



Annual Report 2025 - 2026

Welsh Language Standards Compliance

Prepared in accordance with the requirements of
The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

June 2026



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1. Introduction

Torfaen County Borough Council is committed to delivering high-quality Welsh language services to residents and visitors.

During 2025/26, the Welsh Language team worked closely with Council Directorates to provide guidance and awareness of the legal requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. Statutory corporate Welsh language training was developed to ensure that managers understand their responsibilities and that new employees are aware of the importance of implementing the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, not only in the Borough, but also as part of the national direction in increasing the use of Welsh.

The Council has also continued to support partner organisations and external providers delivering services on their behalf, with the aim of improving both the quality and accessibility of Welsh language services.

The service continued to explore the possibilities of working with other neighboring authorities in providing translation services, avoiding duplication, increased efficiencies and reducing costs using technology advances and investment in recent years. The federated working of both Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Councils will offer greater collaboration opportunities in developing stronger promotion across the region.

This report outlines the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and presents the required data for the 2025/26 financial year. Barriers that previously hindered progress in implementing the Standards have been addressed, enabling greater promotion of services and supporting the recruitment of staff to deliver Welsh language services effectively.

The report was presented to Full Council, ensuring that Elected Members are fully informed of the Council's corporate responsibilities and statutory obligations under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The approved Annual Report will be published on the Council's corporate website (www.torfaen.gov.uk) under the Welsh Language section and made available at local offices accessible to the public no later than 30 June 2026.

2. Background

This Annual Report is produced under the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 and Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015. The legal framework requires Torfaen County Borough Council to report on five statutory areas.

Areas	Relevant Standard and/or Sub-section
Compliance	158, 164, 170
Complaints	147, 148, 149, 156, 158 (2), 162, 164 (2), 168 (a), 170 (2) (d)
Welsh Language Skills	170 (2) (a), 151
Welsh Language Training	170 (2) (b) (c), 152
Recruitment	170 (2) (ch), 154

The Councils' Welsh language standards are detailed within its Compliance Notice dated 30 September 2015. The Council is subject to 170 standards contained within the Compliance Notice. A copy of Torfaen County Borough Council Compliance Notice can be found [here](#)

During 2025/2026, the Welsh Language Team were part of Community Wellbeing, which sits under the Adult and Communities Directorate. We currently have four members of staff working on corporate Welsh language delivery support on behalf of the Council:

Welsh Language Officer
Welsh Translation Co-ordinator
Welsh Language Translators (x 2)

Community Wellbeing
Adult & Communities Directorate
Civic Centre
Pontypool
Torfaen NP4 6YB

Telephone: (01495) 766096

The appointed Executive Member for Corporate Governance & Performance (including Welsh Language) for 2025/26 was Cllr Peter Jones

3. Compliance

Staff Guidance and the Council's interpretation on the requirements of the Service Delivery Standards are published on the Council's staff intranet. The council carries out their own mystery shopper exercise to ensure consistent compliance with the Standards.

Service Delivery Standards

Standards Group	Action taken during 2025/26	Action to be taken during 2026/2027
Standards 1 - 7 Correspondence sent and received	Guidance issued through the Staff Bulletin	Monitor general correspondence with the public to ensure compliance. Implement the new bilingual emails through engagement request and ensure addresses are adopted and promoted by directorates.
Standards 8 - 22 Telephone calls made and received	Calls are directed to key officers with Welsh language skills if the call centre is busy dealing with other enquiries From April 2025 to March 2026 the Council's main call centre received a total of 72,265 calls. 0.45% (327 calls) of these callers chose the Welsh language option.	Ensure call centre staff and key officers are aware of the protocol when dealing with Welsh language calls. Review the Welsh language "hunt" group every 6 months to update any skills/staff changes
Standards 24 – 36 Meetings with the Public	Staff have been reminded on the requirement of the Standards, and when simultaneous translation is required at public meetings. The council have invested in simultaneous translation equipment to ensure services and meetings can be delivered in Welsh where required	Promote the use of translation technology at meetings and the scope of available tools to assist in multilingual meetings.

