



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council



# Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2023-2028

## Annual report 2025-2026

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg  
This document is also available in Welsh

[www.npt.gov.uk/welshlanguage](http://www.npt.gov.uk/welshlanguage)

# Contents

Introduction.....	2
Developments/achievements during 2025-2026 .....	3-6
Initiatives for Neath Port Talbot Council Employees 2025-2026.....	6- 7
Summary of progress on Strategic Themes for 2025-2026.....	8
• Strategic Theme 1: Increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers.....	8-10
• Strategic Theme 2: Increasing the use of Welsh.....	11-12
• Strategic Theme 3: Creating Favourable Conditions: Infrastructure and Context.....	13-14

If you require this report in larger print or in an alternative format, please contact the Policy, Governance and Performance Team on 07805 771506 or email: [policy@npt.gov.uk](mailto:policy@npt.gov.uk)

## Introduction

We are pleased to present the third annual report for the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2023-2028. This report covers the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, during which time the Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr took place at Margam Country Park, representing a significant milestone for Welsh language and culture in Neath Port Talbot, and the county borough also marked the centenary of the birth of Hollywood legend Richard Burton.

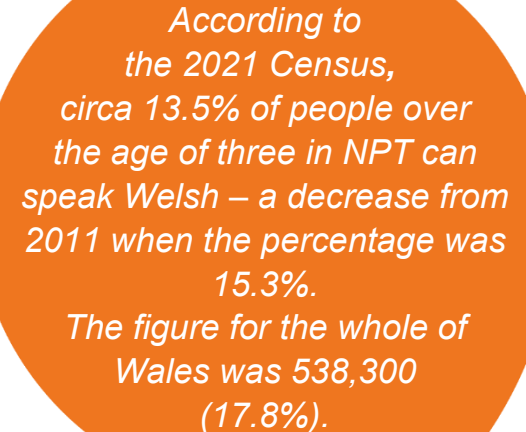
On 12 July 2023, Council adopted the revised *Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2023–2028* for Neath Port Talbot.

The strategy sets out how the council will promote the Welsh language and support its increased use, with the aim that by 2028 the language is more visible, more widely heard, and more actively used within local communities.

The strategy aligns with the strategic themes of the Welsh Government's *Cymraeg 2050* Welsh Language Strategy and sets out our approach to:

- increasing the number of Welsh speakers;
- enhancing the use of Welsh; *and*
- creating the supportive conditions needed within the county borough to enable the language to thrive.

Alongside promoting the use of Welsh within our communities, the strategy also emphasises encouraging greater use of the language across the Neath Port Talbot Council workforce. This report highlights our progress in implementing the strategy's actions with target dates between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026.



*According to the 2021 Census, circa 13.5% of people over the age of three in NPT can speak Welsh – a decrease from 2011 when the percentage was 15.3%. The figure for the whole of Wales was 538,300 (17.8%).*

# Developments/Achievements during 2025-2026

## Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr 2025

In May 2025, Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr 2025 was held at Margam Country Park and achieved a record 119,593 competitor registrations. Notably, there was also a 42% increase in the number of Welsh learners taking part compared with the previous year. A total of 17 schools from Neath Port Talbot achieved a first, second, or third place during the finals week, with many more participating in the earlier qualifying rounds, and approximately 15,000 children and young people participating throughout the festival. The Urdd Eisteddfod provided a strong platform to showcase the council's commitment to promoting the Welsh language.



Hosting Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr at Margam Country Park demonstrably increased participation in Welsh-language cultural activity across the county borough, particularly among children and young people and Welsh learners. The event saw record-breaking levels of engagement, extensive local cultural activity and increased visibility of Welsh in schools, communities and council services. While longer-term impacts on Welsh language use will take time to emerge in national datasets, early indicators strongly suggest a positive legacy for Welsh language and culture in the county borough.

