MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL WELSH LANGUAGE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 2025-6

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

AND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WELSH LANGUAGE IN MERTHYR TYDFIL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Introduction

In 2011 the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of the new legislation, in Wales, the Welsh language has equal legal status with English and must not be treated any less favourably. Public bodies are no longer required to develop and implement a Welsh Language Framework but must comply with the Welsh Language Standards instead. The Standards explain how organisations are expected to use the Welsh language in different situations internally and externally. This document sets out how Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) is complying with the standards.

MTCBC received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30th September 2015. This outlined the Council's duty to meet the statutory Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The implementation of the Welsh Language Standards is intertwined with the 5-year Welsh Language Strategy, 2022-2027. The focus of this Strategy is developing the use and visibility of the Welsh language across the County Borough, ensuring that Welsh is a Language that is spoken, heard and celebrated in and around Merthyr Tydfil. The 5-year Welsh Language Strategy must be read and considered alongside the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032, as the two plans in parallel, with each one reinforcing the other's actions.

Our Vision

MTCBC is committed to creating an environment where residents feel confident and encouraged to use the Welsh language in their interactions with both the community and the Council. The Council also emphasises and supports the importance of staff using Welsh in the workplace, through formal and informal opportunities.

Our vision in Merthyr Tydfil is: #Shwmaeronment – a County Borough where the Welsh language is heard, spoken and celebrated through all walks of life. This is supported by our overarching principles:

- Ardal/Area: We will celebrate our area, its culture, heritage and the commercial activities that make us prosperous, aspirational and healthy.
- Budd/Benefit: We will celebrate the benefits of our language, history, heritage and culture. We will enable people to grow their skills through the economy, the workforce and as an opportunity as a social hub!
- Cynefin: We will celebrate the place where we belong, our strong, diverse, vibrant community, our people, and our collective identity, championing our local landscape.

Through our vision and our overarching principles, we at MTCBC are planning and supporting the rights of our residents, community and workforce to use the Welsh Language.

During 2025-6, the Council continued with its efforts to implement the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, working closely with a range of service areas to ensure their compliance. The Council has continued to raise awareness of the key requirements of the Standards and enhance our approach through the avenues of:

- **Welsh Language Standards**: Raising Awareness, Developing Understanding and Monitoring Progress.
- **Welsh Language Strategy:** Creating an ethos and Culture and engaging in community activity.

A substantial amount of work has been completed across a range of directorates which are outlined in this report. There has been a continued focus on our work of supporting the workforce to use Welsh in their day-to-day work. A new version of the internal Welsh Language Policy was presented to Council in 2025, and this has been shared with the workforce across the year through Corporate Communication emails. The key aim of this policy is to expand opportunities for our staff to learn Welsh and to build their confidence in using the language at work. This policy is being supported by our #SiarterShwmaeronemt scheme, which is happening across three directorates: HR, Education, and Social Services (Children).

The Council continues to aim to create an environment where residents feel comfortable and encouraged to use whatever Welsh Language skills they have when

accessing Council Services. To achieve this, the Council continues and is committed to working in partnership with local businesses and organisations across the third and voluntary sectors, helping us to fulfil our responsibilities to the community under the Welsh Language legislation.

Section 2 of this report outlines the progress MTCBC has made in meeting the Welsh Language Standards during the 2025-26 financial year, while Section 3 details our progress against the Welsh Language Strategy. Although we have moved forward in several areas, we recognise that further work is needed to strengthen and expand our Welsh-medium service provision, and we are committed to continuing our journey to compliance.

Executive Summary:

Strategic Developments in Welsh Language Promotion (2025-26)

During 2025–26, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council continued to strengthen its approach to implementing the Welsh Language Standards and delivering the Welsh Language Strategy. The Council's work this year focused on embedding a culture where Welsh is visible, valued and used confidently across services, the workforce and the wider community. The vision of #Shwmaeronment—a borough where Welsh is heard, spoken and celebrated—remained central to this progress, supported by the principles of Area, Benefit and Cynefin.

The Council maintained a strong governance structure, with Welsh language responsibilities integrated into corporate performance processes and monitored through quarterly reporting, senior leadership oversight and risk management discussions. The merger of the Welsh Language Strategy Group with the Welsh in Education Forum created a more streamlined and aligned approach to planning, ensuring that Welsh language and education priorities reinforce one another. Work will continue in 2026–27 to strengthen the group's strategic role and membership.

A significant focus this year was on raising awareness and deepening understanding of the Standards across directorates. Internal communication campaigns, updated induction processes and targeted guidance helped ensure that staff are equipped to meet their responsibilities. The introduction of a revised Use of Welsh Internally Policy, alongside strengthened complaints procedures, has provided clearer expectations and more robust support for staff. A new monitoring cycle and handbook have been developed to ensure consistent implementation from April 2026.

Progress across the Service Delivery, Policy Making and Operational Standards has continued. Improvements were made to bilingual correspondence, telephone greetings, social media output and the production of public documents. Welsh-language content on the website and intranet expanded further, supported by ongoing monitoring. Key corporate policies—including Complaints, Events, Grants, Pay and Dignity at Work—were reviewed to ensure full compliance with the Standards.

Workforce development remained a priority. Staff were supported through formal and informal learning opportunities, including Welsh courses delivered by Learn Welsh Glamorgan, updated training on complaints handling, and bespoke sessions for teams such as the Museum service. The Council continued to promote the 10-hour introductory Welsh course, and more staff are now using Welsh in their day-to-day work. The #SiarterShwmaeronment pilot progressed well across three directorates,

with teams demonstrating increased confidence and embedding bilingual practice into their routines.

Partnership working continued to play a key role in promoting the Welsh language across the borough. The Council worked closely with organisations including Menter Iaith, The Soar, Learn Welsh Glamorgan, the Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin and the College. These partnerships supported community events, learning opportunities and wider engagement activities that contribute to a more visible and accessible Welsh-language environment.

SECTION 2

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

PROGRESS REPORT

Background/Context:

Welsh Language Standards:

In 2011 the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of the new legislation, in Wales, the Welsh language has equal legal status with English and must not be treated any less favourably. Public bodies are no longer required to develop and implement a Welsh Language Scheme but must comply with the Welsh Language Standards instead.

MTCBC received its final Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30th September 2015. This outlined the Council's duty to meet the statutory Welsh Language Standards established by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The compliance notes can be found here: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Compliance Notice

The Standards explain how organisations are expected to use the Welsh language in different situations. This report sets out how MTCBC is meeting the standards.

The Measure established a legal framework to impose a duty on some organisations to comply with standards of conduct on the Welsh language. The Measure notes that Welsh Ministers may by regulations, specify Standards in the following areas:

1. Service Delivery

2. Policy Making

3. Operational

4. Promotion

5. Record Keeping

These Standards aim to:

• Make it clear to organisations what their duties are in relation to the Welsh Language.

• Ensure there is fairness, justice, and rights for Welsh speakers.

• Make the Welsh Language services more consistent and improve their quality.

• Ensure that the Welsh Language is a consideration in policy and legislation.

• Make it clearer to Welsh speakers about the services they can expect to receive in Welsh.