Standards 37 - 51, 69 - 70 Other bilingual documents	Continue to work with our Communications team to ensure documents are produced in line with the Standards.	Monitor samples of documents to ensure compliance.
Standards 52 – 60 Websites, Social Media and Apps, and Self-service Machines	The Welsh pages of the corporate website received 110,650 hits during 2025/26, in comparison to 1,703,684 hits on the English pages. On closer inspection, from April 2025 until November 2025 there have been some anomalies in the visits to the Welsh version of the website, resulting in a significant spike every few days (likely to be a technology issue). This has skewed the figures significantly. For the period 1 April 2025 until 1 November 2025 (inclusive) there were 108,272 views. For the period 2 November to 31 March there were 2,378 views. Using the November to March figure as an average, the more realistic figure for the year would be 5.707 views.	Monitor Council owned websites to ensure compliance. Work with external organisations who provide services on our behalf to ensure compliance. Continue to monitor anomalies in visits to the Welsh pages on the corporate website (reported through Google Analytics)

Standards 61 – 63 Signs	There was 1 new development during 2025/26. 1 street name approved (100%) with a Welsh name. Existing nameplates are not translated. Work has continued to standardise place names in the borough (in line with the Welsh Language Commissioner)	Monitor new and replacement signs. Ensure a comprehensive list of standardised place names in the borough is agreed (in line with the Welsh Language Commissioner) and signed off by elected members
Standards 64 – 68 Reception Services	Periodic visits were made during the year to ensure compliance.	Work with customer care to address any training needed.
Standards 71 – 75 Awarding Grants	Internal Audit assess performance of any funding awarded as part of a grant in line with the awarding grants Standards. A review of the third sector grant scheme is underway in order to shape how small grants are delivered across the local authority and ensure consistency.	Ensure that the Welsh language is included in grant agreements.

Standards 76 – 80 Awarding Contracts	Procurement for Torfaen County Borough Council is delivered collaboratively through Ardal, a partnership managed by Cardiff Council that oversees purchasing for Cardiff, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, and the Vale of Glamorgan. All procurement Invitations include Welsh language element scoring.	Continue to work with third party providers on Welsh language requirements and provide practical support if required
Standards 81 – 82 Promoting Welsh Language Services	Welsh Language Commissioner's guidance issued to staff on promoting services via social media	Monitor social media to ensure that Welsh language services are actively promoted and content is published in line with the Standards.
Standard 83 Corporate Identity	The Council's corporate identity is bilingual.	Monitor for compliance
Standards 84 & 86 Educational Courses	Courses are moving to digital platforms and are being offered bilingually.	Ensure that the assessment of courses are publicised on our website We will develop a method of recording attendee numbers and language accessed
Standard 87 Public Address Systems	Announcements made in all lifts within Council Offices are bilingual.	Monitor for compliance

Policy Making Standards

Guidance and the Council's interpretation on the requirements of the Policy Making Standards are published on the Council's staff intranet.

Standards Group	Action taken during 2025/26	Action to be taken during 2026/2027
Standards 88 - 93	62.5% of designated officers have completed the Intergrated Impact Assessment on-line training module. The Council's integrated impact assessment, linked to the 7 national well-being goals is used to ensure that a "conscientious effort" has been made to identify impact of policy decisions on the Welsh language. The Welsh Language Unit has oversight of each policy decision.	Continue to monitor officer completion of the on-line training module and report % within the Annual Monitoring Report.

Operational Standards

Guidance and the Council's interpretation for staff on the requirements of the Operational Standards are published on the Council's intranet. The council will carry out their own mystery shopper exercise to ensure consistent compliance with the Standards.

