



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

Neath Port Talbot Council

# Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2025-2026



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

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# Introduction

## **Welcome to our Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2025-26.**

The Welsh Language Standards require the council to 'produce an annual report' on the way in which it has complied with the relevant standards during the previous financial year. This is the council's tenth such report.

The Standards give Welsh speakers the right to use the language when dealing with certain organisations and requires these organisations to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than English. The focus is on actively offering language choice i.e. providing services in Welsh without service users or employees having to request them.

## **Key Highlights/Achievements**

2025-2026 was a busy and exciting year for the council in terms of taking action to fulfil our commitment to complying with the standards, whilst preparing to welcome Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr in May 2025. For which, there was 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 Eisteddfod provided a strong platform to showcase the council's commitment to promoting the Welsh language.

During the Urdd, the council launched its Dewch i Sgwrsio – Let's Talk campaign, which directs residents to opportunities 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 "Whats on" events database. A total of 133 events within 2025-2026, in comparison with 45 events in 2024-2025. In addition, an increase in the use and promotion of the Welsh language is anticipated as part of the legacy of Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr 2025.

With our revised Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan now in their third and fourth years, respectively, we are beginning to see good progress.

# Introduction (cont.)

A significant area of progress during the year was the re-establishment of a Fforwm Iaith for Neath Port Talbot in June 2025. The new Language forum (Fforwm Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot) includes representation from key organisations across the county borough and will meet twice a year to discuss how to work in partnership to protect and promote the Welsh language at a grass roots level within the Neath Port Talbot area.

Supporting and encouraging Welsh speakers and learners to use their language skills in the workplace is recognised as a key element of the council's Welsh Language compliance journey. In support of this, work continued to ensure that employees completed the mandatory Welsh Language in NPT eLearning course. In 2025-2026, a total of 4,725 staff members had completed the course, marking an increase of 1,866 since the end of the previous year. This accounts for 64.2% of the overall workforce.

The Welsh Language Officers Group (WLOG) organised a series of informal activities for staff 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 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 staff members attended the events.

The council continues to have a strong commitment to meeting the standards, while recognising that delivery requires ongoing focus and effort. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with colleagues and partners to build upon the progress achieved to date.



# Accountability

The council holds overall responsibility for implementing the Welsh Language Standards, with the Chief Executive accountable for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to secure compliance. We also recognise that every employee plays an essential role in the successful delivery of these duties.

Governance arrangements require the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report to be considered by Cabinet, providing assurance that performance is being monitored and sustained.

Within the Strategy and Corporate Services Directorate, the Corporate Policy, Governance and Performance Team provides advice and guidance to services on meeting the requirements of the Standards. The team also manages the Council's Welsh language complaints process, ensuring that any concerns or allegations of non-compliance are promptly identified and addressed.

All information, guidance and supporting materials relating to the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards are accessible via the council's internal intranet, NPT Connect.

Awareness of the Standards is promoted through the Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Leadership Team, directorate management teams, service team meetings, and through a range of internal communication channels including Viva Engage, NPT Connect Highlights (intranet news stories), and the weekly Staff newsletters.

The Welsh Language Officer Group (WLOG) contributes to the administration and implementation of the Standards. The group plays a key role in resolving issues at an early stage, supporting staff in delivering services in accordance with statutory duties, and promoting the Welsh language across the organisation.

## Background

This annual report outlines our council's implementation of the Welsh language standards and details specific areas such as the number of Welsh-speaking staff and the language requirements for vacant posts, as mandated by the Welsh Language Measure (2011) and the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015.

The standards applied to the council under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are included in our [compliance notice](#).