Arrangements for complying, monitoring, promoting and facilitating the Welsh language can be found here: Welsh Language | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Accountability: Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Welsh Language Programme forms part of the Council's Corporate Services work programme, supporting compliance with the Standards and delivery of the:

- Corporate Well-being Plan, 2023-2028: Well-being Goal: An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning
- Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050: Million Welsh Speakers Strategy; Leading in a Bilingual Country
- Merthyr Tydfil Welsh Language Strategy, 2022-2027

The Welsh Language Standards require the Council to compile an Annual Report, in relation to each financial year, that deals with the way that it has complied with the Service Delivery, Policy Making and Operational Standards and the publicity of the Annual Report as per Standards 158 and 164.

The report also presents data on the required indicators as follows:

- the number of staff who have Welsh language skills (Standard 151).
- the number of staff who attended the training courses listed in Standard 128 if they were offered in Welsh (Standard 152).
- the percentage of total staff who attended any courses listed in Standard 128 (Standard 152).
- the number of new jobs and vacancies that were categorised as jobs that where (i) skills in the Welsh language to be essential; (ii) it is necessary to learn skills in the Welsh language once someone is appointed to the post; (iii) skills in the Welsh language are desirable; or (iv) skills in the Welsh language were not necessary (Standard 154).
- the number of complaints the Council received (Standard 150).

It should be noted that the 5-year Welsh Language Strategy comes to an end in 2027. A new strategy will be formulated and consulted on during 2026-7.

Monitoring Progress:

The Council continues to place the Welsh Language Standards at the forefront of its work, recognising that delivering and promoting Welsh-language services from the first point of contact relies on the commitment of the whole organisation.

The Welsh language measure remains embedded within the Council's Corporate Performance processes, and the Welsh language objectives are fully integrated into the Corporate Well-being Plan. As a result, progress is monitored alongside other key strategic priorities, with the annual report presented to Council for approval.

Ongoing oversight is maintained through the Council's performance management framework, which includes:

- Quarterly reporting to the Corporate Management Team,
- Frequent reporting to the Senior Leadership Team, when relevant.
- Risk Management discussions with Compliance Officer.
- Business Planning Monitoring with Heads of Service and Corporate Director.
- The Welsh Language Strategy Group has now been incorporated into the Welsh in Education group and is also utilised to scrutinise the work of partners.

Monitoring Service Delivery:

Roles and Responsibilities:

Within the Council, the Welsh Language team brings together Elected Members, Corporate Managers, and officers from across directorates. The presence of Departmental Champions in the three areas of Social Services (Children), Learning and People and Transformation, alongside the Workforce Development Officer and Equity Officer, has strengthened what was once a small but dedicated team. This structure ensures that responsibility for the Welsh Language is shared across the organisation rather than held by a select few. The champions role will continue to be developed across other areas.

Elected Members and Officers work collaboratively to ensure full compliance with the Standards and to promote an environment where the Welsh Language is treated no less favourably than English. Our aim is for all residents, community members, and staff to feel confident, supported, and safe in using the Welsh Language in all aspects of their interaction with the Council.

Strategic Oversight:

- **Responsible for Welsh Language on a political level:** Cabinet Member for Education has Welsh Language in their portfolio. In 2025/26, there is a Councillor who acts as Welsh Champion – this element is subject to change.
- **Responsible for Welsh on a strategic level:** Director of Education – Corporate Management Lead; Head of Service – Achievement and Wellbeing.

Operational Delivery:

- **Responsible for implementing the standards from day to day and acts as a point of contact for discussing the report:** Operational Delivery will be monitored through the Council's senior leadership team and relevant steering groups or managers networks.
- The Welsh Language Policy Officer (WLPO) assumes key responsibilities for supporting and delivery (Welsh Language Strategy and Standards).

Other members of the team include:

- Strategic Lead for Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).
- Departmental Team Champions.
- Our sourced support for translation – The Soar.
- Equity Officer (Governance Team).
- Workforce Development Officer supporting Leading a Bilingual Country.

Monitoring Delivery:

- Welsh Language (like other services) aligns with the Council's performance management processes.
- The Corporate Management team receive quarterly updates and provides constructive challenges regarding progress on implementation and development.
- Operational changes will be embedded within service delivery plans and monitored through existing governance arrangements. This may include contributing to self-evaluation activities that inform the scrutiny process.
- A mystery shopper exercise is carried out which feeds into service plans for improvement; this takes place quarterly.
- Lessons learned and examples of best practice will be shared across the Council as part of this approach.
- A monitoring tool has been developed and supports each stage of implementation, and it has been expanded over the financial year

New processes 2025-6

- During 2025-6 new approaches/processes were initiated by the People and Transformation team. The recruitment process now incorporates an analysis of the linguistic requirements for each post. Managers assess every role, consider its functions and the current Welsh language capacity within the service. This assessment is reviewed by the Council's Corporate Management Team before the post proceeds to interview.
- A new monitoring cycle, guidance and the tool implemented last year, has been developed and shared with SLT. This will be employed from April 2026.

Partnership Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Welsh Language Strategy Group has been merged with the Welsh in Education Forum. This revised structure is intended to streamline oversight and strengthen the alignment between Welsh language planning and education priorities. This forum requires new terms and conditions, as well as adjustments to membership, which will be included for 2026-7. This will ensure wider views play a part in the governance and decision-making process.

The Head of Service and the Welsh Language Policy Officer work across all directorates and with a range of external partners to develop and implement both the Welsh Language Strategy and compliance to the Welsh Language Standards. Partnership working to support this implementation includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- The National Centre for Learning Welsh.
- Menter Iaith and The Soar Centre.
- Learn Welsh Glamorgan.
- RhaG
- Mudiad Meithrin
- The Urdd
- The College, Merthyr Tydfil
- Cymraeg i Bawb
- The Welsh Language Commissioner

Approving the Report:

The approval of the report is undertaken through the democratic process of Scrutiny and Council.

Complaints Procedure:

Complaints or concerns relating to the Welsh Language are managed in line with the timeframes and procedures set out in the Council's Complaints Policy. This policy has been updated further following discussions with the Commissioner's Office, to ensure it is more robust and better equipped to address Welsh Language–related complaints. Investigating officers are required to consult all relevant legislation before determining whether the Council or a specific service area has acted in accordance with statutory requirements and approved policies and procedures.

Council employees receive training on handling complaints linked to the Welsh Language Standards, and staff awareness is reinforced through regular updates, induction sessions, and ongoing learning within the Workforce Development Programme. Induction now places a stronger emphasis on ensuring officers have the tools, support, and knowledge needed to respond effectively to Welsh Language complaints. These modules have undergone further update during 2025-6.

When dealing with a complaint, employees refer to the Compliance Notice – Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 (issued 30/09/2015) and the Code of Practice for the Welsh Language Standards (Regulations 2015) to access the necessary guidance. Additional support is available from the Welsh Language Policy Officer for any staff member receiving or managing a complaint relating to the Standards. The process and policies can be found here:

Complaints Procedure, Comments and Customer Feedback | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Corporate Complaints Policy

Matters arising during the reporting period

Promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh Language

Approach to implementing, developing and embedding:

The approach to implementing, developing, and embedding the Welsh Language Standards was refreshed last year following the Council's participation in the Leading a Bilingual Country programme for the public sector. This work continues into the current year, with the learning and momentum from the programme still shaping ongoing activity and improvement.

