Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Report 2018-2019

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

Contents

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.

This annual report outlines our compliance with the Welsh language standards during 2018-2019.

Implementing the Standards

The Council has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the standards, with the Chief Executive having 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.

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, 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.

The Welsh Language Officer Group provides regular updates on progress, issues and good practice to the Equality and Community Cohesion Group, which approves the Welsh Language Officer Group's work plan.

The actions of the Welsh Language Officer Group are reported to the Equality and Community Cohesion Group. Actions are implemented on a collective and/or individual basis by the Welsh Language Officer Group, with the full support of the individual directorate management teams.

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 usual internal publicity mechanisms, e.g. the online newsletter, 'In the Loop'.

Welsh Language Commissioner's Assurance Report 2017-2018

In October 2018, the Welsh Language Commissioner published her Annual Report 2017-18 'A Measure of Success'. The report assesses the overall situation of Welsh language public services, and shows that services are improving across Wales. Following the publication of the annual report, a meeting was held between Council and Welsh Language Commissioner Officers where specific findings in relation to the Council's performance were shared and discussed.

The Council's performance was good overall:
- All calls to our main telephone number were dealt with in their entirety in Welsh.
- Our attitude towards the use of Welsh was positive during 3 of 3 calls.
- All posters, leaflets, sets of rule, form and official notices were available in Welsh.
- All emails and Facebook enquires were answered on the same day in both Welsh and English.
- All replies in Welsh (email and Facebook) treated the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- 2 of 3 replies to Welsh enquiries that included additional information or documentation was the same as with English Facebook enquiries.

The Commissioner's survey highlighted that there was some room for improvement in the following areas:

Emails:
- 2 of 3 enquiries that received a reply, and that answered the enquiry fully, in Welsh compared to 3 of 3 in English.
- 1 of 3 replies to Welsh e-mail enquiries that included additional information or documentation compared to 2 of 3 English e-mail enquiries.
- 1 of 3 Welsh e-mail enquiries included a statement about contacting the organisation in Welsh compared to 3 of 3 English e-mail enquiries.

Facebook
- 2 of 3 Welsh Facebook enquiries that were answered fully compared to 3 of 3 English Facebook enquiries.

Similar issues with social media accounts had been identified independently of this survey and ways to overcome these issues are being explored.

Issues identified in relation to emails have been passed to the Welsh Language Officer Group for action; the IT Section has been asked to embed a statement about contacting the organisation in Welsh on all email signatures.

Main Achievements during 2018-2019

- In September 2018 the Council adopted the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy which will support the Council's objectives to increase the number of people who can speak Welsh on a daily basis. This was developed by elected members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee with the support of Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot.

- The number of staff who have indicated they are Welsh learners has increased from 748 (2017-2018) to 828 (2018-2019).

- Our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was approved by the Welsh Government and details how we plan to support and

further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities and how we plan for future growth.

- We opened a brand new school, Ysgol Bro Dur, to provide increased Welsh medium capacity in the south of the county borough complementing investment in recent years at Ysgol Ystalyfera north campus.

- The Welsh Language Officer Group has been instrumental in promoting and raising awareness of the Welsh language amongst staff and the public particularly as part of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.

- 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.

- Our impact assessment process was revised and the new 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 new framework and associated guidance has been circulated to all corporate directors and heads of service for dissemination to relevant staff. All report authors across the Council have been trained to apply the new Integrated Impact Assessment.

- We have enjoyed a closer partnership with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot over the period particularly in the development and implementation of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and promotion and awareness initiatives as well as more general support and advice.

Challenges

Social Media

Issues with service specific social media accounts had been identified independently of the Commissioner's findings and ways to overcome them are being explored.

Full compliance with the standard relating to social media across all our individual service social media accounts because of our resource constraints and restrictions on recruitment continues to be challenging.

While we are now confident of compliance with the standards in relation to planned or pre-prepared messages on our individual service social media accounts, issues faced with the more spontaneous aspects of the social media accounts remain the same; limited number of staff with Welsh language skills and turnaround time for translations in addition to the wider budget and recruitment constraints make the delivery of a fully bilingual social media service very challenging.

