



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

Period of this plan:
September 2022 – September 2032

WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN



Name of Local Authority

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

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This Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is made under Section 84 of *The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013* and the content complies with the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019*¹⁻². We have given due regard to the statutory guidance issued by Welsh Ministers when setting our targets.

Signed: **Date:**

(This Plan needs to be signed by the Chief Education officer within your local authority)

¹ [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans \(Wales\) Regulations 2019](#)

² [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) \(Coronavirus\) Regulations 2020](#)

Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education 10-year Plan 2022 - 2032

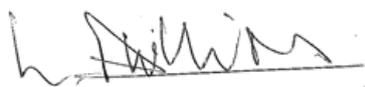
Foreword

Corporate Director of Education

Blaenau Gwent is a relatively small Local Authority area, but with big ambitions for our schools and learners. We are determined to play our part in Wales being a bilingual nation with a clear ambition to increase the use of Welsh across the County Borough. We fully support and are committed to the Welsh Government's national strategy for the Welsh Language Cymraeg 2050: a million Welsh speakers. Welsh medium education in the County Borough has been growing in recent years. This growth played a key part in increasing the number of people regularly using Welsh across the County Borough. Blaenau Gwent's strategic aim that is advocated in our Welsh Education Strategic Plan is to realise;

'A Blaenau Gwent community who embrace the Welsh language and culture with confidence and pride'.

One of the key components in ensuring the successful delivery of our strategic aim for the Welsh language is the realisation of a new and ambitious Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-32. I look forward to working with all of our partners in the true spirit of collaboration to deliver against the WESP's priorities and aspirations over the coming years.



Lynn Phillips
Corporate Director of Education
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Consultation Overview

Blaenau Gwent Council has developed a draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which is set to run for a 10-year period from September 2022 until September 2032. The following plan includes an overview of where we are now, where we plan to be in 5 years' time and where we intend to be by 2032, along with how we plan on getting there.

We will be consulting with key stakeholders in order to ensure that our plan is fit for purpose and reflects the needs of our families, staff and partners.

This consultation is an opportunity for you to provide your views, comments and opinions on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. All responses will be considered, along with the associated implications –including any changes to the plan resulting from the consultation. We will then look to produce a final version for approval by the Council's Executive Committee, prior to submission to Welsh Government Ministers for their consideration and approval. Once agreed, the plan will come into effect from September 2022.

The consultation period commenced on Friday 5th November 2021, concluding on Monday 3rd January 2022 at 12pm.

Background and Context

Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, requires each Council to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The purpose of the WESP is to set out the Council's strategic approach and direction, in relation to the development and delivery of Welsh medium education. The following plan has been developed in accordance with the statutory guidance issued under section 87 (5) of the *School Standards and Organisation Wales Act 2013*.

Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Development

The development of Blaenau Gwent Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, has been coordinated by the Education Directorate, working in partnership with the Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Forum, along with other relevant partners. The purpose of which has been to establish the current position, whilst also informing plans and targets for the next 10 years. The plan details the localised strategic approach, along with the Council's aspirations for Welsh-medium education between 2022 and 2032.

Discussions have also taken place with counterparts responsible for their WESPs in neighbouring authorities, including: Caerphilly County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council and Torfaen County Borough Council. We aim to continue to engage and work closely with neighbouring authorities, to ensure that as Councils, we work collaboratively in order to continue to embed and strengthen our approach to the delivery of Welsh Education throughout the region.

Strategic Context

National

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is firmly aligned to and will facilitate effective delivery of the following Welsh Government strategies and policies:

Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers (2017), sets out Welsh Government's (WG) long-term vision for the Welsh language. The WG aim to increase the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050, also increasing use of the Welsh language and creating favourable conditions; including infrastructure and context, to support this growth. The Education sector will play a vital role in facilitating Cymraeg 2050, through the Welsh in Education Strategic planning process, which seeks to increase the number of learners who have the opportunity to develop Welsh language skills in school and also as part of their everyday life. In addition, each Council's WESP will contribute to changing the way in which Welsh is taught, in turn seeking to improve language acquisition and use, and by working with key partners to increase the teaching workforce, both in terms of those able to teach via the medium of Welsh, along with those teaching Welsh as a language.

