



Annual Report 2024 - 2025

Welsh Language Standards Compliance

Prepared in accordance with the requirements of

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

June 2025



Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Background	3
3.	Compliance	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service Delivery Standards• Policy Making Standards• Operational Standards• Complaints• Welsh Language Skills• Welsh Language Training• Recruitment	
4.	Conclusions	16

1. Introduction

Torfaen County Borough Council strives to deliver a high-quality Welsh language service to its residents and visitors.

Throughout 2024/25, the team has worked with Directorates to raise awareness and advise on the legal requirements of the Standards. Corporate statutory Welsh language Training has been developed to inform Managers that new employees are aware of the importance and ethical requirements when implementing the Welsh language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Council has continued to support partners and external organisations who provide services on behalf of the Council with the aim of improving the quality and availability of their Welsh services.

This report sets out our compliance with the Standards and submits the necessary data for the 2024/25 financial year. We have removed barriers that may prohibit the progress of implementing the Standards and will allow increased promotion and the recruitment of staff to deliver our Welsh language services.

This report was presented to full Council and ensures that Elected Members are fully aware of the corporate responsibilities and statutory obligations under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Council approved Annual Report will be published on the Council's corporate website (www.torfaen.gov.uk), under the Welsh Language section and available at local offices where the public have access, no later than 30 June 2025.

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 2024/2025, the Welsh Language Team were part of the Public Service Support Unit, which sits under the Adult and Communities Directorate. We currently have four members of staff working on corporate Welsh language delivery on behalf of the Council:

Welsh Language Officer
Welsh Translation Co-ordinator
Welsh Language Translators (1 x F/T, 1 P/T)

Adult & Communities Directorate
Public Service Support Unit
Civic Centre
Pontypool
Torfaen NP4 6YB

Telephone: (01495) 766096

The appointed Executive Member for Corporate Governance & Performance (including Welsh Language) for 2024/25 was Cllr Peter Jones

3. Compliance

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 2024/25	Action to be taken during 2025/2026
Standards 1 - 7 Correspondence sent and received	Guidance issued through the Staff Bulletin Corporate email addresses have been translated and will continue to work with SRS to adopt the new bilingual addresses	Monitor general correspondence with the public to ensure compliance.
Standards 8 - 22 Telephone calls made and received	Following an investigation by the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Council have revised their procedure for calls received in Welsh. From April 2024 to March 2025 the Council's main call centre received a total of 81,952 calls. 0.83% (682 calls) of these callers chose the Welsh language option.	Ensure members and staff are aware of the protocol when dealing with Welsh language calls. Ensure that the Welsh language "hunt" group is updated and shared with the relevant staff
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.	Investigate how simultaneous translation would work within the Council chamber for large multilingual meetings.
Standards 37 - 51, 69 - 70 Other bilingual documents	Continued 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	<p>The Welsh pages of the corporate website received 89,216 hits during 2024/25, in comparison to 1,819,439 hits on the English pages.</p> <p>On closer inspection, since October 2024 there have been some anomalies in the visits to the Welsh version of the website. Resulting in a significant spike every few days. These visits are very short (less than 1 second) and by different users. This has therefore skewed the figures significantly.</p>	<p>Monitor Council owned websites to ensure compliance.</p> <p>Work with external organisations who provide services on our behalf to ensure compliance.</p> <p>Investigate why there has been a disproportionate increase in visits (reported through Google Analytics)</p>
Standards 61 – 63 Signs	<p>There was 1 new development during 2024/25. 1 street name approved (100%) with a Welsh name.</p> <p>Direct training has been given to staff who commission highway signage and street nameplates.</p> <p>Existing nameplates are not translated.</p>	<p>Monitor new and replacement signs.</p> <p>Ensure new road sign procedure is fit for purpose</p> <p>Council will aim to standardise place names in the borough (in line with the Welsh Language Commissioner)</p>
Standards 64 – 68 Reception Services	<p>Periodic visits were made during the year to ensure compliance.</p>	<p>Work with customer care to address any training needed.</p>

Standards 71 – 75 Awarding Grants	<p>Internal Audit assess performance of any funding awarded as part of a grant in line with the awarding grants Standards.</p> <p>No assessments have been carried out during 2024/2025 in relation to grants and their compliance with the requirement</p>	<p>Ensure that the Welsh language is included in the grant agreements.</p> <p>During 2025/2026 the Internal Audit team will be carrying out audit on third sector grants..</p>
Standards 76 – 80 Awarding Contracts	<p>All procurement Invitations include Welsh language element scoring.</p> <p>All successful tenders are offered Welsh language support.</p>	Continue to work with third party providers on Welsh language requirements and provide practical support
Standards 81 – 82 Promoting Welsh Language Services	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 predominantly to digital platforms and are being offered bilingually.	<p>Ensure that the assessment of courses are publicised on our website</p> <p>We will develop a method of recording attendee numbers and language accessed</p>
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 2024/25	Action to be taken during 2025/2026
Standards 88 - 93	<p>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.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Unit has an oversight of each policy decision that requires an integrated Impact assessment prior to presenting to Elected Members</p> <p>On-line training has been developed to assist officers to complete the Intergrated Impact Assessment</p>	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 2024/25	Action to be taken during 2025/26
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	16 employees (2.04% 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 includes preferred language.
Standards 120 – 125 Staff Intranet and IT Resources	Staff have access to Cysgoliad, "Tô Bach" and Welsh 'language pack' from Microsoft on all new and replacement computers	Update all resources on the Welsh intranet pages
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 includes preferred language.
Standards 128 – 133 Staff Training	Please see section on <i>Welsh language skills</i> . Training is being developed on the Thinqi system. During 2024/2025, 23 employees undertook Welsh language training.	Continue to promote learning Welsh as a valuable skill. Develop an on-line Welsh awareness module and look to mandate for every new member of staff