The two formats of implementation have continued:

- **Welsh Language Programme:** Creating an ethos and culture and engaging in community activity.
- **Welsh Language Standards:** Raising Awareness, Developing Understanding and Monitoring Progress.

Welsh Language Programme: Creating an ethos and culture:

The Council continues to focus its key communication narrative around:

- Together
- We are able to
- Take small steps.

This has continued to develop through our vision of #Shwmaeronment, this allows us to bring the vision alive through the key principles of:

- Area
- Benefits
- Cynefin

Which will be celebrated.

The Council continues to empower the workforce and community through a continued 'call to action' through #smallsteps/camaubach. This supports the notion that at our culture and ethos of the Welsh Language belongs to us all.

Our #SiarterShwmaeronment approach has continued. Three directorates continue their journey – People Service and Transformation, Learning, and Social Service (Children) and this has been actively monitored termly by the WLPO with all three achieving more than half of the targets by the end of January 2026.

The long-term aim continues to roll out the #SiarterShwmaeronment across all Council directorates.

Welsh Language Programme: Raising Awareness and Developing Understanding:

The Council recognises the ongoing turnover of staff and the recruitment of new employees. Therefore, it has continued with its adoption of a programme focused on raising awareness and building understanding to ensure that all standards are consistently applied, embedded, and sustained across the organisation.

Raising Awareness:

A programme of raising awareness continues to ensure that both the Welsh Language Strategy and Standards are high on the agenda across the directorates. This has been further developed through

- The introduction of internal communications focused on outlining key elements of new policies. For example, the Use of Welsh Internally.
- A new monitoring cycle, which outlines the expectations, priorities and targets set to ensure compliance with the standards is set to begin in Quarter 1.
- Working with community and national partners to understand the type of training/courses available.
- Changes to the Induction Process with a re-focus on Welsh Language complaints and the Standards.

Developing Understanding:

To deepen understanding of the 5 areas of the Standards, and enhance the skills of team members, a range of work has been undertaken. This has included:

- Working alongside different service teams to assess needs specific to directorate areas.
- Developing more service area specific resources to support service delivery standards.
- Responding to queries from across directorates to support their development and understanding.
- Extending opportunities for team members to undertake a range of informal and formal learning and development opportunities. For example, bespoke programmes for the Museum team.
- Engagement with the Business Education Together Partnership to promote the language. Working in partnership with Menter Iaith, there is ongoing work to develop a map of Welsh language businesses across the Borough.
- Working with the Complaints and Concerns team to update the Complaints Policy to ensure it is more robust in the understanding of complaints of the Welsh Language.

- Working with the Regeneration team on updating the Grants Policy.
- Introduction of the new Use of Welsh Internally Policy, ensuring it was clearly communicated to staff across the organisation.

Working Across Directorates

Over the past year, the Welsh Language Team has continued to make significant progress, building strong relationships with a wide range of teams and directorates. This collaborative approach has helped to ensure greater compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, while also deepening staff understanding and awareness of their purpose and the importance of using Welsh in the workplace. Through ongoing engagement, guidance, and support, the team has played a key role in embedding bilingual practice across the organisation. The following outlines the work with different directorates and the linked standards. Further explanation of the work is within the specific standards section.

- ICT – Standards 52-57, 120, 121-126
- Recruitment – Standards 99-104, 136-140
- People Performance and Transformation – Standards 101, 105-111
- Corporate Communications – Standard 83
- Learning – Standard 130
- Social Services (Children) – Standards 23-29B, 40-49
- Regeneration – Standards 37,40-49

Progress: Service delivery standards:

Context:

The Welsh Language Measure defines a ‘service delivery standard’ as a requirement relating to a service-delivery activity that is intended to promote or facilitate the use of the Welsh language, or to help ensure that Welsh is treated no less favourably than English when that activity is carried out. It further explains that a ‘service delivery activity’ refers to a person delivering services to another individual or dealing with any person in connection with delivering services—whether to that individual or to a third party.

Progress

	Standard	Progress and Development
Correspondence sent by a body	1-7	Reminders and resources to support employees following monitoring for compliance.
Telephone calls made and received by a body	8-22	Reminders and resources to support employees following monitoring for compliance. Training for some staff has taken place.
Standards relating to a body holding meetings that are not open to the general public.	23-29B	Raising awareness among employees who may hold such meetings.
A body’s publicity and advertising.	37	Raising awareness among employees who have used publicity and advertising over the year.
A body producing and publishing documents.	40-49	Reminders and resources to support employees following monitoring for compliance.
A body’s websites and on-line services.	52-57	Expanded Welsh-language provision across our online services by translating key areas of the intranet and sections of the website, and our external website led by the Council supported by ongoing monitoring to ensure

		bilingual content is maintained.
A body's use of social media.	58-59	Reminders sent out to strengthen bilingual social media output, holding discussions and issuing regular reminders to ensure posts are consistently delivered in both Welsh and English.
Standards relating to a body awarding grants.	71-75	Worked with the Welsh Language Policy Officer to ensure compliance.
A body's corporate identity.	83	Email information has been produced for staff and assurance of advertising the Welsh social media and website has been achieved.

Progress: Policy Making Standards

Context:

The Policy Making Standards requires organisations to consider how their policy decisions may affect the Welsh Language and its use. Within Merthyr Tydfil, the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is used.

The IIA incorporates the equality impact assessment required under the Equality Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and now also includes

The IIA ensures compliance with the following legislation:

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Section 6 of Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Socio-economic Duty (Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010)

Review of Policies:

The following policies have been reviewed/revised in 2025-6:

- Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy.
- Use of Internal Welsh.
- Events Policy.
- Grants Policy.
- Pay Policy 2025-2026
- Dignity and Respect at Work Policy
- Agile and Homeworking Policy
- Code of Conduct

At present, the Procurement Policy is currently being reviewed.

Operational Standards

Context:

Overall, the Operational Standards focus on how an organisation develops and strengthens its own use of the Welsh language, while also enabling and supporting staff to use Welsh confidently in the workplace.

Progress

	Standard	Progress and Development
Standards relating to the use of the Welsh language within a body's internal administration	98	Use of Internal Welsh Policy was reviewed in line with new approaches being taken by the Council and the progress made across the organisation. This includes: 1. Creating an ethos and culture. 2. Information, guidance and support. 3. Language Choice. 4. Policy making. 5. Policy documents. 6. Meetings. 7. Recruitment. 8. Welsh Language Skills. 9. Training. 10. Displaying the ability to speak Welsh. 11. Communication. This has been passed through Council and has been rolled out via Corporate Communications emails.
Standards relating to the use of the Welsh language within a body's internal administration.	99-104	Reminders and discussions in line with these standards. More robust focus on Welsh Language Complaints in Induction and employees' rights within the Induction Process.
Standards relating to the use of the Welsh language within a body's internal administration	105-111	Internally policies reviewed and available to colleagues internally in Welsh and can be found on the Staff Hub.
Standards relating to a body's information technology and about support material provided by a body.	120	All staff have access to computer software for checking spelling and grammar in Welsh on our internal intranet.