## Dewch i Sgwrsio

During the Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr, the council launched its Dewch i Sgwrsio – Let’s Talk campaign, which aims to promote opportunities for learning Welsh, improving language skills, improving confidence and using the Welsh language in the county borough. The campaign directs residents, visitors and council employees to opportunities, activities and resources for using and learning Welsh as part of the council’s broader efforts to support and promote the language.



Since the launch of the campaign, we have seen an increase in the number of Welsh Language events in the “What’s on” events database on the council’s website. A total of 133 events in 2025-2026, compared to 45 events in 2024-2025. In addition, an increase in the use and promotion of the Welsh language is anticipated going forward as part of the legacy of Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr 2025.

## Richard Burton Centenary

Although Richard Burton achieved international fame, the centenary programme consistently emphasised his Welsh roots, voice, and cultural identity, highlighting how his upbringing in Pontrhydyfen and Taibach shaped his artistry. The centenary programme included Welsh-language creative activity, notably through performances by Welsh-language theatre companies such as Theatr Na nÓg, as well as bilingual interpretation, signage, and digital content along the Richard Burton Trails. This contributed to normalising the everyday public presence of Welsh in cultural settings and broadening access to Welsh-medium arts experiences for residents and visitors alike.



## Commemorative Blue Plaque Scheme



The new Commemorative Blue Plaque Scheme opened for nominations in early 2025. The first fully bi-lingual plaques were installed in November 2025, honouring Richard Burton and his adoptive father Philip Burton. These were followed in March 2026 with a plaque unveiled in honour of Ray Milland from Neath, Wales's first Oscar winner. Additional blue plaques (e.g. for David Thomas and Dafydd Rowlands) were approved in late 2025 and are scheduled for installation later in 2026.

## Welsh-medium Primary school investment

At the start of 2026, work began on a brand new, state of the art Welsh-medium primary school in Port Talbot. The development will deliver a modern and environmentally sustainable learning environment for up to 511 pupils. It will include nursery and childcare provision, an Additional Learning Needs Unit, a Welsh Immersion Unit, and improved outdoor sports and play facilities, and accommodation for adult education services.



## Bilingual Children's Book – Aled Afal



In October 2025, the council released a new bilingual children's book. *Aled Afal Explores Neath Port Talbot*, follows a cheerful apple character visiting iconic local heritage sites to inspire young readers. The book was developed with input from local pupils as part of the *Treehouse Tales* literacy initiative and was launched at the NPT Children's Book Festival. Copies were distributed to all schools and libraries, supported through the UKSPF-funded Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events programme.

## New bilingual Day Nursery



A vacant, former chapel was given a new lease of life to provide a much-needed service to the local community in Cwmgwrach, thanks to funding received from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Croeso Day Nursery provides a bilingual (Welsh and English) day care service to Cwmgwrach and its neighbouring villages. Croeso Day Nursery aims to encourage children to learn the Welsh language from a young age.

Support for national campaigns such as 'Defnyddia Dy Gymraeg' and 'Shwmae Shwmae Day' continued. The council's Commercial Marketing Team created a cross-venue social media video to mark 'Shwmae Shwmae Day' on October 15th 2025, featuring staff from various roles at our commercial venues using Welsh greetings, achieving a combined organic reach of circa 20,000 across Facebook and Instagram.



## Initiatives for Neath Port Talbot Council Employees 2025-26



**Learning Welsh** - We recognise that supporting and encouraging Welsh speakers and learners to use their language skills at work is crucial to our compliance efforts. Whilst 4,725 employees had completed the Welsh Language in NPT eLearning course by the end of March 2026, Welsh language training uptake is generally low. Going forward we will aim to boost staff participation and enhance Welsh language services for NPT residents by improving Thinqi learning resources, exploring new learning options, and collaborating with the Welsh Language Officers Group and Menter Iaith.

Activities continued throughout the year to promote the Welsh language to Council employees:

**Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Celebrations** - The Welsh Language Officers Group organised a series of informal activities for colleagues to mark Dydd Gŵyl Dewi / St David's Day across the three main civic buildings - The Quays, Neath Civic Centre and Port Talbot Civic Centre, as well as an online quiz focused on Welsh language and culture.