We have been piloting Microsoft Translator software, along with Cysgliad software, with Welsh speakers and Welsh learners in our Communications and Community Relations team. The aim is to establish how the software might enable officers who manage these service specific accounts (those fluent in Welsh, fairly fluent, Welsh learners and non-Welsh speakers) to:

a. Ensure that any posts from the Council can be published simultaneously in Welsh and English (using the translate from English to Welsh facility)
and
b. Ensure that comments and messages that require a response and are received in Welsh via these accounts can be responded to as swiftly as if they had been received in English (using the translate from Welsh to English facility)

This pilot has identified limitations and so we are exploring the use of machine learning software, with the Welsh Government and Cardiff University, in order to find a more suitable solution.

<u>Email signatures/messages</u>

While standard text, to comply with the various standards relating to email signatures and messages has been circulated to all staff it has become apparent that this has yet to be fully applied across the Council.

This issue has been passed to the Welsh Language Officer Group and actions to address the matter have been identified; the IT Section has been asked to embed the standard text (see Correspondence section below) on all email signatures.

Compliance

Service delivery standards

<u>Correspondence</u>

All emails as well as our letterheads include the following standard text:

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymdrin â gohebiaeth Gymraeg a Saesneg i'r un safonau ac amserlenni

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and will deal with Welsh and English correspondence to the same standards and timescales.

In addition, our emails also include the following which links to the language preference form on our website:

Os hoffech ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg wrth ddelio â'r Cyngor os gwelwch yn dda cliciwch <u>yma</u>

If you would like to use Welsh when dealing with the Council please click <u>here</u>

Where individuals have informed us of their language choice this is held on a database (populated from the online form on our website) that can be accessed by all staff via our intranet.

Guidance is available to all staff to assist with compliance.

Telephone calls

Staff Guidance has been published to assist staff in complying with the requirements of the standards.

Our main telephone line, supported by Welsh speaking staff, deals with the majority of calls to the Council.

Welsh speaking staff in all directorates are clearly identified on our employee directory which is accessed via our intranet.

Articles on compliance have been included in the online newsletter In the Loop during the year.

Meetings & Public events

Simultaneous translation for meetings, when required, is provided by the Translation Unit (a shared service with the City and County of Swansea).

Translation facilities are available at all scheduled Council meetings

Display Material, Signs and Notices

All new signs and notices are bilingual in accordance with the standards.

The majority of display material we produce is usually part of promotion or consultation linked to plans, strategies or the development of initiatives and as such is produced bilingually.

Documents & Forms

Documents and forms are produced bilingually where appropriate and guidance has been published to assist staff comply with the requirements of the standards.

The production of Welsh versions of the minutes of meetings of Council committees continues to be challenging however, ways to address this matter are being explored by the Democratic Services section.

The following standard text is included on forms and documents:

This document is available in Welsh - Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Saesneg.

This form is available in Welsh - Mae'r fflurflen hon ar gael yn Saesneg

Reception Services

A Welsh language service is available at our One Stop Shop/Reception at both Neath and Port Talbot Civic Centres.

Recruitment of additional Welsh speaking staff to the Customer Services section has been challenging and unfortunately, although advertised, Welsh essential posts have not been filled. On the third attempt, two Welsh speaking modern apprentices have been recruited and it is hoped that the appointees will develop and take up permanent positions in the service at the end of their training.

There is a telephone link to bilingual staff who provide a reception service for our unmanned reception areas.

Website & Social Media

Our website can be accessed through either Welsh or English, with switching between languages possible through a simple click of a button on each webpage.

Our website is subject to an ongoing audit to ensure information, for which the Council is responsible, is up to date, relevant and bilingual.

Where third party content and links are available bilingually, this is reflected through links and webpages on our website.

Unfortunately, there remains some instances where we are unable to provide a complete Welsh language service on our website primarily due to historic software limitations, where webpages are linked to back office software/databases and on our transactional webpages. This will improve consistency in addressing the Welsh language standards.

With the introduction of a new content management system, Umbraco, specific employees have responsibility for uploading and monitoring the content of service specific webpages. Changes are approved, by a central section, only if both Welsh and English content is available.

Training provided on the Umbraco system has been delivered to all relevant staff and the requirements regarding Welsh content clearly stressed.