Standards 134 – 135 Wording and Logo for Staff Email Signatures	<p>All staff are reminded, via line managers, to have a bilingual email signature in line with corporate standards.</p> <p>The “Work Welsh” logo is available for staff to download on the intranet.</p> <p>Staff are able to choose Teams backgrounds that display the Work Welsh logo</p>	Update all resources on the Welsh intranet pages.
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

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 2024/2025, 0 complaints were received.

Stage 1	Stage 2	Welsh Language Commissioner
0	0	0

Stage 1

There were no complaints received from the public during this period.

Welsh Language Commissioner

There were no new investigations carried out by the Welsh Language Commissioner during 2024/2025

- CS1061 - Complaint from a member of the public on 28/09/2022
(update) This refers to a complaint raised in September 2022, but was not investigated and referred to the Welsh Language Tribunal for determination. The case was re-opened in June 2023. The complaint relates to street name plates and Welsh language consideration when making Council decisions, The Investigation concluded that Torfaen Council had not complied fully with the relevant Standards, and a number of actions imposed. All these have been implemented and the case has been closed..
- CS1149 - Complaint raised by the Welsh Language Commissioner on 25/11/2023.
(update) Four telephone calls made as part of the Commissioner's mystery shopper exercise were unanswered. This investigation concluded that Torfaen had not complied fully with the relevant Standards, and a number of actions imposed. All these have been implemented and the case has been closed..

Welsh language skills

During 2024/2025, the levels for recording Welsh language skills changed to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). 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. Therefore, we have launched a campaign 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, 15% 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

No. of Staff with Welsh Skills by Directorate

Directorate	Speak Welsh	Read Welsh	Understand Welsh	Write Welsh
Shared Resource Service	20	20	20	19
Resources Directorate	50	44	44	43
Economy & Environment	22	21	22	22
Children and Family Services	154	144	148	147
Adults and Communities	53	50	49	50