Standards relating to the intranet.	121-126	This is a continued area for development within the Council. A programme of adjustment is still underway and is being monitored through the internal monitoring programme.
A body developing Welsh language skills through planning and training its workforce.	127-135	The way in which the Council assesses Welsh language skills has been updated in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). There will be a period of transition will be needed to align data collection. Training on complaints within induction has been updated. Training on conducting meetings/telephone calls using Welsh have taken place in some teams. A Mynediad 1 course has started with Learn Welsh Glamorgan. Resources and assistance have been created to ensure all employees have Welsh Language version of their contact details in their email signatures.
Standards relating to recruiting and appointing.	136-140	The WLPO and the recruitment team have worked to update to Managers Handbook with regards to recruitment and appointing. The Induction Process has been updated to ensure the information providing on the Welsh Language is more robust and is raising their awareness of the language. All employees have been provided and continue to be provided with an outline of formal and informal learning opportunities. These are regularly communicated through bulletins, staff Facebook and emails.

Data Requirements: Complaints, Welsh Language Skills and Training

Complaints

As noted above, the Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy has been reviewed this year and strengthened to ensure a more robust approach to complaints relating to the Welsh language. The updated process places greater emphasis on supporting staff to understand their responsibilities and handle Welsh-language complaints appropriately and consistently.

The Council's Complaints Department received no formal complaints in relation to the Welsh Language during the period 1st April 2025- 31st March 2026.

Welsh Language Skills of Employees:

(on the basis of the records kept in accordance with standard 151)

The following section outlines the recording of Welsh language skills across the Council, based on our current internal framework. The Council is currently working to adopt a more robust and consistent approach through aligning this framework and the CEFR levels. This will form part of our recommendations and action planning for 2026–27.

Directorate	Total	Education	Finance	Governance & Resources	Neighbourhood Services	Regeneration & Housing	Schools - Directly Employed	Social Services
Gwrando/Listening								
No Skills	**781**	160	88	57	82	40	165	189
Basic soc. conversations	**222**	18	13	7	7	14	135	28
Basic enquiries	**714**	75	29	40	39	45	356	130
Major. work conversation	**28**	5	1	1	2	1	11	7
All work conversations	**128**	20	1	6	10	2	70	19
Routine conversations	**42**	2	2	2	1	5	24	6
No Record	**1,120**	312	30	24	68	30	527	129
Reading								
No skills	**763**	152	79	57	78	39	176	182
Routine material (Dict.)	**76**	7	4	2	3	5	47	8
Basic word and phrases	**701**	70	38	41	41	48	322	141
Basic work material	**178**	18	8	4	6	11	116	15
Majority of material	**54**	6	2	5	2	3	27	9
All work material	**129**	22	2	4	9	1	70	21
No Record	**1,134**	317	31	24	70	30	530	132
Speaking								
No skills	**805**	157	89	63	79	49	179	189
Answer simple queries	**180**	9	11	9	9	9	114	19
General conversation	**693**	80	25	31	37	42	348	130
Majority of situations	**33**	5	1	3	3	2	13	6
Converse with others	**53**	5	3	2	3	4	29	7
Fluent-all conversations	**137**	21	4	5	7	1	76	23
No Record	**1,134**	315	31	24	71	30	529	134
Writing								
No skills	**964**	82	63	46	75	42	482	174
Basic messages	**573**	24	19	15	40	42	300	133
Simple correspondence	**138**	5	4	9	10	9	65	36
Routine text , with help	**58**	4	3	4	5	1	26	15
Majority of written text	**45**	1	3	1	4	5	27	4
Skilled -do complex work	**113**	6	0	3	9	10	54	31
No Record	**1,144**	470	72	59	66	28	334	115

Commentary:

- The 2025/26 data is showing that more staff are reporting basic and intermediate Welsh skills than the previous year, suggesting a steady rise in confidence.
- Several ‘no skills’ categories have slightly reduced from the previous year.
- Functional categories such as “Basic enquiries,” “General conversation,” and “Basic work material” have grown, indicating that more staff are progressing beyond the lowest levels.
- Writing continues to be the most challenging area, but 2025/26 shows small increases in “Simple correspondence” and “Routine text with help,” reflecting gradual improvement.
- The “No record” category remains large, but the shift toward a CEFR-aligned audit tool is expected to significantly improve data quality going forward.
- Cultural initiatives introduced in 2024/25 — such as #Shwmaeronment and #Camaubach — appear to be having a positive cumulative effect**,** reflected in the gradual upward movement across several skill categories which can be seen below in the increased take up of formal and informal courses.
- Overall, the 2025/26 data shows steady, positive progress from 2024/25, with more staff developing early-stage skills, stable advanced proficiency, and a clearer trajectory toward improved bilingual capability.

Training and Development:

The workforce and development opportunities are outlined in the progress on the Welsh Language Strategy – Strategic Aim 3 in Section 2.

No requests for a Welsh Language version of courses in line with Standard 152 have been received.

New and Vacant Posts:

Desirable – Need to undertaken 10 hour programme	225
Essential	1

Monitoring Activities:

The service is monitored through the Councils performance management framework.

Across the Council, the performance management framework shows clear progress in strengthening Welsh language skills and embedding bilingual practice.

Evidence from service areas shows steady and meaningful progress in meeting the Welsh Language Standards, with most teams embedding the mandatory 10-hour Welsh language course into their induction processes and encouraging staff to develop their skills further where capacity allows. Many services report increased confidence in using incidental Welsh, supported by awareness sessions, e-learning modules, and ongoing guidance from the Welsh Language Officer. This has helped normalise everyday Welsh across the organisation, particularly in greetings, email communication, and frontline interactions.

Public-facing services continue to strengthen bilingual delivery, with Libraries, Museums, ICT, Customer Services, and Neighbourhood Services demonstrating consistent use of bilingual signage, digital content, public notices, and customer engagement. ICT's approach of ensuring all online systems and forms are bilingual by default has supported wider organisational compliance. Strategic developments, including the Internal Welsh Language Policy, the draft Welsh Language Grants Policy, and the refreshed Education Welsh Language Strategy, further reinforce the Council's commitment to improving Welsh language provision. While some services note limited capacity to progress beyond statutory requirements, the overall picture reflects a positive cultural shift and growing organisational confidence in delivering bilingual services.

Monitoring Tool Overview:

A monitoring tool which presents an overview of each of the strands and relevant standards has been developed aiding the Council's ability to track how well and how consistent the standards are being implemented across all directorates.

All standards are at least at the implementation stage, with over half at the embedding or sustaining stage. This means, within these areas, there is greater consistency of application of the standards.

Section	Implementing		Embedding		Sustaining	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Delivery Standards	58	52.3%	30	27.0%	23	20.7%
2. Policy Making Standards	3	20.0%	10	66.7%	2	13.3%
3. Operational Standards	23	39.7%	14	24.1%	21	36.2%
4. Promotion Standards	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	3	75.0%
5. Record Keeping Standards	2	20.0%	3	30.0%	5	50.0%

Internal Monitoring Outcomes:

Internal monitoring has been carried out and the outcomes reported to the Senior Leadership Team. Outcomes of the monitoring are outlined below:

Areas of Compliance:

- All calls made were answered in Welsh.
- 67.9% of email signatures were compliant. This resulted in a Corporate Communications email to assist compliance. 100% of email signatures were compliant on further follow-up.
- Many of the areas tested within the internal Intranet were compliant. Support has been given where non-compliance was found and historical elements removed.
- 100% of the Out of Office checked were compliant.
- Third Party websites have been translated to ensure compliance.
- 72% compliance in responses to emails, these emails were sent in Welsh and received a Welsh response as per the standards.
- Compliance levels for the communication standard: Social media has improved as all external websites the Council monitors are compliant.