The events were well received, providing employees with opportunities to practice their Welsh and encouraging them to explore the *Dewch i Sgwrsio* web pages for information on activities available to Welsh speakers and learners. A total of 108 employees attended the events.



**Hyder-ish** - A second six-week *Hyder-ish* course for Neath Port Talbot Council employees commenced in November 2025, delivered by Menter Iaith CnPT. The lunchtime sessions were designed to support Welsh speakers in developing confidence in their language abilities by providing informal opportunities to practise through a series of engaging activities.

Five employees completed this cohort. Additional courses are planned across a range of civic buildings, and officers will explore the feasibility of offering hybrid delivery to increase flexibility and participation.

## Summary of progress on Strategic Themes for 2025-2026

Updates on each action in the plan can be found in Appendix 1 – Progress Against Objectives. However, some key elements of work during 2024/2025 included:

### Strategic Theme 1: Increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers

#### Area of work: Support the implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

Delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was supported through coordinated activity to promote Welsh language use among families, early-years provision and the wider community. Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot continued to engage parents of Welsh-medium learners through the *Welsh Homework Help* Facebook group, targeted community engagement and the promotion of Welsh-language learning opportunities. A digital *Benefits of Bilingualism* booklet improved access to key information for families.

Progress was also made in embedding Welsh from the earliest stages, including the expansion of Welsh-language childcare provision, delivery of Flying Start-funded Welsh and bilingual childcare, training for employees to promote bilingualism, and a programme of visible, open-access Welsh-language activities for babies, young children and families. Collectively, this activity increased exposure to Welsh, strengthened family confidence and supported early language development across the county borough.



## Area of work: Language transmission in the home

12

Welsh Song and Rhyme sessions were organised by Menter Iaith CnPT in libraries across Neath Port Talbot

Activity focused on increasing awareness of Welsh-language learning opportunities and promoting positive attitudes towards the Welsh language among residents. Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot continued to signpost parents to Dysgu Cymraeg Ardal Bae Abertawe, Mudiad Meithrin provision and local informal opportunities, alongside partnership working to deliver a free *Dysgu Cymraeg gyda'ch plentyn* course, supporting parents and children to learn together.

Welsh-language awareness was further strengthened through community engagement, including information stalls at partner events, delivery of Welsh-language activities at county-wide festivals, promotion of latecomer Welsh-medium provision, and regular Welsh song and rhyme sessions in libraries.

Additional Welsh-language sessions delivered within English-medium schools provided further opportunities for children and young people to use and develop their Welsh, supporting wider engagement with the language across the county.

## Area of work: Support people learning/speaking Welsh

Efforts to strengthen Welsh language learning and awareness among council employees continued, but Welsh language training uptake in general remained low.

However, participation in the council's Welsh Language eLearning course increased significantly, with over 4,700 employees completing the training by March 2026. This course has now been automated, which means all new employees are automatically enrolled on their first day of employment.

The corporate induction programme was updated to ensure that the content is now fully bilingual.

These actions are part of a long-term strategy to increase the number of employees speaking and learning Welsh and will take time to demonstrate measurable impact.

Welsh language resources for families and the public continued to expand, with increased use of online content and the ongoing development of practical materials to support learners of all ages. Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot delivered targeted resources for parents, children, adult learners and youth settings, supported by effective signposting to Dysgu Cymraeg, Mudiad Meithrin and community-based learning opportunities.

Council employees who had completed the Welsh Language eLearning course increased by

**1,866**

## Strategic Theme 2: Increasing the use of Welsh

### Area of work: Support and promote the use of Welsh in social settings 2022-2032



NPT Libraries  
held **195** Welsh  
language events  
with **1,684**  
attendees

Progress was made in increasing the visibility, use and social relevance of the Welsh language across libraries, cultural venues, youth provision and community settings. Library Services supported access to Welsh-language materials through a growing programme of events and lending activity, alongside expanded reading group collections and participation in national and local literary initiatives.

