



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Report 2019-2020

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Introduction

This annual report is produced to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Measure (2011) and Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015.

We are committed to the principle of the Welsh language standards and strive to comply with the standards as applied to the Council in what continues to be a difficult financial and resource limiting environment.

The outbreak of COVID -19 has had significant impact on our ability to produce an annual report by the statutory publication date of 30 June. This has been due to many of our workforce having been/ continue to be redeployed to other service areas to support the work in tackling the outbreak and supporting residents in these unprecedented times.

The outbreak also meant that we have had to make considerable changes to the way we operated towards the end of March and because of limited internal linguistic skills this impacted on our ability to provide communications in Welsh and English during that period.

Legislative requirements

The standards which have been applied to the Council under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are contained in the [compliance notice](#) which can be found on our website.

As part of the requirements of the standards we must produce an annual report on how we have complied with the standards and provide information on specific areas; the number staff who are Welsh speakers and the language requirements of vacant posts.

Implementing the Standards

The Council has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the standards, with the Chief Executive having overall responsibility for ensuring arrangements are in place to secure compliance. In addition, we

recognise that each member of staff has a role to play in the successful implementation of the standards.

Our governance arrangements require the Annual Report to be monitored by Cabinet, with Cabinet Scrutiny Committee undertaking an important role in ensuring progress on performance is being sustained.

The Equality and Community Cohesion Group supports the Chief Executive and elected Members and has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the standards. This group is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Equality and has a membership drawn from each directorate as well as representatives from local equality organisations.

The Welsh Language Officer Group (WLOG) supports the administration and implementation of the standards and helps with the early resolution of any issues that may occur and supports staff in the delivery of services in accordance with the duties placed on the Council.

All information and support materials relating to the implementation of the Welsh language standards are available on the intranet and can be accessed by staff. Awareness of the requirements of the standards is raised via Corporate Management Group, directorate management teams, team meetings as well as through the Council's internal publicity mechanisms, e.g. the online newsletter, 'In the Loop'.

Compliance

Our translation processes are well established although some delays have been experienced due to the increasing levels of demand placed on our shared Welsh translation service. During the year we have identified alternative arrangements and working practices to help alleviate this and so ensure we are able to meet our legal requirements.

In October 2019, we held a meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner at Ysgol Ystalyfera Bro Dur, our new Welsh medium secondary school. The focus of the meeting was to ensure that we had a mutual understanding of the priorities we are working to and the opportunities and challenges that we as a Council face. Ysgol Ystalyfera

Bro Dur has exemplified our commitment to the Welsh language and the principles of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Issues identified as a result of complaints received during the year have been addressed and procedures put in place to ensure we are better able to comply with the standards in future, e.g. the use of bilingual messages in service area social media accounts, responding to correspondence in the appropriate language, etc.

In order to determine how well, or otherwise, we are complying with the service delivery standards the WLOG undertook a compliance monitoring exercise during March/April 2019.

Compliance was generally positive amongst service areas. However, there were some inconsistencies within and across some services and the use of Welsh in service specific social media accounts, dealing with particular aspects of telephone calls and producing documents were identified as areas of particular concern.

WLOG departmental representatives worked with the relevant sections to address the inconsistencies and gaps in knowledge in relation to the Welsh language requirements.

An action plan to address the issues of the use of Welsh in social media, developed in response to a complaint received via the Welsh Language Commissioner, is being progressed by all services with social media accounts.

In order to further assess compliance a mystery shopper exercise was undertaken during February/March 2020. Although not fully evaluated, the exercise has highlighted inconsistencies remain across various service areas. During 2020-2021 the WLOG will consider how best to achieve consistency both within and across service areas.

Examples of areas compliance

- The number of people requesting to correspond with the Council in Welsh has increased to 29 (as at 31 March 2020).
- The Welsh Language Officer Group continues to provide support and advice to services as well as providing regular updates on progress, issues and good practice to the Equality and Community Cohesion Group.
- We published the first [Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. Progress Report](#). The rate of progress has been mixed; some specific targets have been missed or partially met with the aim to bring the plan back in line with its original timescales during October 2019 -September 2020.
- During the year regular Welsh language features and guidance to support compliance have been included in our online newsletter, 'In the Loop'. This is available to all staff through our intranet and more recently made available through our employee portal allowing staff access on their home devices.
- The Welsh Language Officer Group's work programme which aims to support staff in the implementation of the standards, assist in the identification of good practice and monitor compliance has been agreed.
- The new Integrated Impact Assessment process, which includes consideration of the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, continues to be applied.