## Service Delivery Standards

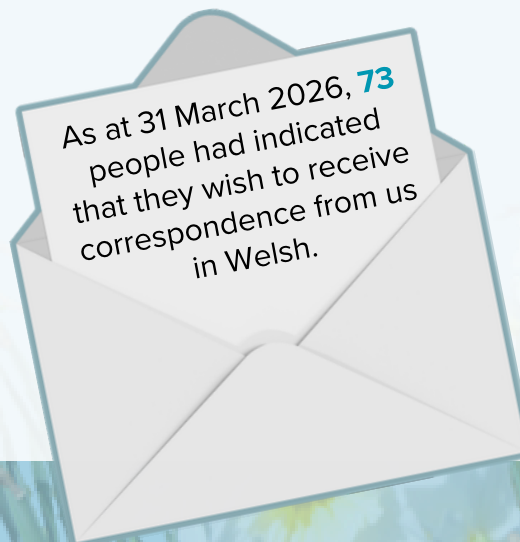
**Service Delivery Standards** are about how people can use Welsh when they deal with the council. They set clear rules to make sure Welsh speakers can access services as easily and naturally as English speakers.

## Council Meetings

Full Council meetings are held on a hybrid basis and we offer simultaneous interpretation (Welsh to English), using Microsoft Teams Welsh translation software, for all participants in full Council meetings (whether in person or remotely). This is fully integrated with the Council's Public-I webcasting and hybrid audio visual equipment.

## Correspondence in Welsh

We continue to make an active offer to correspond with our residents, visitors and communities in Welsh with a 'Correspondence in Welsh' button on the 'Request' area of our webpages.



## Website

The total number of hits on the pages of our corporate website in Welsh have more than doubled, from 22,284 in 2024-2025, to 53,809 in 2025-2026.

Within the same time frame, there has also been a 25% increase in the number of social media followers on our Welsh Corporate Facebook page (from 366 in 2024-2025 to 458 in 2025-2026).



# Policy Making Standards

**Policy Making Standards** are about considering Welsh from the outset when the council develops or changes policies, strategies, or plans. They ensure decisions do not disadvantage the Welsh language and, where possible, help the language grow and be used more.

A revised Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy was developed. In keeping with the requirement to consider the effects on the Welsh language when formulating a new policy or reviewing/revising an existing policy, officers with responsibility for both corporate complaints and the Welsh language attended the Commissioner's 'Good Practice in Welsh Language Complaints Procedures' learning session, which followed a key line of enquiry. As a result mechanisms to strengthen the arrangements for the capturing and monitoring of Welsh language complaints data were incorporated into the policy from the outset.

The development of an Internal Use of Welsh Policy, part of a pilot led by the Welsh Language Commissioner also progressed. The policy is currently going through the council's approval process and is expected to be published during the 2026–27 (see page 9)

The requirements of the policy-making standards are embedded within the council's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) framework which is applied to all new/revised policies and policy decisions, ensuring that the impacts on Welsh language are carefully considered in each case. Comprehensive guidance and accompanying documentation are currently available to all staff via NPT Connect (the council's intranet).

A Member Equality Panel was established in January 2026 which includes an oversight of compliance with and progress on the Welsh Language Standards. The Panel will report to Cabinet on a six-monthly basis providing updates on progress, challenges and any recommendations.



# Operational standards

**Operational Standards** apply to how the council runs internally so that it is able to provide services in Welsh consistently and to a high standard. They focus on staffing, systems, and day-to-day working arrangements.

There was a slight decrease in the number of employees who identify as having Welsh language skills in 2025-26 compared with 2024-25, from 665 to 640. These skills are captured via i-trent (the council's HR and payroll system) at the time of induction; however these can be updated at any time. The decrease is due to a combination of employees with Welsh language skills leaving/retiring from the council and a reliance on employees to provide and update their Welsh language skills information voluntarily. An internal campaign to encourage colleagues to provide this information will be launched in conjunction with the publication of our Internal Use of Welsh Policy in 2026-2027.

A breakdown of Welsh language skills by directorate/service area can be found on pages 17-18.