Welsh was consistently embedded across major cultural and leisure activity, including the Richard Burton 100 Centenary campaign, the Urdd Eisteddfod at Margam Park, and programmes at Pontardawe Arts Centre and the Gwyn Hall. These initiatives delivered fully bilingual experiences, increased audience engagement and supported both Welsh speakers and learners, with strong attendance at Welsh-language and cultural events across the county.

Partnership working with the Youth Service and Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot strengthened Welsh-language use among children and young people through resource packs for all youth clubs, dedicated Welsh-language youth provision, music-based engagement and creative events that promoted Welsh as a living, social language. Community music, theatre, festivals and informal social sessions further supported everyday use of Welsh across a wide range of settings and age groups, contributing to increased confidence, visibility and participation in the language.

## Area of work: Expand the use of Welsh in the workplace etc

During 2025–26, progress was made in supporting council employees to build confidence in using Welsh and in strengthening the foundations for increased internal use of the language. Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot delivered a further *Hyder-ish* course for council employees, supporting participants to rebuild confidence in spoken Welsh, although delivery was limited by staffing capacity.

In parallel, the council progressed the development of an Internal Use of Welsh Policy through participation in a pilot led by the Welsh Language Commissioner. The policy is scheduled for publication in 2026–27 and will provide a clear framework to support employees in meeting Welsh language obligations and embedding Welsh more consistently in internal working practices.

**109**

Colleagues took part in the council's Dydd Gŵyl Dewi events in 2026

## Strategic Theme 3: Creating Favourable Conditions: Infrastructure and Context

### Area of work: Increase the visibility of the language across the area



Hits to the Welsh language pages of the council's website increased by **31,525** compared to 2024-25

During 2025–26, the council and its partners continued to strengthen the visibility, use and cultural relevance of the Welsh language across education, culture, tourism, business engagement and community initiatives. Welsh-language awareness was promoted among children and young people through school-based sessions and targeted youth activities that reinforced Welsh identity, heritage and social use of the language.

Welsh language and culture were embedded across major cultural, leisure and destination-management activity, with fully bilingual marketing, programming and customer experiences delivered at council venues and high-profile events. Targeted promotion, partnerships and bilingual campaigns significantly increased reach, engagement and participation, while ensuring Welsh remained a core element of the county's sense of place.

Community engagement was broadened through inclusive cultural events, partnerships with diverse communities and the expansion of the Dewch i Sgwrsio – Let's Talk Welsh campaign, which increased awareness of Welsh-language opportunities and online engagement. Welsh language use was also supported within economic development activity where possible and promoted consistently through business-facing communications.

Capacity to support Welsh language promotion was strengthened through the Welsh Language Promotion Officer role, providing targeted support to schools and services and supporting a holistic approach to developing Welsh language use, particularly in social and spoken contexts.

## Area of work: Embed Welsh into all our strategies and plans

The council continued to strengthen the systems, policies and infrastructure needed to embed Welsh more consistently across internal practice, digital services, heritage activity and strategic planning. Progress was made in developing an **Internal Use of Welsh Policy** through a pilot with the Welsh Language Commissioner, with publication planned in 2026–27 to support employees in meeting Welsh language obligations.

Welsh remained central to the design and delivery of customer-facing digital services, with bilingual content embedded by default across platforms, continued development of the council website and MyNPT account, and the introduction of AI-assisted translation tools supported by human review. This work aligns with corporate digital and accessibility standards and reinforces digitally inclusive service delivery.

Welsh language and culture were consistently embedded in heritage, commemoration and public-realm activity through bilingual publications, events, training, social media and communications. Monitoring of Welsh-language data continued, with Census and education data informing understanding of local trends, while consideration was given to internal recognition of Welsh language contribution through evolving employee engagement approaches.