Standards Group	Action taken during 2025/26	Action to be taken during 2026/27
Standards 99 – 104 Employment Documents	All electronic HR documents are bilingual. Automated system for arranging leave / absences and staff expenses, is in English only due to system limitations.	Monitor to ensure compliance
Standards 105 – 111 Human Resources Policies	All Council HR policies are provided in Welsh on the staff intranet (SWOOP).	Monitor to ensure compliance
Standards 112 – 119 Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures	37 employees (2.80% of those who have completed their preferred language) have indicated their preferred language of communication is Welsh	Aim to encourage 100% of staff to complete Welsh language skills data which includes preferred language.
Standards 120 – 125 Staff Intranet and IT Resources	Welsh Language Resources on SWOOP (Council Intranet) have been updated. Staff have access to Cysgliad, "Tô Bach" and Welsh 'language pack' from Microsoft on all new and replacement computers.	Update resources on the Welsh intranet pages as required.
Standard 127 Staff Language Skills	Please see section on <i>Welsh language skills</i> .	Aim to encourage 100% of staff to complete Welsh language skills data.

Standards 128 – 133 Staff Training	Please see section on <i>Welsh language skills</i>. During 2025/2026, 7 employees undertook Welsh language training.	Continue to promote learning Welsh as a valuable skill. Due to staff illness, the on-line Welsh awareness module will be developed in 2026/27 and look to mandate for every new member of staff
Standards 134 – 135 Wording and Logo for Staff Email Signatures	All staff are reminded, via line managers, to have a bilingual email signature in line with corporate standards. The “Work Welsh” logo is available for staff to download on the intranet. Staff are able to choose Teams backgrounds that display the Work Welsh logo	Update resources on the Welsh intranet pages as necessary.
Standards 136 - 140 Recruitment Process	Please see section on <i>Recruitment</i>	Monitor compliance.
Standards 141 – 143 Internal Signage	Direct training has been given to staff who commission Internal signage	Monitor all Council offices to ensure compliance.
Standard 144 Workplace announcements	Announcements made in all lifts within Council offices are bilingual.	Continue to monitor

4. Complaints

All complaints received from residents through the medium of Welsh or relate to a failure to comply with the Welsh language Service Delivery Standards are dealt with in line with the Council's corporate complaints policy. Complaints are categorised in three stages

- **Stage 1** - Informal resolution to a complaint within 10 working days
- **Stage 2** - Escalated Stage 1 complaint or a complaint that involves more than one service area. Complaints are formally investigated and responded to within 20 working days.
- **Public Services Ombudsman / Welsh Language Commissioner** - Escalated Stage 2 complaint which may undertake an independent review on the complainant's behalf. The Ombudsman would expect the complainant to have exhausted the Council's complaints process prior to contact, except in exceptional circumstances. Under section 71 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, the Welsh Language Commissioner is able to accept complaints sent directly to the Commissioner's office and investigate on their behalf, if a complaint is deemed valid.

During 2025/2026, 2 complaints were received.

Stage 1	Stage 2	Welsh Language Commissioner
1	0	1

Stage 1

There was 1 complaint received from the public during this period.

29/08/2025 - Disappointed that replacement street signs are not bilingual.

Welsh Language Commissioner

There was 1 new complaint received by the Welsh Language Commissioner during 2025/2026

CS1377 - Complaint from a member of the public on 29/09/2025

This refers to a complaint raised regarding a street sign in Cwmbran that was bilingual, and had been replaced with an English-only sign. The Commissioner decided not to conduct a full investigation into the complaint as there was no failure to comply with the Standards.

5. Welsh Language Skills

The council uses the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for recording the language skills of staff. The CEFR organises language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three broad levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User, and that can be further subdivided according to the needs of the local context. The levels are defined through 'can-do' descriptors.

CEFR did not exactly align with the ALTE scales we used up until December 2024. Hence, a campaign was launched to collect this data from new and existing staff, which will inform us of who has the necessary Welsh language skills to deliver services through the medium of Welsh and help any other areas where we may struggle to provide Welsh services.