**Our Welsh Translation capacity was increased from 1.2 to 2 FTE posts**

Guidance and supporting materials on the use of, and compliance with, the Welsh language standards are available to all staff through the Welsh language pages on NPT Connect (the Council's intranet).

A review of Welsh Translation arrangements across the council was completed during the year and arrangements made for the launch of our new Welsh Translation Support Function (on 1 April 2026). As part of these arrangements, our Welsh Translation capacity was increased from 1.2 to 2FTE posts.

CYMRAG

## Welsh Speakers Directory

**121** members of staff were identified on our Welsh speaking employee directory as willing/able to use their language skills as part of their work. This shows a slight decrease from 130 in 2024-2025, however plans have progressed to review staff self-assessment of Welsh language skills and the accurate capture of these, it is anticipated that progress in relation to this will be reflected in the Annual Report for 2026-2027.

## NPT Council - Internal Use of Welsh

**We recognise that there might be an element of underreporting of Welsh language skills by employees. These are currently captured at induction; but can be updated at any time.**

During the year progress was made on a new approach to strengthen our Welsh translation provision, improve sustainability and support colleagues to use Welsh more confidently at work.

This included a review of Welsh Translation across the council, consequently arrangements were made for the launch of our new Welsh Translation Support Function (on 1 April 2026),

which utilises the expertise of two in-house translators, combined with contracting work to members of Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru (the professional association of Welsh translators and interpreters).

Following Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2025 we have seen improved representation on our Welsh Language Officers Group, and increased attendance at Dydd Gŵyl Dewi staff events.

It also included the phased introduction of a new matrix for Welsh language skills self-assessment, to support the rollout of NPT Smart Translate, the council's AI-enabled Welsh translation tool, piloted in 2025, for roll-out on April 2026. Giving due consideration to the statement by the Welsh Language Commissioner (*that using AI models to translate documents or official communications without human review can lead to linguistic errors or inaccuracies that undermine the Welsh language standards and trust in services*) access to the tool will be restricted to those who have self-assessed at a level that enables them to confidently review and quality-assure Welsh translations.

Our weekly employee newsletter introductions continued to be published bilingually, as were staff news articles relating to Welsh language and culture.

It is anticipated that the above, will contribute to further growth in the number of Welsh speaking council employees.



### Internal Use of Welsh Policy

During 2025-2026, the council progressed with the development of an Internal Use of Welsh Policy, part of a pilot led by the Welsh Language Commissioner relating to this area of work.

The policy is expected to be published during the 2026–27 financial year and will align with wider Welsh language initiatives, all of which aim to assist staff in fulfilling their Welsh language obligations.

# Training



Our Welsh Language in NPT eLearning course continues to be a foundation for introducing employees to the importance of Welsh language in the workplace. The course covers a brief history of the Welsh language, law and policy, why Welsh is important, Welsh Language Standards information on receiving calls, emails, meetings, translation services and training. By 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, 4,725 staff members had completed the course - an increase of 1,866 on 2024-2025, equivalent to 64.2% of the overall workforce.

The eLearning course is hosted on our Learning Management System – Thinqi. Monitoring and reporting on course completions is easier than previous systems. Accessibility to the platform and the overall user experience of the system is vastly improved and we attribute these as reasons for why we have had a significant increase over the last year in the number of course completions. We have also been able to automate the course which means all new employees are automatically enrolled on their first day of employment.

In November 2025, in partnership with Menter Iaith CnPT, ‘Hyder...ish’ sessions recommenced for employees. The second cohort consisted of six sessions held at Neath Civic Centre, with five members of staff registering. Further cohorts are being explored, including the feasibility of hybrid sessions to encourage greater uptake. Following the success of our Dydd Gŵyl Dewi events in March 2026, plans are also in place to re-introduce regular ‘Sgwrs’ sessions for 2026-2027.

