				
'A little'	122	416	538	18.43%
'Fairly Good'	18	53	71	2.43%
'Fluent'	21	89	110	3.77%
'No'	362	1124	1486	50.91%

Schools			
Male	Female	Total	%
<b>530</b>	<b>2438</b>	<b>2968</b>	
<b>Welsh Speaker</b>			
80	381	461	15.53%
11	88	99	3.34%
22	143	165	5.56%
80	367	447	15.06%
337	1459	1796	60.51%
<b>Welsh Reader</b>			
77	392	469	15.80%
12	94	106	3.57%
23	145	168	5.66%
80	347	427	14.39%

'Not Declared'	179	535	714	24.46%
<b>Welsh Writer</b>				
'A little'	81	337	418	14.32%
'Fairly Good'	19	42	61	2.09%
'Fluent'	16	77	93	3.19%
'No'	405	1226	1631	55.88%
'Not Declared'	181	535	716	24.53%

338	1460	1798	60.58%
<b>Welsh Writer</b>			
70	359	429	14.45%
12	85	97	3.27%
21	135	156	5.26%
89	398	487	16.41%
338	1461	1799	60.61%

Please note:

- The 'Schools' category covers employees directly employed by governing bodies. Inclusion staff are included under the 'BCBC excluding schools' category.
- The 'Not Declared' category covers employees who have not provided details of their Welsh language skills.
- The skill levels identified are based on individual self-assessment.
- 219 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 2021 and 31 March 2022:**

- 26 employees have attended 'Cwrs Mynediad' training in 2021/22, enabling them to develop their language skills further. This includes those undertaking year 1, based on two hours per week over 30 weeks.
- 28 employees have been supported to attend Welsh Language courses in the community. These courses included Foundation, Sylfaen Part 1 and Sylfaen Part 2, Sylfaen Part 3.
- There were no requests for face to face training materials to be made available in Welsh during the year.
- There have been 34 e-learning completions for Welsh Language Awareness e-Learning (English – 19, Welsh - 1) and Welsh Language Standards e-Learning (14).
- 298 new employees completed the corporate induction e-learning module and 43 new starters completed it via a workbook. Total completions 341. 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.
- 28 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 2021/22 where Welsh language skills were:

Category	Number of posts categorised	Percentage of posts categorised
Essential	23	3.12%
Desirable	714	96.88%
Need to learn Welsh	0	0.00%
No Welsh skills required	0	0.00%

## 6. Reception services: contact centres and telephone contact centres

Demand for Welsh services in the Customer Contact Centre between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022:

Face to face interactions in Welsh	0
Total visits	0
Welsh requests as % of total interactions conducted	0%

Demand for Welsh services in the Telephone Contact Centre between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022:

Volume of calls during normal working hours (Welsh and English)	115,671
Volume of calls received out of hours (Welsh and English)	5,112
Total calls received (Welsh and English)	120,783
Volume of calls in Welsh	63
Welsh requests as a % of total calls	0.05%

Due to the closure of council offices, there were no face to face visits recorded for the last financial year across all languages. With this, we expected to see a significant uplift in telephone and online contact. Telephony requests increased this

year from 111,072 up to 120,783. We have continued to regularly interact with the public surrounding the support on offer, with online solutions to interact with us, as well as develop our telephone interactive voice response to route calls through to the correct area first time, rather than to a switchboard service.

With that said, we have seen a vast decrease in the number of requests to speak with us in Welsh, even though we recruited an additional Welsh speaker into our contact centre during the year to assist in dealing with more Welsh speakers when required.

## **7. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

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 2021 and 31 March 2022:

- Afon Felin – Gold Award Cymraeg Campus
- Litchard Primary – Gold Award Cymraeg Campus
- Urdd Summer of Fun
- Work has started on 4 new Welsh school provision - Blackmill
- Construction started Welsh medium childcare hub Garw Valley
- Two new Welsh Medium childcare provisions coming to Bridgend
- Construction started Welsh Medium childcare Bettws
- Welsh Language Rights Day
- Shwmae Shwmae
- Mudiad Meithrin and Cymraeg i Blant
- Welsh Language Standards Annual Report
- Welsh Language Strategy / Consultation
- St David's Day
- St Dwynwen's Day
- Clwb Coffi
- Welsh-Medium playgroup or school
- Childcare Offer Wales
- Dydd Miswg Cymru
- Funding to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr and establish a new Welsh-medium school in Porthcawl
- Recruitment of Welsh speaking childcare providers

- Comisiynyddy Gymraeg survey
- Recruitment of Welsh speaking roles
- Welsh Language Twitter

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 2022.