- Our close partnership with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot continued over the period particularly with support and advice, assistance with compliance exercises and training sessions.

Training developed by Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot was delivered to Accountable Managers to help raise awareness of the Welsh language and people's rights as well as to provide an overview of the Welsh language standards with which the Council must comply.

- We began work, with the support of the Welsh Language Commissioner, to consider the initial recommendations of the Place-Names

Standardisation Panel in relation to local place names. This work was suspended as a result of the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic but will be resumed as soon as is practicable to do so.

- The WLOG ran a small awareness campaign for Welsh Language Rights Day on 6th December 2019 (introduced by the Welsh Language Commissioner). The aim of the day was to celebrate Welsh language services and promote the right to use the Welsh language. The focus of the campaign was the rights of staff within the workplace with posters, articles in In the Loop as well as further information available for staff.

Policy decisions

The Integrated Impact Assessment process includes for consideration the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The following is an extract of what has been included in the revised impact assessment to demonstrate compliance:

‘Guidance to accompany the Integrated Impact Assessment process has been produced which provides detailed information on the considerations to be given in relation to Welsh and is made available to all staff via the intranet. Training on the assessment process has been provided to all relevant staff (including senior management) as well as to elected Members.’

All decision reports to Cabinet/ Cabinet boards include a summary of the conclusion of the integrated impact assessment undertaken and is accompanied, as an appendix, by the assessment itself.

Specific Legislative Requirements

Vacant Posts - Welsh language skill requirements

Desirable	146 (including 8 school posts)
Essential	36 (including 25 school posts)
Not necessary	390 (including 121 school posts)
To be learnt on appointment	1
TOTAL	573

Language Skills of Staff

Directorate/Service	Ability						Total staff
	Fairly Fluent Speaker & Writer	Fairly Fluent Welsh Speaker	Fluent Speaker & Writer	Fluent Welsh Speaker	Welsh Learner	Total	
Chief Officers		1	1		1	3	6
Asst Chief Executive & Digital Services	5	4	3	1	20	33	164
Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning							
Participation	14	7	25	7	62	115	658
Transformation	6	2	14	9	36	67	261
Finance and Corporate Services							
Financial Services	3	4	2		10	19	165
Human Resources	2	1	4		5	12	72
Legal Services	5	1	3	1	12	22	80
Environment							
Engineering & Transport	4	3	5	2	12	26	137
Planning & Public Protection	1	2	4	1	20	28	95
Property & Regeneration	2	5	3	2	12	24	141
South Wales Trunk Road Agency	1	4	7	4	14	30	197
Streetcare Services	9	10	14	7	29	69	500
Social Services Health and Housing							
Adult Services	18	13	12	10	55	108	564
Business Services	2	3	2	2	9	18	108
Children & Young People Services	11	9	23	3	43	89	365
Western Bay					7	7	22
Grand Total	176	122	450	94	845	1687	3535

Language skills are self-evaluated and records updated via the employee portal so are not measured against recognised levels. A council wide skills level tool is being considered for introduction during 2020-2021.

Complaints

A total of eight complaints were received during 2019-2020; seven via the Welsh Language Commissioner and one direct to the Council

CSG 538 – Polling Station Review. The Welsh language version of a letter informing of a change to a polling station included English language text. The Commissioner determined that as Returning Officers are not subject to language duties no investigation was possible.

CSG 576 – Twitter/Signage - English language message @CyngorCnPT ‘Twitter’ account and sign by Port Talbot station. Both instances were dealt with via the Council’s own internal investigation. Therefore the Commissioner considered that as the complaint relating to the Twitter account had been resolved it would be a disproportionate use of his resources to undertake a statutory investigation. Also, as the signage complaint had been satisfactorily resolved by the Council there was no need to complete a statutory investigation.

CSG 577 - Home to School Transport Policy – consultation on the proposed policy. The Commissioner decided not to undertake an investigation as it was not a proportionate use of his resources as it would not address the concerns of the complainant.