Areas of Development:

- The Intranet has undergone some development; however, this needs further work.
- Some forms on our external website need further development to support a bilingual approach.
- Social media needs greater consistency to ensure Welsh is not treated any less favourably. For example, use of hashtags and photograph commentary.

Actions taken on areas for development to date

The WLPO has continued to work with various department and owners of web pages and intranet areas to ensure compliance. Email support has continued to be issued to all staff.

External Monitoring

Commissioners Office 'Soft' Monitoring:

The Standards Setting and Compliance Officer of the Commissioner's Office has undertaken compliance activities on our social media channels and the corporate website.

The following outlines areas of strengths identified and areas for development:

Areas of Compliance:

- 70% of the posts checked were compliant.
- 7% of the posts checked were partially compliant.
- 1 account out of the 4 did not treat the Welsh Language less favourably than English when presenting the organisation's corporate identity.

Areas for Development:

- Ensure that every message posted on the English account also appears on the Welsh account.
- Ensure that hashtags are in Welsh.
- Ensure that any text or graphics appearing in videos are available in Welsh.

Actions:

- **LinkedIn – Merthyr Tydfil CBC:** The profile name has been updated to ensure full bilingual presentation. A link to the Welsh-language website has been added to the biography, and the Welsh Instagram link has been included in the English Instagram bio. Corporate Communications attended a meeting to discuss ensuring all images, videos, and audio content are available in Welsh. Quarterly monitoring arrangements were agreed.
- **Facebook – Libraries:** Support has been given to Library services to ensure compliance and understanding of the quarterly monitoring process.
- **Facebook – Leisure Centre:** The Welsh version of the Leisure Centre page was identified and made more prominent. It has also been monitored to ensure it is compliant.
- **Meeting with IT:** A meeting was held with the IT department to identify all social media account holders and ensure all sub-accounts meet compliance requirements. These accounts are now included in quarterly monitoring, with results shared with relevant teams as well as CMT and SLT.
- **Corporate Identity:** An audit of corporate identity is scheduled for Quarter 1 of the next monitoring period. Following the audit, forms will be issued to directorates and teams to support any required updates or corrective actions.

SECTION 3:

PROGRESS ON THE 5-YEAR WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2022-27:

Welsh Language Strategy 2022-27:

To help build a positive culture and ethos around the Welsh language, and to create meaningful opportunities for staff to use it, the Welsh Language Standards operate alongside the Council's Welsh Language Strategy within MTCBC.

Partnership Working

Partnership working continues to be a strong feature within Merthyr Tydfil for the Welsh Language and Culture development. The following key stakeholders provide a range of opportunities and support to develop the Welsh Language:

- Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful and Canolfan Soar
- Learn Welsh Glamorgan.
- Urdd.
- Welsh and English Medium Schools in Merthyr Tydfil.
- Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun.
- The College Merthyr Tydfil.
- Mudiad Meithrin.
- The Youth Service.
- Adult Community Learning.

Partners also have a range of activities that are shared with the Welsh in Education Forum supporting the implementation of both the WESP and the Welsh Language Strategy.

The following outlines the continued progress within the Strategy for the 2025-26 financial year.

Strategic Aim 1:

Overarching Aim: Children and Young People have plenty of opportunities to use Welsh every day.

Good progress is being made against the priorities and targets outlined in the Welsh Language Strategy. The following presents a summary of outputs/activities:

- A range of opportunities have been developed to support children and young people in English medium settings to positively connect with the Welsh language outside the school setting. These are outlined in the community activity and projects below. The Welsh in Education Annual Report also provides a comprehensive overview of these activities.
- Provision and standards in Welsh across Welsh and English medium schools continues to improve as outlined in school improvement activities and outcomes of Estyn Inspections. Positive reports have been received in schools such as Ynysowen, Gellifaelog, Caedraw and Greenfields.
- Adequate progress is being made towards all young people leaving school with a qualification in Welsh. In 2025 (academic year) 74% of young people leaving English Medium Secondary Schools left with a Welsh qualification. This is a key area for development in the Welsh in Education improvement plan.
- The number/percentage of children transferring from Cylchoedd Meithrin to WM education is currently at 57.1%. The WESP officer is working with partners and the Early Years team to develop this area.

Strategic Aim 2:

Overarching Aim: Merthyr Tydfil is a County Borough which has the Welsh language as an integral part of its social and civic activities.

Good progress has been made against this strategic aim. A wide range of Welsh-language and Welsh-cultural events have been delivered in partnership, alongside activities organised independently by partners that also promote the Welsh language.

The list below highlights established community-based activities that now play a central role in delivering the Welsh Language Strategy and Standards, as well as some newer approaches. This is not an exhaustive list:

Careers Events:

The Business, Education Together Partnership (BETP) has continued to champion the Welsh language across Merthyr schools by delivering a range of employer-led, culturally rich, and skills-focused activities that highlight the value of bilingualism in modern Wales. This year, the BETP strengthened its contribution to Cymraeg 2050 by embedding Welsh in STEM, showcasing bilingual role models, and creating real opportunities for pupils to experience Welsh as a living workplace language.

- The STEM Lego League, delivered in partnership with Tilbury Douglas, provided hands-on coding, engineering, and problem-solving workshops through the medium of Welsh in our Welsh-medium primary schools. This demonstrated to pupils that Welsh is used confidently in technical and innovative industries.
- BETP supported BCA's Welsh in the Workplace Day, where staff and the WESP Officer shared their personal journeys of learning and using Welsh professionally, helping pupils understand the growing demand for Welsh-speaking employees.
- As part of International Women's Day, pupils met bilingual role models including Rhuanedd Richards, Director of BBC Nations, who spoke about how Welsh has strengthened her career in media and leadership.
- BETP and Merthyr College delivered an International Languages Day assembly for Year 8 pupils, exploring the history of the Welsh language, the Welsh Not, and the Patagonia project, helping learners appreciate the resilience and global heritage of Welsh.
- Several year groups visited the Senedd, where pupils experienced Welsh in formal political settings and learned about devolved powers, Welsh democracy, and the Youth Parliament.

Through these activities, the BETP has continued to normalise the use of Welsh in real workplaces, provide strong bilingual role models, and strengthen pupils' cultural and political understanding. By connecting learners with employers, technical

projects, and authentic Welsh-language experiences, the BETP is helping to develop confident, skilled, and bilingual young people who are ready to contribute to the future of Wales.

Criw Cymraeg:

The Criw Cymraeg's across schools have worked to raise awareness and develop its schools approaches to using Welsh. For example, in Santes Tudful, Twynyrodyn, Pantysgallog and Abercanaid, the Criw's have worked together to create resources to aid learning through sound recordings and songs. Additionally, Ysgol Y Graig's Criw Cymraeg have been preparing for GraigFest. Gwaunfarren's Criw Cymraeg worked endlessly to prepare, organise and lead their school Eisteddfod. At Ysgol Greenfield, support for the Criw Cymraeg included organising a family clog-dancing session and developing links for a visit to the Urdd Centre.

