

Welsh Language Standards

Annual report 2016/17

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 2016/17 annual report covers the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 and outlines the ways in which the council has complied with the March 2016 service delivery, policy making and operational standards and prepared for compliance with the relevant September 2016 standards.

2. Compliance: how the council has complied with the March 2016 standards and prepared for compliance with the September 2016 standards

General compliance

- The council has a lead officer for Welsh language and equalities;
- A series of staff awareness sessions were held in summer 2016;
- A Welsh Language Standards Implementation Board, chaired by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, and consisting of one or more representatives per service area had responsibility for jointly interpreting the requirements of the standards, collating and disseminating data, and monitoring compliance;
- The council's Welsh Language Standards Action Plan was updated to include the September 2016 standards, each with an assigned lead officer to oversee compliance;
- A risk register was implemented to monitor compliance;
- A list of cross-departmental Welsh Language Champions were reviewed – these are council officers who are responsible for helping to raise awareness of the standards and promote compliance, and provide advice and support to staff;
- Staff intranet pages relating to the Welsh language were reviewed and updated, and regular updates and reminders were circulated to staff;
- A dedicated Welsh Language Standards email address for staff to direct questions was used;

- The council continued to provide Welsh language “Meet and Greet” training for frontline staff.

Service delivery standards

- Working towards introducing a Customer Relationship Management system in Quarter 1 to capture language preference beyond that already captured by Customer Services;
- Individuals are given an option to receive contracts of employment in Welsh;
- Staff continue to 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;
- The council’s main telephone number (016565 643643) is the same 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;
- When a BCBC telephone number is advertised, the council aims to ensure it is stated that calls are welcomed in Welsh and English;
- A “meetings toolkit” has been developed to enable the council to record language preference at external meetings – data will be reported on in the next Annual Report;
- Where appropriate, BCBC will send bilingual invitations to public meetings and those meetings 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;
- Ongoing assessment of demand for Welsh language education courses open to the public;
- Public-facing marketing, advertising and publicity materials (including press releases and statements) continue to be produced bilingually;
- Welsh language social media messages are responded to in Welsh;
- When street, place and direction signs are replaced following damage or normal wear and tear, they are replaced with bilingual signs with the Welsh text appearing first;
- Bilingual official notices are produced;
- Welsh speaking reception staff and those learning Welsh wear lanyards as appropriate;
- Audio announcements are bilingual;
- Grant applications (and the process) can be made in Welsh;
- Tenders and associated interviews can be submitted / held in Welsh.

Policy-making standards

- A revised Equalities Impact Assessment process is in place to ensure consideration is given to the Welsh language when policies are revised or developed;
- Those taking part in consultation and engagement activity are asked for their views on whether policy decisions could impact on the use of the Welsh language;
- The effects that awarding grants may have on the use of the Welsh language are considered.

Operational standards

- All employees have been asked to confirm language preference, which will inform correspondence relating to their employment, training needs, appraisal documentation and various employment related forms;
- Software has been provided to staff for them to check their Welsh grammar and spelling;
- The homepage, menus and Welsh language section of BCBC's staff intranet are bilingual;
- A new "self-service" system has been introduced for all BCBC employees to add or amend their Welsh language skills;
- Bilingual "out of office" messages are used as standard and regular reminders issued to staff;
- Welsh speakers and Welsh learners are encouraged to identify themselves as such on their email signature (using the relevant recognised logos);
- BCBC has published a Five Year Strategy that sets out how we intend to promote and facilitate use of the Welsh language across the county borough, which is available [here](#). Paper copies are also available in our Customer Contact Centre;
- All BCBC vacant positions are advertised as Welsh desirable, unless the vacancy management screening identifies Welsh as an essential requirement. This is reported on in more detail within this report;
- Job applicants continue to be able to do the following through the medium of Welsh:
 - receive documentation
 - submit online applications
 - access the selection process
- Bilingual signage is in place at our main reception area (Civic Offices), with Welsh appearing first;
- We have published versions of our main HR policies in Welsh.

Record-keeping standards

- Monitoring and recording the number of employees attending training courses through the medium of English and Welsh - see paragraph 4B and 4C below.