So far, 29% of staff have completed the assessment. Below is the latest information available on staff Welsh language skills and their preferred language choice.

The data below outlines each service area and the Welsh language proficiency levels, assessed using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scales.

A1	-	Entry Level
A2	-	Foundation
B1	-	Intermediate
B2	-	Advanced
C1	-	Proficient
C2	-	Fully Proficient

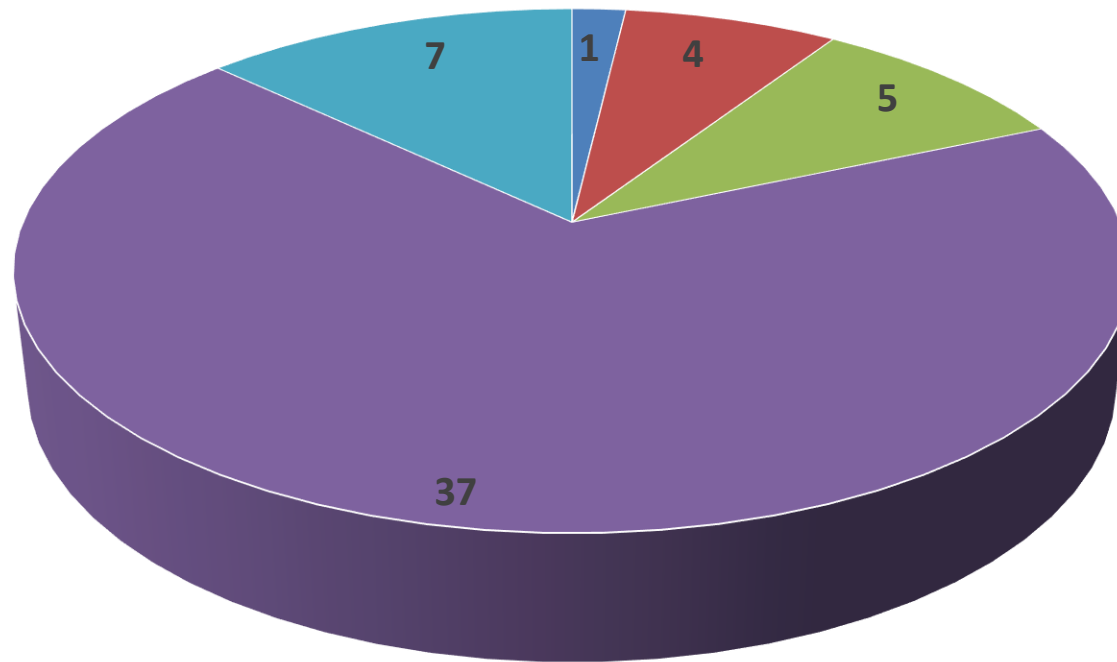
Number of Staff with Welsh Skills by Directorate

Directorate	Speak Welsh	Read Welsh	Understand Welsh	Write Welsh
Shared Resource Service	21	21	19	13
Economy & Environment	23	19	23	20
Corporate Resources	52	43	48	36
Children and Family Services	252	213	232	188
Adults and Communities	64	47	55	32
	412	343	377	289

Number of Staff with Welsh Language Skills by Competency Level

Description	Speak Welsh	Read Welsh	Understand Welsh	Write Welsh
A1 Level – Entry (Mynediad)	245	183	216	153
A2 Level – Foundation (Sylfaen)	76	78	68	60
B1 Level – Intermediate (Canolradd)	21	19	24	15
B2 Level – Advanced (Uwch)	16	11	15	12
C1 Proficiency Express fully and precisely (Mynegu'n llawn ac yn gywir)	10	13	9	12
C2 Proficiency – Fully Proficient (Rhugl)	44	39	45	37
	412	343	377	289

Number of Staff with good Welsh Language Skills (C1 and C2)



■ Shared Resource Service ■ Economy & Environment ■ Corporate Resources
■ Children and Family Services ■ Adults and Communities

6. Welsh Language Training

The Council run a number of Welsh Language training courses, aimed at increasing the capacity of Welsh speakers within the organisation and raise the confidence of staff who are reluctant to use their Welsh skills. All courses are centrally funded.