Each WESP will also contribute to implementation of **The Welsh in Education, Action Plan 2017-21** which sets the direction for Welsh-medium education.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, details seven well-being goals, which public bodies must work towards, including '*A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language*'. The Blaenau Gwent WESP via its vision, aims and targets; will seek to facilitate Welsh language and cultural developments in line with this goal, in turn improving the well-being of pupils, staff and communities.

Prosperity for All: the national strategy and the programme for Government, Taking Wales Forward 2016 – 2021 for which one of the wellbeing goals is to '*Build resilient communities, culture and language*'. The WESP seeks to create a suitable and sustainable Welsh-medium education system, to support effective implementation of this goal.

Education in Wales: Our National Mission, Action Plan (2017 -21) details plans for the education system in Wales, to ensure effective implementation of the new curriculum. This includes a desire for learners to become increasingly bilingual, Welsh education promotion and growth, along with workforce Welsh language use and skill development, whilst also contributing to effective recruitment and retention of staff. The key aspects of this action plan associated with bilingualism, are inextricably linked to all 7 of the outcome areas within the Blaenau Gwent WESP. The WESP seeks to:

- Improve and increase access to and uptake of Welsh medium education
- Secure high standards in terms of education standards and delivery
- Develop and create opportunities for informal – as well as formal use of the Welsh language
- Secure workforce development and sustainability

Local

The WESP is firmly aligned to the Council's vision for education, which is:

“To secure excellent achievement and wellbeing through a partnership, school-led, self-improving school to school, system approach”.

The WESP is key to securing successful delivery of the vision for education, as it establishes a framework through which these aspirations can be achieved, in partnership with the Welsh in Education Forum and local schools.

Education is key to achieving the vision and outcomes established within the Blaenau Gwent Council Corporate Plan 2020/22 including: 'Proud heritage, strong communities and brighter future'. Access to quality Welsh-medium education, the development of the language, culture, provision and workforce are all essential components of the WESP.

Education is also a major contributor to the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan 2018 -23, and fulfilling the associated objectives. The Council has a duty to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh in working towards the well-being goals.

The Blaenau Gwent WESP will inform the review and development processes associated with the Blaenau Gwent Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, which will be consulted upon and published prior to March 2022.

Our ten year vision for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh-medium education in our area

Blaenau Gwent Council's Vision for Welsh-medium Education:

'To build upon the strong progress made to date, by creating a sustainable education system which enhances provision, uptake and use of the Welsh language; creating skilled and empowered citizens who are proud to live and work both within and outside of Wales'.

The strategic aim of which will be to create:

A community who embrace the Welsh language and culture with confidence and pride.

We will seek achieve our vision by promoting, developing and enhancing Welsh-medium education provision and services. We will do so by working closely with the Welsh in Education Forum, along with other key strategic partners including Welsh Government, and other local authorities.

Our objectives include:

- To raise the profile of Welsh medium Education, along with the benefits of being bi-lingual
- To create high quality, thriving learning establishments which support effective pupil, staff, community and partner engagement
- To support integration of services and create an immersive experience for learners
- To secure improved school to school and partnership work, facilitating wider use and development of the Welsh language
- To create a skilled and sustainable workforce, committed to continuing professional development
- To ensure inclusive teaching and learning environments and opportunities for all learners

- To improve progression opportunities by reviewing and implementing a curriculum which is firmly aligned to further and higher education

Key achievements over the course of the 2017-20 Plan, include:

- Numbers of pupils on roll, along with those applying for a place at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg continues to increase, with a positive trend noted over the last 3 years in relation to both nursery and reception numbers. The Council has committed to the delivery of free home to school transport for nursery pupils accessing Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, in order to support improved access to Welsh medium education.
- Standards have improved at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, which has positively influenced both uptake and delivery.
- Transition rates between Welsh medium primary and secondary education continues to be high with 100% of pupils transferring to Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw.
- Blaenau Gwent Council successfully secured capital funding via the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme, to remodel both internal and external teaching and learning environments at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, in turn improving delivery.
- Blaenau Gwent Council has developed a strong marketing and communication plan, targeting and promoting the benefits of being bilingual, working collaboratively with partners throughout the region to do so; whilst also establishing effective methods of engagement and consultation with stakeholders, in order to inform key strategic priorities.
- Blaenau Gwent has successfully coordinated a regional planning of schools places and demand South East Wales Consortia (SEWC) sub-group over the last 2 years. This has resulted in effective partnership working and join up between neighbouring authorities, who continue to learn from one another, whilst exploring opportunities for regional development that will benefit all.
- Representation, attendance and frequency of WEF meetings has increased, with partners firmly committed to and recognising the effectiveness of the Blaenau Gwent Forum.
- The Council secured Welsh Government funding via the Welsh Medium Capital Grant, to develop and implement a new 210 place Welsh Seedling Medium Primary School in the Tredegar/Sirhowy Valley, which is planned for implementation via seedling growth model from the autumn 2023. In addition, the Council has secured funding via the Childcare Capital Grant to provide 2 additional Welsh-medium childcare facilities, supporting the growth of primary provision.

Welsh Government have established targets for Councils, in order to achieve their vision for one million Welsh speakers by 2050. The targets are based on Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data, relating to the percentage of the Year 1 cohort who are taught via the medium of Welsh. In order to contribute to the achieving vision, Blaenau Gwent needs to ensure that **at least 10%** of the Year 1 cohort are taught via the medium of Welsh by 2032.

Figure 1: Baseline Data/Current Position

PLASC (2019/20)	Year 1 Cohort	Year 1 Welsh-medium Baseline 2021
Number of Year 1 pupils	728	29 (4%)

In order to ensure that we achieve the aforementioned vision and objectives, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council are committed to working towards the ambitious Welsh Government target, to increase the Year 1 cohort taught via the medium of Welsh to 75 pupils. When compared with the 2019/20 baseline data used by Welsh Government, this would equate to 10% (an increase of 6 percentage points increase) of the total Year 1 cohort being taught via the medium of Welsh by 2032. The Council will assess the feasibility of achieving the upper limit Welsh Government target of 105 Year 1 pupils by 2032. The plan will be reviewed accordingly upon completion of the feasibility study. However, the Council are committed to and will coordinate an effective continuum of learning by securing increased Welsh Medium childcare, primary, secondary and post 16 provision working with key partners to do so.

This will be achieved via:

- Strengthening the Welsh Education Forum, to build upon existing partnerships, and develop a clear accountability structure in line with implementation and monitoring of the 10-year plan;
- Development of a Blaenau Gwent Welsh Education Policy, to embed the WESP and associated developments within wider Education and Local Authority strategic and operational planning, policy and practice;
- Development of a Promotion and Engagement Strategy and associated communications plan, to ensure clear and consistent messages are delivered throughout the Council and its services, in line with the implementation of the WESP. The strategy will also seek to improve engagement methods;
- The development of an effective promotion and engagement strategy, which highlights the benefits of being bi-lingual, dispels myths and creates opportunities for increased participation;
- Increasing the capacity within existing childcare and early years (Welsh-medium sector, along number of childcare and early years' education provision) by at least 2 settings, in order to feed school-based nursery and Welsh-medium statutory education provision;
- Increasing both the capacity and uptake at of pupil places further Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg;
- Promoting, opening and meeting the proposed capacity of the Council's second Welsh-medium primary school;
- Developing immersion provision for latecomers, in order to increase opportunities for engagement in Welsh-medium education within primary phase;
- Committing to a workforce development plan in partnership with the EAS, and Coleg Gwent, along with other key partners;
- Undertake a feasibility study in line with the development of a Welsh-medium Special Needs Resource Base (SNRB);
- Work with neighbouring authorities to secure a second secondary school within the Heads of the Valleys region for Blaenau Gwent pupils; and,
- Undertaking a feasibility study in line with the potential for increased capacity within the primary sector between 2027 and 2032, using the seedling growth model adopted by Blaenau Gwent.

The Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) is currently under review. Education are a key stakeholder engaged as part of this review, which will be informed by both the WESP and associated feasibility studies, undertaken in order to secure appropriate additionally. In addition, as part of Education's Planning Obligations, we will seek to ensure that population growth is accounted for from an education perspective.

Key to the success of the WESP, is the implementation of an effective Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, which is currently under review. The Council are working with Menter Iaith, in order establish initial consultation sessions, which will be informed by the 2021 Census data review. Two consultation events are planned for the Spring-term 2022. The aim of these events will be to engage key stakeholders including Education, the WEF and local community groups in the development of the strategy. The plan is to retain these groups to oversee and inform implementation. The new strategy will be in place by March 31st 2022.

The existing Blaenau Gwent Welsh Language Promotion Strategy runs until 2022 (for more information please visit:

[Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017-2022.pdf \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/Assets/2017-2022/Welsh%20Language%20Promotion%20Strategy%202017-2022.pdf)).

The aims set out within the current strategy, include:

- Improve the services Welsh-speakers can expect to receive from specified organisations in Welsh.
- Increase the use people make of Welsh-language services.
- Make it clear to organisations what they need to do in terms of the Welsh language.
- Ensure that there is an appropriate degree of consistency in terms of the duties placed on bodies in the same sectors.

In addition, Blaenau Gwent Council identifies the following three Welsh language promotion objectives:

1. To promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language within families and the community.
2. To increase the provision of Welsh language education and informal activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language.
3. To increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace, including:
 - More people engage with the Welsh language;
 - More people attain fluency in the Welsh language; and,
 - More Council employees are able to use Welsh Language.

The current Blaenau Gwent target is to achieve 70 additional Welsh speakers per annum (3% of approx. 2,400), in order to achieve the vision of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Effective implementation of the WESP will be key to ensuring that the Council achieve their target. Education has been heavily involved in the review of the Welsh Language Strategy to date, and will continue to have significant involvement in order to ensure alignment between the Strategy and the 10-year WESP. In addition, the Policy and Partnerships team who are responsible for leading the review, are heavily involved in both the WEF and drafting of the WESP.

Outcome 1:

More nursery children/ three year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Where are we now?

It is important to recognise that the decisions that families make about language prior to starting school, has a role to play in supporting their child's journey. This journey begins prior to the funded non-maintained education.

The Role of the Health Visitor

Health Visitors currently do not have any quantitative targets regarding for the contribution for the health sector to promote education through the medium of Welsh.

It is the role of the Health Visitors to provide all information via the medium of English and Welsh, they also provide information regarding Family Information Services to all families (FIS).

Health Visitors have access to develop their Welsh through on-line modules available through our Aneurin University Health Board provision. Welsh language awareness training delivered internally upon request. There are free Welsh language courses available to all staff.

The Family Information Service (FIS), provide parents with information regarding local education provision which includes Welsh medium education options, promotion of Cymraeg i Blant services, and the offer of Welsh language baby and toddler groups. They also provide Welsh book start bags, and correspondence through Flying Start is translated and provided in both English and Welsh.

Family Information Service information is distributed to families regularly through early years and Healthy Child Wales contacts. Bookstart Book bags are available, which include a Welsh Language book.

Flying Start Health Visitors work in areas of deprivation as designated by Welsh Government, they encourage children to attend Flying Start childcare and inform parents of the availability of Flying Start childcare through the medium of Welsh. As a service they offer a wide range of choices for parents via the following:

- promote and support welsh speaking opportunities.
- refer into a Welsh speaking Speech and Language Therapist.
- Speech and Language groups set up across the County Borough, which are bi-lingual

Flying Start

Welsh Government's updated programme commits to continued support for our flagship Flying Start programme. In line with the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru, WG have extended this commitment to deliver a three year phased expansion of early years' provision to include all two-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision. The first phase of the expansion runs from September 2022 to March 2023.