Diwrnod Shwmae Su'mae

To continue strengthening the profile of the Welsh language across Merthyr Tydfil, this year's Diwrnod Shwmae/Su'mae celebration was delivered across seven community venues, offering a wide range of cultural, creative, and family-friendly activities designed to promote the everyday use of Welsh. This was the Council's first attempt at this model.

Events were held at Cyfarthfa Museum, Merthyr Tydfil Library, Treharris Community Centre, Dowlais Engine House, Clwb Crown, Glebeland Site, and Theatre Soar, bringing Welsh language experiences directly into the places where people live, learn, and socialise. Five schools performed throughout the day, involving approximately 50–75 pupils, and 14 stallholders contributed to the programme, supported by partners including Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful, Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg, and other local organisations.

Activities such as clog dancing, Urdd games, arts and crafts, storytelling, guided tours, and Welsh-medium workshops ensured that children, young people, and families could engage with Welsh in an enjoyable and accessible way. The Glebeland Site attracted the highest footfall, with around 500 attendees, contributing to strong community engagement and positive feedback from participants and stallholders.

The event was warmly received and demonstrated a collaborative spirit with varied attendance across venues. The event also trialled for the second year in a row an evening gig at Clwb Crown featuring Welsh bands, which saw a moderate turnout and provides a foundation to build upon for 2025/26. Overall, Diwrnod Shwmae/Su'mae continued to promote the use of Welsh in everyday community life, provided positive publicity for the language across the county, and contributed to the wider aims of Cymraeg 2050 by creating inclusive, meaningful opportunities for people of all ages to experience and enjoy Welsh. However, consideration has been

given to the approach taken and feedback from the event will be factored into the 2026-7 event.

Christmas Fair

The Annual Welsh Language Christmas Fair was held at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre and once again brought festive cheer to the community while promoting the Welsh language in an engaging and family-friendly setting.

The event attracted strong footfall throughout the day, with visitors enjoying a lively atmosphere with an increase from the previous year's showing the success and development of the Welsh Language in Merthyr Tydfil.

There was a wide range of handmade and artisan goods, and a full programme of Welsh-medium performances. Pupils from Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydygrug, Ysgol y Graig, and Cyfarthfa Park Primary, along with Cylch Meithrin Pentrebach, delivered festive musical items, supported by performances from the Soar Variation Club, the Cerys Driscoll Music School, and the Orchestra, who added a classical seasonal element.

Families enjoyed a variety of activities including a visit from Sion Corn, Dawnsio gyda Dwynwen, and arts and crafts sessions led by Soar, all of which contributed to a warm and welcoming celebration of Welsh culture.

Twelve local and Welsh-language businesses—such as Siop Soar, Gwaith Llaw Crafft, Cadw Sŵn, Yr Hen Lyfrgell Porth, and others—participated in the marketplace, offering high-quality products and supporting the local economy. Partners including Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful, Learn Welsh Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil Library, Merthyr College, and Community Focused Schools were also present, promoting Welsh-medium opportunities and community programmes.

Positive feedback from attendees highlighted the inclusive atmosphere, the balance of free family activities and shopping opportunities, and the strong Welsh-language presence throughout the event. The Christmas Fair continues to play an important role in strengthening community engagement and celebrating the Welsh language across the County Borough.

Dydd Gwyl Dewi

Our St David's Day celebrations in Merthyr Tydfil this year brought the community together in a vibrant display of Welsh pride and cultural heritage. This was funded as part of the Welsh Governments St Davids Day fund. The focus centred on Merthyr Tydfil's role in the Mabinogion, a series of myths and legends translated by Lady Charlotte Guest.

'Legends Come Alive' engaged schools', local groups, and residents through joined at multiple events across the County Borough. A storyteller, arts and crafts, live

music, a cooking challenge were amongst some of the activities that were organised by the Council and our partners. Our partners included Merthyr Tydfil Libraries, Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, Cyfarthfa Foundation and Theatre Soar.

The strong turnout and enthusiastic participation reflected the community's deep-rooted spirit and commitment to celebrating our shared identity, making this year's St David's Day one of our most memorable to date.

Conference

The Welsh Language Conference was held on 19 June 2025 at the Orbit Business Centre, bringing together Council officers, local partners and regional organisations to reflect on three years of progress and shape the next steps for Merthyr Tydfil's Welsh Language and Welsh in Education Strategy operational plans.

The event centred on three themes—Workforce Development, the Learning Journey, and Promotion and Marketing—each introduced through presentations followed by roundtable discussions designed to gather ideas and practical ways forward.

The conference opened with a Welsh-language address from the Director of Education and a performance of the Merthyr Song, before the Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS delivered a keynote speech referencing Cymraeg 2050, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, and national policy developments.

Presentations showcased successful partnerships across Early Years, schools, community learning, and Welsh language organisations, highlighting tangible progress and collaborative models that support the WESP outcomes. Attendees responded positively, contributing new ideas and expressing appreciation for the opportunity to share challenges and solutions with colleagues and Welsh-medium partners.

The insights gathered has been used directly inform planning for the remaining years of the Welsh Language Strategy and the next phase of the WESP. These insights included that strengthening Welsh language development relies on widening access, building confidence, and normalising everyday use. Participants emphasised practical support such as flexible learning opportunities, informal conversation spaces, digital tools, and access to tutors. Strong progression from early years into adulthood, with parents actively involved, was seen as essential, alongside collaboration across schools, clusters and community partners. To normalise Welsh, the group highlighted the need for consistent visibility across businesses, public spaces, social media and council communications, ensuring the language feels natural, accessible and embedded in daily life.

National Music Plan

As in previous years, Upbeat Music and Art Services have provided Welsh cultural opportunities to all Primary Schools in the County Borough. Some schools have also had the opportunity of working with Stick2 and undergone Harp Workshops with

Bethan Nia. BBC NOW also visited Merthyr Tydfil for a side by side event for Children and Young people.

Cluster Eisteddfodau 2026

Schools across the clusters have continued to organise successful Eisteddfodau, which have proven highly effective in promoting the Welsh language—particularly within our English-medium settings. These events have provided valuable opportunities for pupils from both English-medium and Welsh-medium schools to engage with the language in a celebratory, culturally rich environment. This year, both the Cyfarthfa Cluster and the BCA Cluster delivered particularly impressive cluster Eisteddfodau, showcasing a wide range of Welsh-medium performances and strengthening collaboration between schools.

Urdd Eisteddfod – Regional Rounds 2025-26

In the regional competitions, pupils from several local primary and secondary schools achieved excellent results across a range of categories. In the primary section, Rhyd y Grug secured first place in the Year 6 and under unison party and second place in the folk-dance competition. The school also achieved third place in the individual recitation categories for Years 2 and under, and Years 3 and 4, as well as first and second place in the Year 5 and 6 solo singing, and third place in the Year 5 and 6 individual recitations. Santes Tudful celebrated a first-place result in the Year 5 and 6 individual recitations. Among the learners' categories, Ysgol y Graig achieved third place in the Year 3 and 4 individual recitations, first and third place in the Year 5 and 6 individual recitation, and second place in the Year 6 and under group recitation. In the secondary section, Ysgol Pen y Dre achieved first place in the Year 7–9 scene performance. These results reflect the strong commitment and talent shown by pupils across all participating schools.