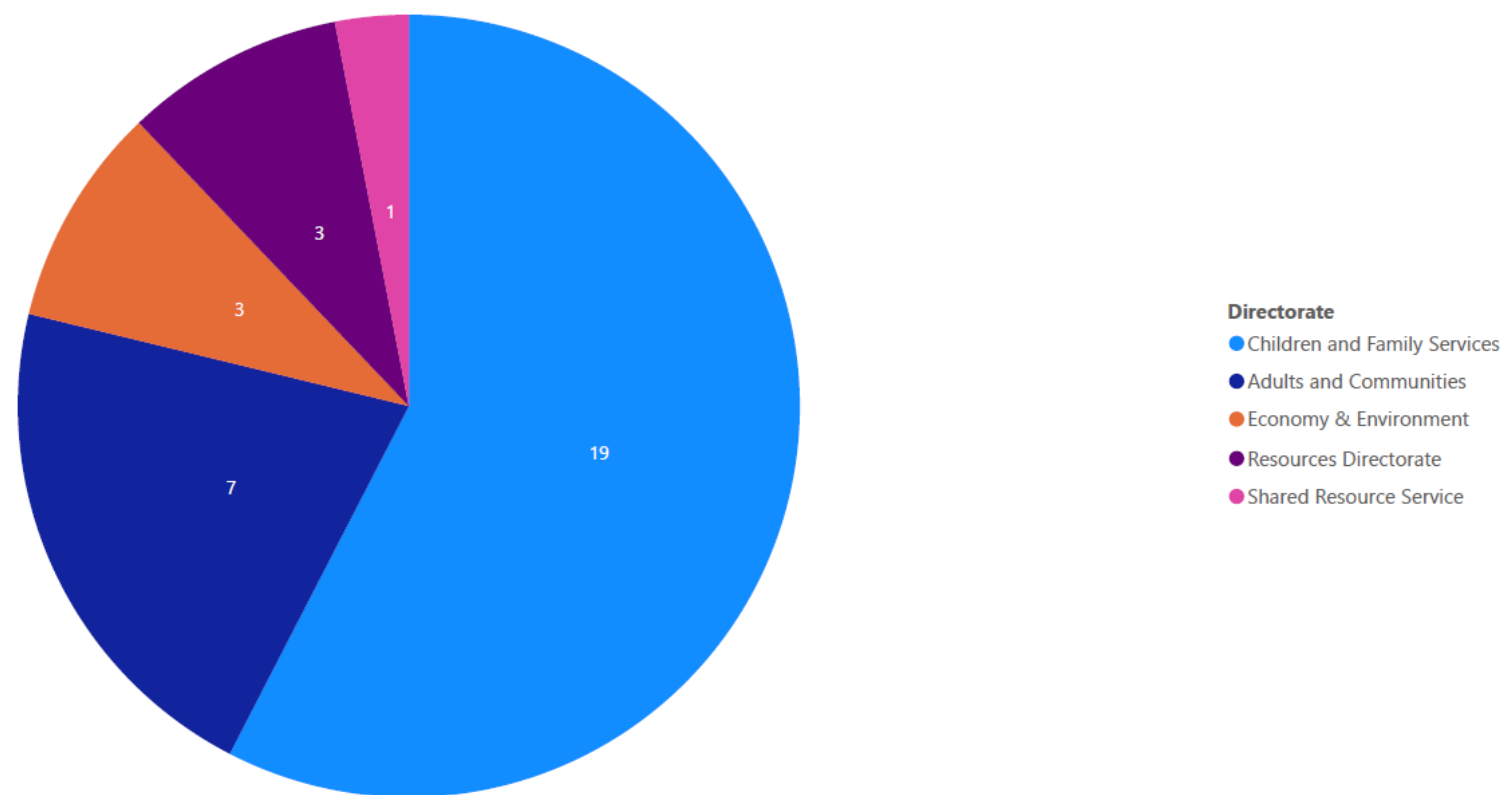
16

of Staff would like
Communication in Welsh

No of Staff with Welsh language Skill by Competency Level

Description	Speak Welsh	Read Welsh	Understand Welsh	Write Welsh
C1 Proficiency - Express fully and precisely (Mynegu'n llawn ac yn gywir)	3	3	3	3
B2 Level - Advanced (Uwch)	10	8	8	8
B1 Level - Intermediate (Canolradd)	18	15	16	14
C2 Proficiency - Fully proficient (Rhugl)	32	28	29	30
A2 Level - Foundation (Sylfaen)	54	51	51	52
A1 Level - Entry (Mynediad)	182	174	176	174

No of Staff (by Directorate) with good Welsh Language Skills (C1 and C2)



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 2024/2025, 14 employees attended Welsh language training through the National Centre for Learning Welsh (delivered by Coleg Gwent).

5.73% of our workforce are able to speak Welsh (Levels A1-C2)

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

4 Members of staff completed the on-line awareness training offered by the National Centre for Learning Welsh

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 2024/25, invitations to training offered attendees a language choice. No requests were received for training through the medium of Welsh.

Courses are moving predominantly to digital platforms and are being offered bilingually and we will develop a method of recording and reporting on attendee numbers and language chosen.

Recruitment

During 2024/25, **718** 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	38	5.29
Desirable	69	9.61
Need to be learnt	5	0.70
No Welsh skills required	606	84.40

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

From March 2025, the Council will only assess vacant post against two catagories : Welsh desirable or Welsh essential. This will allow candidates to indicate their level of Welsh and contribute to delivering Welsh language services for the council.

.

4. 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) and the Welsh Government Strategy – Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers.

The Welsh Language Commissioner will be conducting a review of Promotion Strategies across Wales during 2025/2026

Staff Skills Audit.

We have many staff who 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.

At the beginning of 2024, A new campaign was launched to encourage our staff to record their language skills on iFOR (our HR system) using the CEFR levels. The 6 skill levels ranging from pure beginner (A1) to 'fluent' (C2) are linked to recognised qualification and other assessment framework and in order to align us with other public sector organisations.

Removing Barriers

In April 2024, the internal charging of directorates for translations was removed, easing the barriers faced by managers in balancing budget pressures and compliance with the Welsh language standards. Additionally, we transitioned to an electronic system for requesting and tracking translations, streamlining the process for both staff and translators.

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

During the past 2 years the Council has been involved in a Welsh Government pilot scheme. A campaign which aims to encourage people from all walks of life to choose Welsh-medium education for their children. The 'Cymraeg i Bawb' (Welsh for All) partnership has been so successful that it is now being pushed across Wales with the help of Mentrau Iaith Cymru.

Cultural Events

To celebrate Welsh culture 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 Ysgol Panteg in 2024/2025.

The Council also promoted awareness of St David's Day, Santes Dwynwen, and the Eisteddfod throughout the year. This was achieved primarily through internal staff communications, themed menus at the Inspire Café, and the display of various flags outside the Civic Centre.

Policy Development

The Council has strengthened its Intergrated Impact Assessment (IIA) following advice from the Welsh Language Commissioner. The assessment now references the “conscientious effort” needed for all policy decisions.

A new on-line training module has been developed to sit alongside the IIA and assist managers and senior officers on making a “conscientious effort” when assessing the positive and adverse effects of the policy, both directly and in-directly on the Welsh language.

The need to assess impacts earlier in the policy development process remains key to the process. We have worked with colleagues from Corporate Development to ensure this is made clear to all officers involved in completing the IIA