During 2025/2026, 5 employees attended Welsh language training through the National Centre for Learning Welsh (delivered by Coleg Gwent).

8.05% of our workforce are able to speak Welsh (Levels A1-C2)

2 members of staff studied Welsh through “Say Something in Welsh” on-line audio course.

Standard 128, requires the Council to provide training in Welsh for staff in the following areas, if they are provided in English:

- Recruitment and interviewing;
- Performance management;
- Complaints and disciplinary procedures;
- Induction;
- Dealing with the public; and
- Health and safety.

Some training within these areas was provided during 2025/26, invitations to training offered attendees a language choice. No requests were received for training through the medium of Welsh.

Most courses are moving to digital platforms (Thinqi) and are being offered bilingually, and we will develop a method of recording and reporting on attendee numbers and language chosen.

7. Recruitment

During 2025/26, **780** new or vacant Torfaen County Borough Council posts were advertised.

The number of posts that were categorised as requiring Welsh language skills were as follows:

Category	Number of Advertisements	Percentage of Advertisements
Essential	21	2.69
Desirable	759	97.31
Need to be learnt	0	0.00
No Welsh skills required	0	0.00

As part of the recruitment process, and a requirement of Standard 136, each post advertised must be assessed for their Welsh language skills.

The Council only assesses vacant post against two categories: Welsh desirable or Welsh essential. This will allow all candidates to indicate their level of Welsh and contribute to delivering Welsh language services on behalf of the council.

8. Conclusion

5 Year Promotion Strategy

The Council's continues to work with Menter Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen a Mynwy, and other partner organisations to deliver the outcomes of the 5-year strategy (2024 – 2029).

There are 5 key areas covered by the Strategy :

- 1) Legislation and Policy
- 2) Education
- 3) The Community
- 4) Services Delivery
- 5) The Workplace

The Strategy is closely aligned to the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP), Welsh Government Strategy – Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers and the recommendations within the Welsh Language Commissioner's 5-year report on the position of the Welsh Language 2021–25.

Staff Skills Audit.

We have many staff who work for the council and have gone through Welsh medium education in the borough, but we know that often skills are forgotten, and confidence lost. We would like to support our staff to continue to use those extremely valuable life skills. This will also allow us to understand where we have skills gaps so we can look to fill these by recruiting and/or training in the future.

Gathering staff Welsh language skills on iFOR (our HR system) using the CEFR levels continues. The 6 skill levels ranging from pure beginner (A1) to 'fluent' (C2) are linked to recognised qualifications and other assessment frameworks.

This also complements the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 framework on describing Welsh language ability within the education sector and the transfer of those skills to the workplace.

Removing Barriers

The council's translation service offers directorates and external partners with a quality resource to assist in complying with the Welsh language Standards. In 2025/2026, the service translated 2.5 million words.

Language technology is developing rapidly and new tools and innovations are transforming communication, education, business, and public services The Welsh language service has fully engaged with the use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Translation to aide productivity. The accuracy of the technology is not 100%.

These changes have enabled us to place greater emphasis on promoting the Welsh language and enhancing our Welsh language services for residents.

Cultural Events

The Council promotes cultural awareness and national events to internal staff through the staff bulletin, via the Inspire Café, and the display of various flags outside the Civic Centre. Wider promotion with the public is done in partnership with Menter Iaith Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen a Mynwy, The Council continues to support the 'Torf-hwyl' festival. A music, storytelling and activities event aimed at promoting Welsh culture among children and young people, regardless of their background. The event was held at Cwmbran Shopping in 2025/2026.