There has been an increase in the number of settings that are commissioned to deliver Flying Start childcare, and future expansion of the programme offers opportunities for all sessional providers to receive funding to deliver this programme, along with other childcare provider types to become registered Flying Start providers. Details of the childcare organisations who are already providing a small number of outreach places for Flying Start families are listed below, some of which will become fully registered Flying Start providers by the end of phase one of the expansion programme.

Welsh Government have set an expectation for Local Authorities to deliver 75% of expansion via the geographical targeting methodology. However, as part of the plans for phase one, up to 25% of the expansion can be achieved via the Flying Start Outreach programme in order to provide an element of flexibility to reach families living outside of existing or new Flying Start areas, and in order to reach disadvantaged families living in more rural areas. This flexibility will also allow us to work with families whose children have identified developmental needs and require support via the medium of Welsh, but are unable to access the service due to family finances. Such circumstances can be considered as part of the outreach programme as a way of increasing numbers in our Welsh-medium settings within the County Borough.

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg offers full-time nursery places. The feeder childcare provision for this school is Helyg Bychan which is an established Flying Start registered setting since September 2010. It is co-located with Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg with 19 children of which 14 are taken up by Flying Start children, with the others as fee payers. The setting is registered with CIW for up to 19 children. As part of the Flying Start expansion programme, we will be working closely with the setting to increase promotion of what the setting can offer with an aim of increasing the demand for families wanting to send their children there.

The only other Welsh-Medium childcare provision is Gwddi Hŵ - Mudiad Meithrin (based at the Flying Start Brynithel Hub). Again an established Flying Start commissioned provider. Through the expansion of the Flying Start programme, we will increase the promotion of the Welsh Language through offering Welsh Language courses from our Flying Start hubs and encouraging the hubs to be more bilingual and increasing the use of incidental Welsh across the workforce and throughout childcare settings.

The local authority is committed to supporting early language acquisition through a range of evidence based, recognised programmes (Word Aware; ELKLAN; Signalong). The Flying Start Advisory Teacher will also support settings to implement the ComIT 0-3 Handbook which provides advice and guidance on Speech, Language and Communication Development and strategies to support typically developing language skills and strategies to support children with identified delay. This will be achieved through close working with the Speech and Language Therapist whose first language is Welsh and therefore able to provide all ACI strategies bilingually within childcare settings across Blaenau Gwent.

During the Flying Start childcare admissions process, letters are sent to all eligible families the term before their entitlement commences, which includes a leaflet with all childcare providers highlighted, providing an element of parental choice of the different types of Welsh medium, predominantly English and bilingual childcare settings available. Health Visitors and Family Support Workers work with the families who are also able to share

information regarding the childcare settings. All English medium settings will use incidental Welsh as part of their practice in order to introduce the Welsh language to all Flying Start children. As part of the Flying Start Expansion, a new “Benefits of becoming Bilingual within the Early Years” information package will be developed and adopted as part of the admissions process and used throughout the service to further promote the Welsh language in addition to engaging with Welsh Language service providers to ensure there is sufficient early years provision accessible to families to support the take up of Welsh language.

Childminders

All 32 childminders in Blaenau Gwent report the main language of their setting is English. As part of the new expansion programme for Flying Start a new Childminder Specification is being developed to encourage childminders to apply to become registered Flying Start providers. As part of the specification we will require childminders to engage in the Local Authority Quality Assurance Programme which encourages the use of Welsh in daily practice. This will continue to be encouraged, supported and developed going forward, with more emphasis on the Welsh Language.

All childminders are offered full access to the Local Authority training programme, which has previously included Welsh courses. In addition, they have been encouraged to complete the Camau Welsh language checker, and Camau course information has been shared with all providers.