We continue to post to and monitor our corporate Welsh and English corporate social media accounts.

Due to Welsh language skills limitations within service areas, our individual social media accounts are in English only. However, as explained earlier in this report we are exploring ways to overcome these limitations through utilising language learning/translation software in order to ensure service area accounts are maintained.

Self Service machines

A programme of replacement or updating of parking ticket machines has begun to ensure their full compliance with the requirements of the Standards. This programme, endorsed by the Welsh Language Commissioner, is due to be completed by 2021.

Corporate Identity

We have revised and updated our corporate identity and guidelines have been published to assist staff with visual identity elements (logo, etc.), content, and includes an employee toolkit with a range of templates. Welsh is positioned first in our logo, letterheads, document templates, etc.

Education Courses

Education courses are provided in accordance with the requirements of the standards. However, none of the courses offered by Adult Community Learning have been requested for delivery through the medium of Welsh.

Our Road Safety section has run 43 courses during the year with 388 attendees and while all promotional material has been bilingual there has been no request to deliver these courses through the medium of Welsh.

Over 600 pupils from our Welsh language medium schools have received bilingual Cycle and Megadrive training courses during the year.

Awarding grant and contracts

Grant documents and the tender specifications reflect the requirements of the Welsh language standards.

The third sector grants assessment process has been updated to include specific criteria in relation to the Welsh language:

Does the application demonstrate how the grant will affect opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and its equal treatment with English?

E-procurement can be accessed in both Welsh and English via a secure portal.

During March 2019 a service delivery standards compliance testing exercise was undertaken with a small number of service area that had a high level of contact with the public, though not all standards were relevant to every service area.

Compliance was generally positive with the majority of staff within the service areas understanding the requirements when dealing with correspondence, telephone calls, arranging meetings, producing documents and signage. However, there were some inconsistencies within and across some service areas, e.g. the use of Welsh in social media, dealing with telephone calls and producing documents.

These inconsistences are being addressed by members of the Welsh Language Officer Group directly with the services areas. In addition, the Welsh Language Officer Group has developed a training programme for managers along with an information campaign for staff which will be rolled out during 2019-2020. Service areas will undergo a further compliance testing exercise in March 2020 to determine progress following the information campaign.

Policy making standards

The Welsh language has always been considered alongside the protected characteristics as part of our Equality Impact Assessment process. During the last year we revised our impact assessment process to take into account new, and existing, legal duties. The new 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:

What effect does the initiative have on:	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
people's opportunities to use the Welsh language				
treating the Welsh and English languages equally				

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.

All relevant staff (including senior management) and elected Members have undertaken training on the revised Integrated Impact Assessment process.

Operational standards

New posts

All new contracts of employment/conditional offer letters and statement of particulars state:

Os hoffech dderbyn gohebiaeth mewn perthynas â'ch cyflogaeth yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r Tîm Cefnogi Cyflogaeth yn jobs@npt.gov.uk

If you would like to receive correspondence in relation to your employment in Welsh, please contact the Employment Support Team on jobs@npt.gov.uk

Employment correspondence and documentation

All employment correspondence and documentation, including performance appraisal forms, contain text to comply with the standards.   Performance Appraisal forms, along with forms for annual leave and absence are available in Welsh and can be accessed from our intranet.

HR Policies

The majority of policies listed in the standards are available bilingually.

Complaints and Disciplinary

The following text is included in our Grievance Policy and Grievance Procedure documents

> Os hoffech gynnal y broses hon yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'ch Swyddog AD dynodedig
>
> If you wish to conduct this process in Welsh, please contact your designated HR Officer.

> Os hoffech dderbyn gohebiaeth mewn perthynas â'ch cyflogaeth yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'ch Swyddog AD dynodedig.
>
> If you would like to receive correspondence in relation to your employment in Welsh, please contact your designated HR Officer

Documentation in Welsh and simultaneous translation is provided when requested.

Support for staff

Cysgliad software (Welsh grammar and spellchecker software) has been made available to all staff and elected Members for installation on their work PC/laptop. This has been advertised direct to Welsh speaking staff as well as in our online newsletter, In the Loop.