Following the refresh of the corporate induction programme in 2024–2025, the training materials were made fully bilingual and the Welsh language content was significantly expanded. The original two-slide overview of the Welsh Language Standards was replaced with an 11-slide section providing a comprehensive overview of the Standards and signposting staff to relevant resources. During 2025–2026, three corporate induction sessions were delivered, with a total of 243 attendees.



# Promotion standards

**Promotion Standards** are about encouraging and promoting the use of the Welsh language. They expect the council to actively support Welsh, not just comply with minimum requirements when providing services, this could include. Some key areas within these standards include the promoting Welsh-language services, encouraging staff confidence in using Welsh, supporting campaigns and initiatives that raise awareness of the language and integrating Welsh into corporate culture and public messaging.

Our **Welsh Language Officers' Group (WLOG)**, which benefits greatly from the valued involvement of Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot, continued to meet regularly, with one of its key roles being to support the delivery of our revised Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

Progress on the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy is subject to its own annual report, but some of the activities during the year included:

- In May, **Eisteddfod yr Urdd Dur a Môr 2025** was held at Margam Country Park and achieved a record 119,593 competitor registrations. During the event, the council launched its Dewch i Sgwrsio – Let's Talk campaign, which directs residents to opportunities and resources for using and learning Welsh as part of the council's broader efforts to support and promote the language.



## Cont. Promotion standards

- **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, 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.
- Three **Dydd Gŵyl Dewi** events for employees held on 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at the main civic buildings (Neath Civic Centre, Port Talbot Civic Centre and The Quays). These events were well-received, with over 100 members of staff attending.
- The second cohort of '**Hyder...ish**' sessions took place in November 2025, led by Menter Iaith CnPT. These 6-week, free, informal sessions are aimed at Welsh speaking employees who wanted to build their confidence.

## National Resident Survey

During the year the council accepted the offer to participate in the free core modules of the National Resident Survey developed by Data Cymru, in collaboration with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and councils. One of the questions asked is 'Do you think council services are available in your preferred language'. 80.7% of respondents said they feel that council services are always available in their preferred language. When filtered this by those who said Welsh was their preferred language and this decreased to 54.55%. The council is intending to run the survey on an annual basis and data from this question will be monitored with the aim of seeing an improving trend for Welsh speakers feeling that services are available in their preferred language.



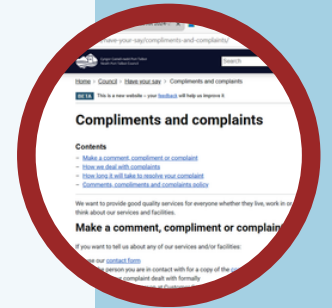
# Record Keeping Standards

**Record-Keeping Standards** are about keeping clear evidence of how the council meets its Welsh language duties. They don't add new service requirements – instead, they make sure the council can evidence what it has done. This helps to support accountability and regulatory oversight. Key areas include keeping records of complaints relating to the Welsh language, steps taken to comply with the standards, recording of staff Welsh language skills (as required), producing and publishing an annual Welsh Language Standards report and supplying information to the Welsh Language Commissioner on request.

## Complaints

According to Standard 170, the council is required to publish information about any complaints received regarding its compliance with the standards. No complaints were received either via the Welsh Language Commissioner or directly to the council, during 2025-2026.

We recognise that there is an element of under reporting of complaints due to inconsistency in capturing data. It is anticipated that the more robust arrangements for capturing and monitoring of Welsh language complaints data included within our recently revised Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy will help to address this going forward.