Maintained Nursery

Figure 2 below shows the number and percentage of Welsh-medium nursery pupils in relation to the overall nursery cohort. The following data is based upon January 2021 PLASC data:

Figure 2: Welsh-medium Nursery Place Availability 5-year Trend

	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
3-year Old Cohort	732		769		729		696		683	
Admission no./ and as a % of the total nursery-age cohort	41	5%	60	8%	60	8%	60	9%	60	9%
Places filled/ and as a % of the total cohort	22	3%	30	4%	40	5%	34	5%	40	6%
Places available/ and as a % of the total cohort	19	3%	30	4%	20	3%	26	3%	20	3%

At present, there is sufficient capacity to meet demand within maintained nursery provision at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. Nursery pupil numbers have risen over the last 3 years, for September 2021, 45 pupils have been allocated a place at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. This does not include the spring-term 2022 rising 3 figures, which will be determined as a result of the 2022/23 nursery admission round (scheduled to close on 15th October 2021).

The Blaenau Gwent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is currently in development with anticipated completion of the final draft by March 2022, for consultation from April 2022. The 5-year assessment will be finalised in 2022, and subject to annual review. This will be conducted in line with the WESP annual review and associated reporting processes. The previous CSA identified a gap in terms of availability of Welsh-medium provision in the Ebbw Fawr Valley, which is being addressed via Childcare Offer Capital Grant, with a new Welsh-medium setting programmed for implementation from 2023. The outcome of the planned CSA (2022) will inform the geographical priorities in terms of gaps, which will be addressed going forward. This will be captured and developed as part of the WESP 10-year Plan annual review process and associated delivery plan.

Welsh Medium Childcare Provision

For the full CSA (2017), which presents full findings in relation to Welsh medium childcare in 2016/17, please click on the following link [Blaenau Gwent CBC: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 2017 \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk). The 2017 assessment noted a gap in Welsh medium provision in the Ebbw Fawr community planning area, with the other three community planning areas (Sirhowy, North Ebbw Fach and South Ebbw Fach), each being served by Welsh Medium provision at that time.

The parental survey conducted indicated that, whilst the majority of parents did not identify barriers to accessing Welsh medium childcare, some parents did identify that not having provision locally as a barrier. As such, an action to address the gap in the Ebbw Fawr area was agreed, and subsequent plans to establish Welsh language provision in the area are being progressed as detailed below.

The Childcare Offer Capital Programme has been utilised to establish a Welsh medium Full Day Care Centre co-located on the site of Glyncoed Primary new build in Ebbw Vale, the design for the facility has been agreed and is currently in the planning process. Subsequent to the last assessment, the Welsh medium childcare provider in the Sirhowy community planning area has re-categorised themselves as English and Welsh medium. Therefore, a gap was identified in that area for Welsh medium provision. Plans for this gap to be addressed have been aligned with the Welsh Medium Capital Grant Programme, this also links with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Ebbw Fawr Redevelopment Programme and a Cylch Meithrin forms part of the plans for the new Welsh medium seedling school in Tredegar.

A new Cylch Meithrin has been planned for Tredegar, post implementation of the Ti a Fi. The provision was established during 2019 and registered in 2020, with a staff recruitment exercise currently underway. The setting is scheduled to open during the autumn-term 2021 and will also offer Flying Start places.

An existing Day Nursery in Ebbw Vale has committed to provide daily Cylch Meithrin sessions (one-hour session in both the morning and afternoon). The setting has been receiving Croesi'r Bont support since mid-January 2020. They have been assigned a dedicated Croesi'r Bont Officer, who works closely with them to establish a timetable for the sessions, which is updated on a fortnightly basis. The children's Welsh language development is then monitored via assessments, which are carried out four times per annum. The feedback from the nursery thus far has been positive, with future potential for increased Welsh-medium childcare provision.