CSG 594 - Home to School Transport Policy – the use of Welsh during a public consultation. While recognising that the Council had made arrangements to ensure that the Welsh language was not treated less favourably than the English language and that a Welsh language service was available, the Commissioner considered opportunities were missed in promoting a Welsh Language service and determined that there was a failure to comply with the relevant

standards. Further action was required of the Council in the form of the development of a checklist for use when planning and attending events.

Finalisation of the checklist has been delayed due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the Council's subsequent response. However, this work will be prioritised for completion by the autumn.

CSG 609 - Home to School Transport Policy – consultation on the proposed policy. The Commissioner decided not to carry out an investigation as the Council provided a copy of correspondence it shared with stakeholders advising of the decision to review the proposed policy changes in light of feedback received. As the policy decision making was still in progress, the Commissioner considered it pre-emptive to consider investigating an alleged failure to comply with standards relating to that decision.

CSG 650 – Telephone call to the general telephone number. The complaint referred to the use of English on a Welsh language telephone call and similar issues when connected to a service area. The investigation has been suspended by the Commissioner in light of the ongoing situation with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

CSG 682 – Street signs, car parking permits, marketing material. The complaint referred to the lack of Welsh on a street sign and car parking permits as well as the claim that the Welsh language had been treated less favourably than the English language on marketing materials. On 25 March 2020 the Commissioner determined that although the complaint was valid there was no identified failure to comply.

The following complaint was received direct by the Council concerning the Registrars Service:

- A Welsh language email was replied to in English – a misunderstanding by staff over the details of a Welsh language database which has been addressed through staff training.

- A concern over a lack of Welsh language service provision – with the only Welsh speaker no longer employed in the service.

Arrangements had been made to ensure the service was able to continue to offer a Welsh language marriage service.

Welsh Language Commissioner complaint received during 2018/2019:

CSG 459 - Banner/Website/Social Media. The investigation was suspended due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic but will resume as soon as is practicable.

Have your Say

Enquiries or feedback on this report are welcomed via:

Email: policy@npt.gov.uk

Post: Chief Executive, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council,
Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ

Social media:



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Measures

Translations	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total cost of translations (where able to be identified)	£55,584	£52,598	£49,573
Number of requests for translation received by the translation unit	788	1086	716
<p>In order for us to meet our legal responsibilities it has been necessary for services to source translations from other providers. The cost of this is not readily available and in most cases will be absorbed into publication costs or the general budget for the service.</p>			

Telephone Calls	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Number of staff with fluent/fairly fluent language skills identified in the employee directory	94	148	126
Average time to answer telephone calls – English	18 seconds	22 seconds	52 seconds
Average time to answer telephone calls - Welsh	23 seconds	20 seconds	45 seconds
<p>In April 2019 one of the two Welsh speakers left the service which affected our ability to answer Welsh calls. However the average time improved during the year with the recruitment of two Welsh speakers.</p>			

Social Media	31.03.18	31.03.19	31.03.20
Twitter			
Followers - English corporate account	11,937	12,957	14,381
Followers - Welsh corporate account	160	227	306
Facebook			
English corporate account	6,337	8,321	10,878
Welsh corporate account	27	37	71

NPT News e-newsletter	31.03.18	31.03.19	31.03.20
No of subscribers to Welsh e-newsletter	-	7	11
No of subscribers to English e-newsletter	-	403	1221
No of subscribers to bilingual e newsletter	-	14	24

Website	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total number of hits on website	2,845,526	2,981,002	3,576,298
Hits on Welsh webpages	24,192	29,758	34,045

Language Skills	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Fairly fluent Welsh speaker & writer	174	186	176
Fairly fluent Welsh speaker	126	128	122
Fluent Welsh speaker & writer	429	466	450
Fluent Welsh speaker	94	95	94
Welsh learner	748	828	845

Vacant Posts	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Welsh language skills were desirable	174	189 (64)	146 (8)
Welsh language skills were essential	36	29 (25)	36 (25)
Welsh language skills were not necessary	641	487 (207)	390 (121)
Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post	3	0	1
NOTE: Figures in brackets are the number of school vacancies			

Complaints	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Number of complaints received via the Welsh Language Commissioner	3	4*	7**
Number of complaints where Welsh Language Commissioner determined no investigation necessary (New for 2019-2020)	0	2	5
* investigation ongoing in respect of one complaint ** investigation ongoing in respect of two complaints			