

# Welsh Language Standards

## Annual report 2022/23



*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 July each year.

This 2022/23 annual report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 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 who deals with 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 22/23 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 publicly 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 22/23:

- 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 a Welsh Language Officer, who continues to support the new lead officer to monitor compliance and deliver the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.
- The Welsh Language and Equalities e-learning training modules are now mandatory to all staff.

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

In 22/23 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 22/23:

- 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 Protocol approved by CMB and the protocol shared with officers who administer grants and published on the intranet.

### **2.4 Operational standards**

In 22/23 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 22/23:

- During April 2023 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 Porthcawl Welsh-medium seedling school
- The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) was implemented in September 2022. We have continued to work with Education and other members to progress with the objectives set in the 5 year plan.
- 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 22/23 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 30/03/2023 about the fact that it is not possible to access the Welsh language website in order to see a council tax bill. Following investigation a system failure was noted and reported to the administrators to resolve. The complaint had been resolved and that council tax bills can now be viewed and read on Bridgend Council's website in Welsh.
- A complaint was also received by the commissioner on 18/04/2023 relating to English-only signs. The complaint relates to 4 road signs between Cwmfelin and Ysgol Gyfun Cymraeg Llangynwyd where it was claimed that all signs declared "Bridgend" in English only. BCBC submitted a response to the commissioner to evidence the signs in question have been in place since between 2008 and 2011 therefore before the implementation of the Standards. No further investigation was required by the commissioner
- The Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public on 29/03/2023 about three English street signs that have been installed by the Council within the last 12 months: Heol Castell Coety, Davies Avenue and Raphael Avenue are the streets in question. BCBC are currently working with the commissioner to resolve this complaint,
- The Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public on 15/12/2022 claiming that the Council has failed to comply with policy-making standards in relation to the learner travel arrangements policy, and that the Council's arrangements in terms of school catchment areas treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language. At this time investigations are being carried out to resolve this complaint.
- As a result of an investigation opened in August 2022 by the commissioner Bridgend County Borough Council has spent time reviewing its existing guidance around Welsh language impact assessments (WLIA) as per the advice received. The new guidance emphasises the need to include questions regarding the effects of the proposal on the Welsh language. The new guidance document includes a set of questions and a consultation checklist relating to the steps service areas should take when considering a consultation exercise.

## 4. Employee skills and training

### 4.1 Welsh language skills as at 31 March 2023:

Description	BCBC excluding Schools					Schools			
	Female	Male	Total	%		Female	Male	Total	%
<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>2240</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>2963</b>			<b>2454</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>2985</b>	
<b>Welsh Speaker</b>						<b>Welsh Speaker</b>			
'A little'	459	136	595	20.08%		398	80	478	16.01%
'Fairly Good'	45	14	59	1.99%		92	12	104	3.48%
'Fluent'	90	20	110	3.71%		147	24	171	5.73%
'No'	1181	398	1579	53.29%		387	81	468	15.68%
'Not Declared'	465	155	620	20.92%		1430	334	1764	59.10%
<b>Welsh Reader</b>						<b>Welsh Reader</b>			
'A little'	482	138	620	20.92%		410	77	487	16.31%
'Fairly Good'	59	23	82	2.77%		99	13	112	3.75%
'Fluent'	91	17	108	3.64%		145	25	170	5.70%
'No'	1139	389	1528	51.57%		368	80	448	15.01%
'Not Declared'	469	156	625	21.09%		1432	336	1768	59.23%
<b>Welsh Writer</b>						<b>Welsh Writer</b>			
'A little'	385	93	478	16.13%		366	71	437	14.64%
'Fairly Good'	43	20	63	2.13%		92	14	106	3.55%
'Fluent'	85	14	99	3.34%		137	23	160	5.36%
'No'	1259	439	1698	57.31%		426	87	513	17.19%
'Not Declared'	468	157	625	21.09%		1433	336	1769	59.26%

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.
- 214 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 2022 and 31 March 2023:

- 9 employees have attended 'Cwrs Mynediad' training in 2022/23, enabling them to develop their language skills further. This includes those undertaking year 1, based on two hours per week over 30 weeks.
- 13 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 88 e-learning completions for Welsh Language Awareness e-Learning (English – 62, Welsh - 0) and Welsh Language Standards e-Learning (English - 25 Welsh - 1).
- 542 new employees completed the corporate induction e-learning module and 72 new starters completed it via a workbook. Total completions 614. 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.
- 60 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 2022/23 where Welsh language skills were:

Category	Number of posts categorised	Percentage of posts categorised
Essential	39	4.73%
Desirable	784	95.26%
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 2022 and 31 March 2023:

Face to face interactions in Welsh	2
Total visits	7590
Welsh requests as % of total interactions conducted	0.02%

Demand for Welsh services in the Telephone Contact Centre between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023:

Volume of calls during normal working hours (Welsh and English)	112,622
Volume of calls received out of hours (Welsh and English)	1,619



<b>Total calls received (Welsh and English)</b>	114,241
<b>Volume of calls in Welsh</b>	19
<b>Welsh requests as a % of total calls</b>	0.02

The council offices re-opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022, however, demand for face remains low across all languages.

Telephony requests decreased this from 115,671 to 114,241 (normal working hours (Welsh and English)

Volume of calls received out of hours (Welsh and English) also decreased from 5,112 to 1619.

Welsh requests as a % of total contacts also decreased from 0.05% to 0.02% (Welsh line did encounter issues early 2023)

Our online activity continues to increase and therefore we have noticed a reduction in our telephone and face to face channels.

There is still a low number of requests to contact us in Welsh, however, we continue to attempt to recruit Welsh speakers where possible to ensure we are complying to the Welsh Language Standards.

In addition to this we will also conduct regular reviews of our IVR to ensure we are routing calls to the correct department, whether Welsh or English is selected.

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

Two 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 2022 and 31 March 2023:

- Construction started Welsh medium childcare hub Garw Valley
- 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
- Recruitment of Welsh speaking childcare providers
- Recruitment of Welsh speaking roles
- Welsh Language Twitter
- Clwb Cinio
- Dylan Thomas Day
- Welsh campaign run on twitter through out the month of September
- Building lit up red to mark Welsh awareness day's
- Dydd Miwsig Cymru
- Attended the Siarter Cymraeg Awards
- Celebrated the success of our local Welsh medium and English schools with the achievements they received from the Siarter Iaeth awards.

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 July 2023.