Non-Maintained Nursery Places (Including Mudiad Meithrin Provision)

Currently, there are 2 Cylchoedd Meithrin groups in the Ebbw Fach Valley, one of which is run by a Management Committee, with the other being managed by Mudiad Meithrin. The group details are as follows:

- Helyg Bychan, has been registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) since September 2010. It is co-located with Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, and operates full day care provision for 38 children (19 am and 19 pm), aged two to five years. The setting currently has 50 children on their register, requiring provision on different days, and at different times. Therefore, although they have not exceeded their place availability, they do not currently have any available places.
- Gwdihw (Brynithel), was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in December 2015, to provide day care for up to 38 children at Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw. The setting works in partnership with Blaenau Gwent Flying Start team and is located in a modern, purpose built Flying Start building, on the Penrhiw Estate in Brynithel. In 2020, Gwdihw (Brynithel) registered to become an early year's education provider from September 2021. The setting currently has 28 children in attendance, with 10 places available. In line with pupil projections, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg will have sufficient capacity to support pupil transition from this provision for at least the next 5 years. This will be subject to continued monitoring.

Both provisions feed into Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. Childcare places are available throughout the year for children aged 2-4 years. They offer both full and part-time places. However, it is problematic to include the total number of registered places at non-maintained settings in that the number of spaces available for nursery children, as a % of these places, will already be taken up by Flying Start and/or fee paying 2 years old children.

Pobl Bach is an English and Welsh childcare setting, meaning both Welsh and English are used within the setting. Welsh and English are used as languages of communication with the children and young people and both languages are used for activities. In addition, both languages are used for the setting's administration. The setting communicates with parents either in Welsh or English according to parental preference. The setting currently provide full day care for 25 children aged 2-5 years. They offer a morning and afternoon session. The provision works in partnership with Blaenau Gwent Flying Start team and offers places to children either funded privately, or via Flying Start. The setting can accommodate up to 50 children, with 49 children currently taking up places, and 1 place available.

Transition

During 2019/20, there were 45 children attending Mudiad Meithrin provision, of which 14 (31%) progressed into Welsh-medium education. Transition rates from Helyg Bychan are higher than Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw. A small number of parents have highlighted concerns around nursery age children travelling on the school bus. However, it is hoped that with Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw becoming an early years' education provider, which children can attend until reception, preparatory work can be undertaken with parents and children aligned to transport with the aim of increasing transition rates to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.

It is the intention in order to help the Council to achieve our targets for transition rates, further in-depth analysis of Mudiad Meithrin data will be undertaken, to understand the reasoning behind parent choice, and to enable us to work more closely with parents addressing any considerations or issues they may have. In addition, this will contribute to the development of an effective promotion and engagement plan, which recognises and seeks to address the challenges that are faced by parents.

Childcare Offer

Figure 3 below shows the number of children who took up a place via the 30hr Childcare offer at a Welsh-medium childcare setting.

Figure 3: Childcare Offer WM Place Allocation

Setting	2019	2020	2021
GwdiHw (Welsh Medium)	1	1	1
Helyg Bychan (Welsh Medium)	1	0	0
Pobl Bach (Bilingual)	11	4	4

Flying Start

Blaenau Gwent currently have 11 Flying Start settings across the County Borough,

- 2 are Local Authority run (Cefn Golau, and Twinkle Tots (Garnlydan)
- The former local authority setting Swfrydd Sunflowers is now closed and a tender opportunity for a new full day care provider is being developed to be housed in the new Flying Start Swfrydd Hub (currently under construction). Welsh language providers will be encouraged to bid for the contract.
- 5 are English medium commissioned provisions (Tweenie Tots, Buds to Blossom, Jack & Jills, Mini Me's and Flowering Shrubs)
- 2 are Welsh-medium commissioned provisions (Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw and Helyg Bychan); and
- 1 which is registered as bilingual (Pobl Bach)