Lapel pins and lanyards are provided for all Welsh speakers and learners, which helps promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language both amongst staff and with the public.

Information relating to the Welsh language is available to staff via our intranet. Amongst the information on the intranet is a page dedicated to provide help and support for staff on complying with the standards; including out of office messages, employee guidance (on complying with the standards), email signature and obtaining translations.

Assessing language skills

A self-service employee portal has been developed to enable staff to view pay slips, submit travel claims and update HR records, including

their self-assessed language skill. While this has helped increase the accuracy of the data there are limitations; not all staff currently access the portal (although the numbers are increasing) and the skill categories currently used are very subjective.

Self-assessment is inherently flawed with potential over or under representation of skills and data not being updated. In addition, current skills levels used, Fluent, Fairly Fluent, etc., are open to interpretation. Consequently, we are in the process of updating our categories in line with recognised qualification and assessment frameworks.

Training

There is a fully inclusive training programme for all staff, provided by our local Welsh for Adults Centre and the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Courses include an 'Introduction to Learning Welsh', 'Croeso Cymraeg Gwaith' (Work Welsh Welcome) Gloywi Iaith (Improving Your Written Welsh).

Social work students seconded and hosted by the Council receive 'Welsh Language Awareness in Neath Port Talbot' training to raise awareness of the use of the Welsh language across Neath Port Talbot and in delivering the 'Active Offer'.

Newly qualified social workers entering their second year of practice are required to undertake a consolidation programme which is available in both Welsh and English. The 'Porth Agored' partnership, of which the Council is a partner, is responsible for the writing, development and implementation of the consolidation programme and works in conjunction with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

An informal 'Sgwrs' group was established in 2016 for Welsh speaking staff of all abilities in order to encourage the use of Welsh in the workplace, at home and in the community.

Our Learning, Training and Development Team have several publications, including phrasebooks, course books, dictionaries and

light reading, available for loan to supplement/complement language training courses.

We have a section on the 'Training' intranet pages providing information to staff including links to guidance documentation (e.g. Active Offer, More than Just Words, etc.) and Welsh language training and development opportunities. Benefits of using the Welsh language in the workplace for employers and employees is promoted through the intranet page and our training programme.

Our corporate induction includes information on Welsh language resources and encourages managers to discuss and make new employees aware of the Welsh language standards and Welsh language awareness. Other sections of the induction including set up of bilingual signatures, answering the telephone bilingually etc. is also covered.

Welsh Language Awareness e-learning module has been developed and will be available imminently.

Recruitment and Appointment

New or vacant posts are categorised as to the language skills required; Welsh language essential, desirable, need to be learnt when appointed to the post or not required. The required skills level for each post is then recorded on the HR Vision system.

All job vacancies are advertised in accordance with the requirements of the standards.

Standard text, in both English and Welsh, has been included in the jobs page and to the corporate job application forms:

> Ydym yn croesawu ceisiadau Cymraeg a Saesneg. Ni chaiff cais a gyflwynir yn Gymraeg ei drin yn llai ffafriol na chais a gyflwynir yn Saesneg.

> We welcome applications in English and Welsh. An application submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than an application submitted in English

In addition the following sentence, in both English and Welsh, has been added to the 'invite to interview' letters.

> Os hoffech gynnal y broses hon yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r Tîm Cefnogi Cyflogaeth yn jobs@npt.gov.uk

> If you wish to conduct this process in Welsh, please contact the Employment Support Team on jobs@npt.gov.uk

All recruitment documentation are published in Welsh where appropriate in accordance with the requirements of the standards. Simultaneous translation services are provided where necessary.

Workplace signs

All new signs are bilingual with Welsh positioned first as required in the standards.

Audio announcements

When required, audio announcements are in Welsh first except during an emergency or an emergency drill.

Promotion standards

In September 2018 the Council adopted the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy which will support the Council's objectives to increase the number of people who can speak Welsh, and who do so, on a daily basis. It is anticipated by 2023 the Council will have contributed to a minimum increase of 1% in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough within the current financial plan, and current levels of funding and resources.

Our five year Strategy and action plan will lay the foundations for developing Neath Port Talbot as a bilingual county borough, where the language is considered an important and relevant factor to the day to day operation of the Council as well as the lives of those living within the county borough.