# Measures

<b>Telephone calls</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Number of staff with fluent/fairly fluent language skills identified in the employee directory	125	130	121
Average time to answer telephone calls – English	48 seconds	55 seconds	40 seconds
Average time to answer telephone calls – Welsh	71 seconds	53 seconds	59 seconds

*Long-term sickness absence within the Customer Services team, combined with annual leave during peak periods and a temporary reduction in Welsh-speaking staff while recruitment and training took place has resulted in a slight increase in call-handling times in 2025-2026, in comparison to the previous year.*

<b>Translations</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Total cost of translations (where able to be identified)	£89,735	£66,663	£71,544

**Measures (cont.)**

<b>Complaints</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Number of complaints received via the Welsh Language Commissioner	0	1	0
Number of complaints where the Welsh Language Commissioner determined no investigation necessary	0	1	0
Number of complaints where the Welsh Language Commissioner determined there was no failure to comply with the standards	0	0	0

<b>Vacant Posts for 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026</b>		
<b>Welsh language skill requirements</b>	<b>Number of posts</b>	<b>% of posts</b>
Essential	42	5.60%
Desirable	93	12.40%
Need to learn Welsh	2	0.30%
No Welsh skills required	615	81.80%

**Measures (cont.)**

<b>Vacant Posts – Language Skills</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Desirable	123	68	93
Essential	22	12	42
No Welsh skills required	716	466	615
Need to learn Welsh	4	0	2

<b>Language Skills of NPT Council staff</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Fairly fluent speaker & writer	77	79	74
Fairly fluent speaker	74	69	65
Fluent Welsh speaker & writer	135	136	125
Fluent Welsh speaker	44	44	43
Welsh learner	346	337	333
Total	676	665	640

**Measures - NPT Council Employees language skills by directorate/service area**

Directorate/Service	Fairly Fluent Speaker and Writer	Fairly Fluent Speaker	Fluent Speaker and Writer	Fluent Speaker	Welsh Learner	Little or no knowledge	Prefer Not To Say	Total	Not Reported
Chief Officers	0	0	2	0	5	16	1	6	0
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning									
Early Years Inclusion & Partnerships	4	1	10	2	35	104	3	160	37
Education Development	4	2	5	3	8	35	1	59	24
Leisure Tourism Heritage & Culture	3	3	7	2	13	97	0	126	22
Support Services & Transformation	12	5	27	9	42	381	23	500	250
Environment & Regeneration									
Business Support Services	0	1	0	0	1	6	0	8	1
Engineering & Transport	3	2	4	1	9	82	2	104	47
Planning & Public Protection	3	3	2	0	20	53	1	83	31

Property & Regeneration	3	6	5	4	12	135	3	169	59
South Wales Trunk Road Agency	5	4	8	5	20	141	1	185	52
Streetcare Services	4	9	11	5	28	280	4	342	130
Finance									
Financial Services	1	4	2	0	11	109	0	127	31
Social Services Health & Housing									
Adult Services	13	11	16	5	47	366	7	466	143
Business Services	0	2	3	2	6	68	0	81	27
Children & Young People Services	9	5	10	3	39	193	0	260	103
Housing & Communities	1	3	3	0	13	75	0	96	26
Strategy & Corporate Services									
Digital Services	3	1	1	0	7	64	1	77	24
Legal & Democratic Services	5	2	4	1	11	44	0	68	28
People & Organisational Development	2	1	4	1	7	76	1	93	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>2316</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3004</b>	<b>1066</b>

<b>Social Media</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
X (followers) English corporate account Welsh corporate account	17,131 520	16,712 503	16,317 491
Facebook (followers) English corporate account Welsh corporate account	22,596 313	25,273 366	30,030 458

<b>NPT News e-Newsletters Number of subscribers</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Welsh e-Newsletter	95	34	49
English e-Newsletter	2,769	4,002	5,167
Bilingual e-Newsletter	N/A	98	107

Website	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Total number of hits on website	5,197,608	4,645,216	5,504,853
Total number of hits on English pages	5,179,020	4,622,932	5,451,044
Total number of hits Welsh webpages	18,588*	22,284	53,809

*\* Due to changes to Google analytics in 2023-2024, there were periods where it was not possible to identify between Welsh and English hits. This problem has now been addressed by our new website which enables easier analysis.*

## Have Your Say

**Enquiries or feedback on this report are welcomed via:**

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