Opportunities for Family Learning:

Community Focused Schools (CFS) have undertaken several Welsh events this year which include:

- The Ysgolion Bro team has focused on promoting the Welsh language through family and community engagement, offering informal and accessible opportunities to use and learn Welsh.
- A parent coffee morning was established at Galon Las to encourage engagement with the Gurnos site; although attendance was small, feedback was positive and parents expressed interest in learning simple Welsh phrases. Plans are being explored to develop a Welsh café in response to this.
- At Ysgol Santes Tydfil, a wide range of family activities took place, including pottery workshops, after-school gardening clubs, summer gardening sessions, forest school activities, and a Christmas pottery event, all attracting strong attendance.

- Ysgol Rhydygrug delivered varied family sessions such as stay-and-play activities, International Play Day events, family forest school, skateboarding workshops, and pottery sessions, strengthening relationships between staff and families.
- Increased parental engagement has enabled staff to signpost families to wider support services, including the Early Help Hub, Citizens Advice and to Welsh courses through Learn Welsh Glamorgan.
- Four schools held family clog-dancing sessions between 2–4 March to celebrate St David's Day.
- Ysgol Heolgerrig established a weekly Welsh coffee morning supported by the Ysgolion Bro team, with strong attendance throughout the autumn term.
- At Ysgol Greenfield, support for the Criw Cymraeg included organising a family clog-dancing session and developing links for a visit to the Urdd Centre.
- The Welsh playground games project between Ysgol Bedlinog and Ysgol Rhydygrug was re-coordinated this year, expanding opportunities for children to use Welsh through play.

Partner Opportunities

Urdd

The Urdd Youth and Community teams have continued to play a key role in promoting the Welsh language among children and young people across Merthyr Tydfil, offering a wide range of cultural, social and educational opportunities through the medium of Welsh.

Youth Officer Activities

- The Merthyr Urdd Branch has provided a welcoming space for Year 6–8 pupils to socialise and enjoy activities in Welsh, with 16 young people attending since opening and regular participation from pupils representing five different schools.
- Lunchtime Welsh clubs at Cyfarthfa, Pen y Dre and Blessed Carlo Acutis have engaged over 100 pupils (379 contacts), offering games and conversation sessions to encourage informal Welsh use. A group from Pen y Dre also competed in this year's Urdd Eisteddfod.
- At Ysgol Rhydywaun, the Youth Forum continues to thrive, with assemblies delivered to Years 7–10 and Sixth Form, and two pupils supported on work experience at Canolfan Soar.
- Assemblies were delivered to Year 6 pupils at Ysgol Santes Tudful, alongside a visit from Mistar Urdd as part of the national tour.
- As part of Diwrnod Shwmae Su'mae, a highly successful Silent Disco was held for Year 7 at Cyfarthfa School, attended by over 60 pupils, and the Urdd contributed to town-centre celebrations.

- The team also supported half-term art sessions for children in partnership with Canolfan Soar.
- At Merthyr College, the Urdd delivered a Christmas baking event for 30 ALN learners and sessions on the importance of Welsh in the workplace, with an Easter activity day planned for March.

Community Officer Activities

- A residential trip to Cardiff for Welsh-medium primary pupils took place in April, with four pupils from Merthyr attending.
- Pupils from Pen y Dre, Abercanaid, Rhyd-y-Grug, Rhydywaun and Greenfield took part in the Morgannwg Valleys regional Arts and Crafts competition.
- Summer Camp promotional assemblies were delivered to Years 4–6 at Santes Tudful and Gellifaelog.
- Merthyr schools were well represented at the Urdd National Eisteddfod in Margam, including Rhydywaun, Afon Taf, Santes Tudful, Gellifaelog and Pantysgallog.
- One pupil from Merthyr took part in the Catalonia trip in July.
- A free Merthyr Fun Day was held in August for Welsh-medium pupils in Years 4–6.
- The Urdd supported partners at Miri Mawr Merthyr in September.
- The Merthyr Jambori in October engaged 353 pupils from English-medium schools and 120 from Welsh-medium schools.
- Welsh Fun Days were delivered in Bedlinog and Gwaunfarren, providing enjoyable Welsh-medium sessions for English-medium pupils.
- Assemblies promoting Urdd Summer Camps were delivered in January at Rhyd-y-Grug, Santes Tudful and Ysgol-y-Graig.
- The Mistar Urdd Tour visited Santes Tudful and the Gurnos site, raising funds for local and regional Eisteddfodau.
- Trips and competitions continued throughout the year, including a London trip, Cylch and Regional Eisteddfodau, and both primary and secondary regional competitions.

Sports Provision

- Weekly Welsh-medium sports clubs, including multi-sports and gymnastics sessions at Rhyd-y-Grug and Santes Tudful, engaged 52 children each week, promoting health, wellbeing and Welsh-medium participation. They have also supported English medium schools.

Mudiad Meithrin and Early Years team

- The Flying Start programme is currently developing three new Cylchoedd Meithrin, funded by the Welsh Government, which will create an additional 38

Welsh language childcare places. This could rise to 102 additional places if settings deliver two sessions per day as demand rises.

- Five Ti a Fi groups and a Ffrindiau'r Dyfodol group are delivered across the borough, all of which continue to be well attended.
- Early Years settings have marked a variety of events throughout the year to celebrate and promote the Welsh language and culture.
- The Early Years team have both supported and delivered several Welsh language initiatives to strengthen the local offer.
- Additional Welsh language storybooks have been made available to families and Early Years settings through Merthyr Library Service and the Merthyr Vale and Aberfan project, further enhancing opportunities for early language development.
- The Local Authority have undertaken a parental survey with Nursery-age families regarding school choice. Eleven recommendations have been identified to strengthen the promotion of Welsh-medium education from birth onwards. Factors affecting parental choice included promotion, siblings an input from family and friends. The reasons for not sending children to Welsh Medium included distance, parental lack of Welsh and therefore an inability to support with homework.
- Several Miri Mawr's, which are informative sessions for Welsh language education targeted at parents, have been completed in Merthyr Tydfil this year to encourage Welsh Medium Education.

Menter Iaith/Canolfan Soar:

Canolfan Soar is once again the Home of Hwyl in Merthyr Tydfil with its vast array of opportunities for anyone of any age. Apart from Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful, other locally and nationally important organisations such as Learn Welsh Glamorgan and the Urdd also have a permanent presence here. In collaboration with them, and others, Canolfan Soar has been able to roll out an impressive programme of activities and events.

These have included;

- A weekly Welsh beginner reading club;
- Adult informal chat groups;
- Arts and Craft sessions;
- Coffee mornings;
- Open Mic Nights;
- Drama Workshops;
- Ti a Fi (collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin);
- Welsh courses;
- Mari Lwyd celebrations;
- School of Rock;
- Book launches & events with authors.

The College:

The College has demonstrated strong and sustained progress in promoting the Welsh language through a wide range of engaging, inclusive activities. Learners are increasingly confident in using Welsh during performances, workshops and events, with noticeable growth in spoken Welsh and participation in bilingual creative work. The production of bilingual materials and high engagement in Welsh-themed activities have helped create a visible and vibrant Welsh identity across the College community.