The Strategy and action plan was developed by a cross party task and finish group with the assistance of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council staff and a representative of Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot (Menter Iaith CNPT) (Neath Port Talbot Language Initiative).

The action plan was developed within current budgetary constraints and a number of actions have been included which are already being delivered; through the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, external grants/funding and work already being undertaken by external organisations which contribute to the aims of the Strategy. It includes areas of work where the Council has direct responsibility as well as work being undertaken by partner organisations including the Welsh Language Strategic Forum which is jointly chaired by Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot and Menter Iaith Abertawe (Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Language Initiatives respectively).

Complaints

A total of five complaints were received during 2018-2019; four via the Welsh Language Commissioner and one direct to the Council.

CSG 340: road signs on Harbour Way – the information available was insufficient to enable the Commissioner to reach a decision whether to investigate or not

CSG 375: Welsh language service on our main telephone number – the commissioner found we had failed to comply with the standard. An action plan was agreed to reduce the risk of this reoccurring.

CSG 436: Council Tax – the Commissioner could not conclude the complaint was valid and so did not proceed to investigate the complaint.

CSG 459: Banner/Website/Social Media – this is ongoing.

1/18-19: Lack of Welsh language greetings cards in Port Talbot – while this does not fall under the Council's responsibilities the matter was referred to partner language organisations to consider any possible action.

The following complaints were determined during 2018-2019:

CSG 231: Parking ticket machines – The Commissioner determined the Council had failed to comply with standard 60 and further actions were imposed to prevent the continuation or repetition of the failure; prepare an action plan to show the steps taken to change the default language to Welsh in parking ticket machines which can accommodate an alternative language indicator (button) and prepare a second action plan to show the steps taken to comply with standard 60 in relation to screens on the parking ticket machines which are too small to accommodate an alternative language indicator (button) these would be replaced within 3 years.

CSG 295: Social Media - the Commissioner determined the Council had failed to comply with standard 58 and further action was imposed to prevent the continuation or repetition of the failure; undertake a review of the effectiveness of the new arrangements in order to ensure that the procedure for responding to messages in Welsh works as the Council intended.

CSG 299: Social Media – the Commissioner determined that the Council had failed to comply with standard 58 and further action was imposed to prevent the continuation or repetition of the failure: prepare an action plan to outline what steps the Council will take in order to comply with standard 58 when publishing departmental Twitter accounts.

Measures

Translations	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Total cost of translations (where able to be identified)	£67,537	£55,584	£52,598
Number of requests for translation received by the translation unit	917	788	1086

Telephone Calls	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Number of staff with fluent/fairly fluent language skills identified in the employee directory	63	94	148
Average time to answer telephone calls – English	21 seconds	18 seconds	22 seconds
Average time to answer telephone calls - Welsh	18 seconds	23 seconds	20 seconds

Social Media	31.03.17	31.03.18	31.03.19
Twitter Followers - English corporate account (followers)	10,705	11,937	12,957
Followers - Welsh corporate account	98	160	227
Facebook English corporate account	4,783	6,337	8,321
Welsh corporate account	22	27	37

NPT News e-newsletter (New for 2018-2019)	31.03.17	31.03.18	31.03.19
No of subscribers to English e-newsletter	-	-	403
No of subscribers to Welsh e-newsletter	-	-	7
No of subscribers to bilingual e-newsletter	-	-	14

Website	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Total number of hits on website	2,838,679	2,845,526	2,981,002
Hits on Welsh webpages	21,230	24,192	29,758

Language Skills	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Fairly fluent Welsh speaker and writer	181	174	186
Fairly fluent Welsh speaker	131	126	128
Fluent Welsh speaker and writer	425	429	466
Fluent Welsh speaker	101	94	95
Welsh learner	716	748	828

Vacant Posts	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Welsh language skills were desirable	79	174	189 (including 64 school posts)
Welsh language skills were essential	15	36	29 (including 25 school posts)
Welsh language skills were not necessary	313	641	487 (including 207 school posts)
Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post	0	3	0

Complaints	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Number of complaints received via the Welsh Language Commissioner	2	3	4