

Welsh Language Standards

Annual report 2020/2021

*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Saesneg hefyd.
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 2020/2021 annual report covers the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 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.
- Staff intranet pages and the dedicated Welsh email inbox (WLS@bridgend.gov.uk) still exist.

- The council continues to provide a range of Welsh language training and resources for staff
- The council continue to 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, and 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 2020/2021 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 2020/2021, 157 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. This information continues to be published on our website.
- 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 2020/2021:

- We have ensured that all self-service machines, including all parking machines are fully functional in Welsh
- We have updated the new telephone IVR system so that all callers can select their language preference. The option for Welsh appears first in the options menu.
- As part of the new telephone IVR, if a Welsh speaker is unavailable to the time of the call the system is now able to generate an email, if the caller does

not wish to continue the call in English, which is accessed by Welsh speaking advisors and is then acted upon in Welsh.

2.3 Policy-making standards

In 2020/2021 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 2020/2021:

- We have updated 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

2.4 Operational standards

In 2020/2021 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 Welsh 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 2020/2021:

- We've continued to develop a bilingual chatbot for residents to communicate with us in both Welsh and English on our website and Facebook pages. Also additional bilingual services have been incorporated within the chatbot over the past year. If the chatbot is unable to answer the query successfully, the conversation is taken over by a customer service advisor who will deal with the customer in their 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' 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, training plans are in place and relevant training is being arranged for staff. Training plans are monitored to ensure managers are reminded of their commitment
- 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 continued to promote Welsh Medium Education to parents and have worked with health visitors, midwives and other professionals to deliver the Welsh Medium Education booklet to parents at an early stage in their child's life
- We have worked with colleagues from Welsh Government, childcare professionals, schools and third sector colleagues to support non Welsh speaking parents with Welsh Medium home schooling during the Covid-19 pandemic
- We updated the website to ensure parents had access to relevant materials during the pandemic to support their children

2.5 Record-keeping standards

In 2020/2021 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, email and digital) within the customer services contact centre – see section six for further details.

3. Complaints

- The Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public on 14 August 2020 regarding the fact that the standard of the Welsh language in the update 'Diweddariad Covid-19: Ailagor canolfannau hamdden a phyllau nofio fesul cam ym Mwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr' is lower than the equivalent update in English. The update was received via e-mail from bridgendcbc@public.govdelivery.com on 13 August 2020.

In the complaint, the complainant identified the following issues:

- The word 'cysgodi' was used in the text of the update, but 'gwarchod' in the corresponding infographic
- 'Addysg a gofal plant cynnar' is used in the text of the update, but 'addysg gynnar a gofal' on the corresponding logo
- He asked why the paragraph on 'Cynnig Gofal Plant Cymru' notes the year 2017
- He asked how VJ Day is linked to adoption, as an infographic about VJ day is placed above a paragraph about adoption

On 29 October 2020 the Welsh Language Commissioner notified BCBC that they would not carry out an investigation into this complaint, stating that 'In this case, although it appears on the face of it that the council has failed to comply with the requirements of the Welsh language standards, it is not a matter sufficient to conduct an investigation as both errors are understandable to Welsh speakers and grammatically correct, and clarification was given regarding the error of uploading the wrong text with the 'VJ' celebration day.'

- There were no complaints received under the policy making standards

4. Employee skills and training

Welsh language skills as at 31 March 2021:

Description	Schools			
	Male	Female	Total	%
Total Headcount	522	2395	2917	
Welsh Speaker				
'A little'	68	348	416	14.26%
'Fairly Good'	11	70	81	2.78%
'Fluent'	21	139	160	5.49%
'No'	74	337	411	14.09%
'No Response'	348	1501	1849	63.39%
Welsh Reader				
'A little'	65	354	419	14.36%
'Fairly Good'	12	78	90	3.09%
'Fluent'	22	141	163	5.59%
'No'	75	321	396	13.58%
'No Response'	348	1501	1849	63.39%
Welsh Writer				
'A little'	57	320	377	12.92%
'Fairly Good'	13	71	84	2.88%
'Fluent'	20	131	151	5.18%
'No'	84	371	455	15.60%
'No Response'	348	1502	1850	63.42%

BCBC excluding Schools			
Male	Female	Total	%
696	2316	3012	
Welsh Speaker			
110	352	462	15.34%
7	37	44	1.46%
19	92	111	3.69%
355	1187	1542	51.20%
205	648	853	28.32%
Welsh Reader			
111	382	493	16.37%
14	50	64	2.12%
18	92	110	3.65%
347	1144	1491	49.50%
206	648	854	28.35%
Welsh Writer			
73	306	379	12.58%
11	42	53	1.76%
15	81	96	3.19%
389	1239	1628	54.05%
208	648	856	28.42%

Please note:

- The 'Schools' category covers employees directly employed by governing bodies. Inclusion staff are included under the 'BCBC excluding schools' 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.

Number of employees who attended training courses in Welsh between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

- 14 employees have attended ‘Cwrs Mynediad’ training in 2020/21, enabling them to develop their language skills further. This includes those undertaking year 1, based on two hours per week over 30 weeks.
- 7 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 were 74 Welsh language e-learning module completions
- There have been 136 e-learning completions for Welsh Language Awareness e-Learning and Welsh Language Standards e-Learning
- 351 new employees completed the corporate induction e-learning module and 34 new starters completed it via a workbook. Total completions 385. 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 2020/2021 where Welsh language skills were:

Category	Number of posts categorised	Percentage of posts categorised
Essential	28	4.74%
Desirable	563	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 Face to Face centre and Telephone Contact Centre between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021

Total face to face requests	0
Welsh requests as % of total face to face interactions conducted	0
Volume of calls during normal working hours (Welsh and English)	108,291
Volume of calls received out of hours (Welsh and English)	2,734
Total calls received (Welsh and English)	111,072
Volume of calls in Welsh	47
Welsh requests as a % of total calls	0.0004%

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 an uplift in telephone and online contact and although online interactions increased considerably, telephony requests actually reduced again for another consecutive year from 126,691 down to 111,072. This was due to communication and telephony initiatives, whereby we regularly interacted 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 2020 and 31 March 2021:

- Welsh-medium childcare facility for more than 30 children is to be built in the Ogmere Valley.
- Access simple steps on how to support your children to use the Welsh language at home #StaySafe #StayLearning
- Welsh lessons on Facebook live
- Exploring options for increasing the provision of Welsh medium education
- Clwb Cylch online sessions

- Welsh summer activities
- Welsh Me and my baby programme
- #Brackla relocation and extension of welsh medium primary
- Shwmae sumae
- Welsh medium booklet
- Welsh language and adopting in Wales
- #IaithGwaith
- Saint Dwynwens day
- Welsh Language rights day
- St David's Day
- Welsh in the workplace

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 2021.