3. Complaints received between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017

Seven complaints were received under the service delivery standards as follows:

- Electoral services responded to a Welsh email in English. The Welsh Language Commissioner closed the complaint on the basis that this service falls under the remit of the Returning Officer, not the council.
- A mother complained that, at a supervised contact meeting with her son, the supervising social worker would not allow them to converse in Welsh as he was not a Welsh speaker and needed to understand what was being said during the meeting. The mother also referred her complaint to the Welsh Language Commissioner who concluded the investigation when further information was provided on the role and responsibilities of social workers.
- An action group complained to the Welsh Language Commissioner that the council does not offer all swimming lessons in Welsh. The Commissioner suspended the investigation to allow the council to obtain counsel's opinion. The investigation is now proceeding.
- A complaint was received about English-only stamped addressed envelopes used in Electoral services. The council has not yet received formal communication from the Commissioner on this.
- A complaint was received from a member of the public who called the council's main telephone number and had to wait 10 minutes to access the Welsh service, whereas the English service was readily available. The complainant copied in the Welsh Language Commissioner. The council is still awaiting receipt of a formal complaint from the Commissioner.
- A complaint was received about the lack of Welsh language swimming lessons for Welsh medium pupils who attend swimming lessons delivered by Halo on behalf of the council. Schools are not given language choice and must have lessons through the medium of English. The complainant was advised that schools' are managed by governing bodies and that the complaint should be directed to them. The complainant copied the Welsh Language Commissioner into the complaint. The council is awaiting receipt of a formal complaint from the Commissioner.
- A Welsh sign in a new car park displayed the word "ticketless" in English but had not been correctly translated into Welsh. The Welsh Language Commissioner did not investigate this complaint as the sign was corrected prior to the official opening of the car park.

No complaints were received under the policy-making standards.

4. Employee skills and training

Number of employees with Welsh language skills as at 31 March 2017:

Description	Schools				All Other Services			
	Female	Male	Total	%	Female	Male	Total	%
Total headcount	2,650	534	3,184		2,438	708	3,146	
Welsh speaker								
'A little'	298	46	344	10.80%	305	95	400	12.71%
'Fairly Good'	53	16	69	2.17%	38	10	48	1.53%
'Fluent'	138	20	158	4.96%	80	17	97	3.08%
'No'	268	51	319	10.02%	1,013	298	1,311	41.67%
No Response	1,893	401	2,294	72.05%	1,002	288	1,290	41.00%
Welsh reader								
'A little'	288	43	331	10.40%	318	102	420	13.35%
'Fairly Good'	56	17	73	2.29%	50	18	68	2.16%
'Fluent'	139	21	160	5.03%	78	15	93	2.96%
'No'	274	52	326	10.24%	989	285	1,274	40.50%
No Response	1,893	401	2,294	72.05%	1,003	288	1,291	41.04%
Welsh writer								
'A little'	259	37	296	9.30%	233	71	304	9.66%
'Fairly Good'	54	16	70	2.20%	43	11	54	1.72%
'Fluent'	132	20	152	4.77%	70	12	82	2.61%
'No'	311	60	371	11.65%	1,089	325	1,414	44.95%
No Response	1,894	401	2,295	72.08%	1,003	289	1,292	41.07%

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;
- 265 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 2016 and 31 March 2017:

- Welsh language "Meet and Greet" training was provided to 234 attendees (17 half day sessions during 2016/17);
- 44 employees who completed the above training attended "Cwrs Mynediad" training, enabling them to develop their language skills further. This comprised of 4 classes, 2 hours per week over 30 weeks;
- 21 employees attended both "Meet and Greet" and "Cwrs Mynediad" training.

Where Welsh versions of courses were held between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, the percentage of staff who attended the Welsh course:

- Six requests for face to face training materials to be made available in Welsh were received from school staff comprising 0.19% of those attending and there were two Welsh language e-learning module completions during 2016/17.

5. Recruitment and selection

Number of new and vacant posts advertised during 2016/17 where Welsh language skills were:

- Essential = 30
- Desirable = 446

6. Reception services: contact centres and telephone contact centres

Demand for Welsh services in the Customer Contact Centre between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Face to face interactions in Welsh	13
Total visits	28,818
Welsh requests as % of total interactions conducted	0.04%

Demand for Welsh services in the Telephone Contact Centre between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 (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)	253,917
Volume of calls received out of hours (Welsh and English)	455
Total calls received (Welsh and English)	254,372
Volume of calls in Welsh	457
Welsh requests as a % of total calls	0.18%

7. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) carried out between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017

9 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

Promotional activities were undertaken by the council between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 for the following events/activities:

- Urdd Eisteddfod – countdown parade involving 3,000 children and adults representing local schools, colleges and clubs;
- Consultation on accessing Welsh-medium education;
- Shwmae su'mae day;
- Free Welsh courses;
- WRU rugby 7s schools tournament - 3,000 players and 50 referees took part in the largest event of its kind in Wales (held in Pencoed);
- Dydd Miwsig Cymru / Welsh Language Music Day at the Grand Pavillion, Porthcawl;
- St. David's Day – schools activity.