Cultural participation has been strengthened through diverse workshops, festivals and partnerships with local groups, supporting wider community involvement and cross-generational engagement. Learners have also gained valuable skills through planning and delivering events, contributing to their personal development and confidence. This work is having a lasting impact, with rising interest in Welsh language and culture, increased participation beyond organised activities, and a strong foundation for expanding bilingual opportunities in the future.

Strategic Aim 3

Overall aim: there is an increase in the use of Welsh across all whole workforces.

Good progress continues to be made against this strategic aim. Workforce development has remained a central priority in the Council's approach to implementing, strengthening and embedding the Welsh Language Standards. Cross-directorate collaboration, alongside effective engagement with a wide range of external partners, has been key to driving this work forward and supporting sustained improvement.

The following is a summary of outputs/activities:

- The Council continues to be an active member of Grŵp Deddf, Rhwydiaith and Cymraeg I Bawb.
- A list of volunteers in some departments has been updated, and there is still an attempt to ensure that each directorate has at least one Welsh speak to support their colleagues. Work is continuing in this area with training on Welsh Language skills taking place for the Call Centre team in the coming months.
- A new Welsh language monitoring cycle has been developed to strengthen compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and ensure staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in day-to-day service delivery. The monitoring will be rolled out during the first quarter of the year and will provide a structured approach to reviewing practice, identifying areas for improvement, and supporting teams to meet expectations consistently. This proactive monitoring framework will help embed the Welsh language more firmly across all departments and ensure that staff feel confident and informed in meeting their obligations.

Informal Learning:

- To support staff and elected members in learning and promoting the Welsh language, the Council introduced a Welsh word/phrase of the week initiative last year, which has continued throughout this reporting period. Each week, short and practical Welsh phrases are shared through the HR Bulletin, aligned with the Welsh Language Standard being highlighted in the People and Performance Bulletin. This forms part of the ongoing 'Welsh Corner' initiative, designed to increase visibility of the language and encourage everyday use across the organisation.
- A significant amount of new Welsh-language support material has been added to the Council's intranet to help staff use Welsh in everyday workplace situations. This includes resources to deal with meetings, phone calls and other workplace situations. These resources also include audio recordings.

- Resources now include tailored phrases and vocabulary for specific scenarios such as answering the telephone, responding to emails, greeting visitors, and providing basic customer service in Welsh.
- Audio recordings accompany many of these phrases, enabling staff to hear correct pronunciation and build confidence when using Welsh in real interactions.
- Pronunciation training is also available for staff who wish to improve their spoken Welsh, and several employees have already taken up this opportunity.
- Posters displaying key phrases and common workplace scenarios are currently being installed across Council buildings to provide quick, visible prompts that support everyday Welsh use. These posters are situated in a range of offices, with the intention to roll them out across more of the Council's Offices over the coming months.
- The Council has continued to work with partners to host a coffee morning weekly for learners and staff who have lost their confidence in using their Welsh Language and supporting development. It is an informal coffee morning where council staff discuss in Welsh and play Welsh games. Attendance is varied but is increasing slowly.

Formal Learning:

- The Council continues to work in partnership with Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg (Learn Welsh Glamorgan) to provide workplace training opportunities for staff and Elected Members. This includes an ongoing promotional campaign to encourage staff and Elected members to undertake Welsh language training opportunities via drop-in sessions, through the intranet, by email, and taster sessions.
- Completion rates of National Centre of Welsh courses. The following outlines programmes undertaken:

Programme	Participants
WELCOME – PART 1	124
WELCOME – PART 2	113
WELCOME BACK – PART 1	46
WELCOME BACK – PART 2	21
IMPROVING YOUR WELSH – PART 1	25
IMPROVING YOUR WELSH – PART 2	1
HEALTHCARE SECTOR – PART 1	2
SOCIAL CARE – PART 1	3
TEACHERS – PART 1	2
HEADTEACHERS – PART 1	2
Grand Total	339

- The number of staff who undertook the 10-hour Welsh Course during the period 2025-26 were as follows:

Course Code	**Years (Date)**	**Months (Date)**	**Total**

Welsh Language Level 1	2025	March April May June July August September October November December	7 9 5 9 18 12 12 8 4 3
		2025 Total	87
	2026	January February	8 1
		2026 Total	9
		2025-26 Total	**96**

- The Induction programme for new employees has been updated with more robust information on handling Welsh Language complaints, their rights on the use of the Welsh Language and the standards themselves have been added. This continues to be accompanied by the Welsh Awareness modules.
- The number of staff undertaking the Induction process during the period 2025-26 were as follows:

Year	**Attended**
2025	73
2026	26

- A Welsh Language Awareness Course with two modules was made available to staff and this is the completion rate.

Welsh Language Awareness and Culture Module 1	**Count of Course**
In Progress	14
Not Started	299
Passed	901
Grand Total	1214

Welsh Language Awareness and Culture Module 2	**Count of Course**
In Progress	13
Not Started	323
Passed	878
Grand Total	1214

- A Mynediad 1 course led by Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg is currently taking place with 8 learners.
- There have been a few colleagues who have undertaken residential courses.

Recommendations and Actions:

1. **Continue to develop targeted approaches to increasing the number of staff who can use the language in the workplace.**

Recommendations

- Build a clear, progressive language development pathway
- Target support based on role, context and need

Actions

- Map out a tiered progression framework
- Align each tier to practical workplace competencies
- Provide staff with a self-assessment tool to identify their starting points
- Prioritise high interaction roles (front of house, safeguarding, HR)
- Offer role specific micro modules

2. **Enhance Evaluation of Language Skills**

Recommendations:

- Implement the CEFR-based audit tool in 2025–26 as planned, to improve consistency and comparability of data.
- Regularly update and analyse employee language skill profiles to target interventions effectively**.**

Actions:

- Train managers on using the CEFR framework.
- Set up annual reviews to track progress in skills acquisition.

3. **Strengthen Quarterly Monitoring of Welsh Language Standards**

Recommendations:

- Implement the formal quarterly monitoring cycle to identify compliance issues earlier and support continuous improvement.
- Develop a standardised monitoring template to ensure consistency across service areas and enable clearer comparison of results.
- Present quarterly findings to senior leadership to improve oversight and accountability.

Actions:

- Introduce quarterly reviews covering key areas such as correspondence, reception services, digital content, signage, and complaints.

- Produce a short internal report after each quarter summarising compliance levels, risks, and required corrective actions.

4. **Continue Promoting Awareness and Engagement**

Recommendations:

- Strengthen internal communication to reinforce the importance of Welsh language compliance, data collection, and everyday use.
- Deepen staff engagement with Welsh culture and the organisation's Welsh language commitments through targeted campaigns and events.
- Ensure that the 3 directorates undertaken the Pilot have completed the bronze tier by the end of the year.
- Build on the outcomes of the #SiarterShwmaeronment pilot by embedding its principles more widely across the organisation.
- Expand promotion of Welsh-language learning opportunities and digital resources, ensuring they remain visible and accessible.

Actions:

- Refresh Welsh language awareness content within induction and staff development programmes to reflect updated standards and organisational priorities.
- Deliver a series of themed Welsh language engagement campaigns throughout the year, aligned with national events and internal priorities.
- Further develop the intranet as a central hub for Welsh-language tools, training, guidance, and best-practice examples.
- Increase opportunities for incidental Welsh use through refreshed signage, updated bilingual templates, and workplace prompts.

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