Figure 4: Flying Start Provision Overview

Flying Start Childcare Provider – Name and Address	Lower Super Output Area LSOA's	Local Authority or Commissioned setting	Number of childcare places available per AM session	Number of childcare places available per PM session	Total number of childcare places available per/ day
First Friends Attlee Way, Cefn Golau Tredegar NP22 3TE	Tredegar Central & West 1,2 & 3	LA	20	20	40
Pobl Bach Flying Start Sirhowy Hub, Rhoslan, Sirhowy, NP22 4PG	Sirhowy 2 & 4	Commissioned	25	25	50

Tweenie Tots Flying Start Hilltop Hub Brynteg Ebbw Vale NP23 6ND	Ebbw Vale South 1 and Ebbw Vale North 2	Commissioned	28	28	56
Twinkle Tots Flying Start Garnlydan Hub, Commonwealth Road Garnlydan NP23 5ER	Beaufort 2	LA	28	0	28
Buds to Blossoms Flying Start Cwm Hub, Canning Street Ebbw Vale NP23 7RD	Nantyglo 3	Commissioned	26	26	52
Cylch Meithrin Helyg Bychan Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Rising Sun Industrial Estate Blaina Abertillery NP13 3DQ	Nantyglo 3	Commissioned	19	19	38
Flowering Shrubs Blaina ICC High Street Blaina NP13 3BN	Cwmtillery 1 & Nantyglo 3	Commissioned	48	48	134
Mini Me's Roseheyworth Millenium Primary School, Roseheyworth Road, Roseheyworth, Abertillery, NP13 1SR	Cwmtillery 1	Commissioned	20	20	40
Jack and Jill Abertillery Flying Start Hub, Comprehensive School site Alma Street Abertillery NP13 1YL	Abertillery 1	Commissioned	24	24	48
Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw Flying Start Brynithel Hub, Penrhiw Estate, Abertillery NP13 2GZ	Llanhilleth 3	Commissioned	19	19	38

Former Sofydd Sunflowers – currently out to tender Swfrydd Primary School site, Sofrydd Road, Crumlin, Swffryd, Newport, NP11 5DW	Llanhilleth 1	Newly Commissioned	26	26	52
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Figure 4a Flying Start outreach providers some of which will be working towards becoming fully registered Flying Start Providers* via the expansion plans for the programme:

Figure 4a

Flying Start Childcare Provider – Name and Address	Lower Super Output Area LSOA's	Will it be a Local Authority or Commissioned setting	Number of childcare places available per AM session	Number of childcare places available per PM session	Total number of childcare places available per/ day
Eden Nursery * Unit 7, Glandwr Industrial Estate, Aberbeeg, Abertillery NP13 2LN	Llanhilleth 2	Commissioned	21	21	42
Brynmawr Preschool*	Abertillery	Commissioned	tbd	tbd	24
Tiggys Bryn Bach School Site	Tredegarr Central and West 3	Commissioned	tbd	tbd	19
Mrs Tiggywinkles Stone Lodge, Merthyr Road, Tafarnaubach, Tredegarr NP22 3AG	Sirhowy 3	Commissioned	tbd	tbd	19
Little Teddy Playgroup Deighton Primary School site Stockton Way, Tredegarr NP22 3EN	Tredegarr Central and West 4	Commissioned	tbd	tbd	20
Buds to Blossoms Day Nursery Pen-Y-Lan, Beaufort, Ebbw Vale NP23 5JX	Beaufort 3	Commissioned	tbd	tbd	54

Acorns Nursery Rhos y fedwen School site, Rassau, Ebbw Vale NP23 5TA	Rassau 2	Commissioned	tbd	tbd	20
Mrs Puddleducks Day Nursery	Rassau 2	Commissioned	tbd	tbd	60
Little Stars Nursery Strand Annealing Lane Ebbw Vale NP23 6AN	Ebbw Vale South 2	Commissioned	tbd	tbd	63

All English medium settings use incidental Welsh as part of their practice, in order to introduce the use of the Welsh language to all Flying Start children supporting and promoting the benefits of being bilingual throughout application and transition processes.

Mudiad Meithrin

Cymraeg for Kids is a Mudiad Meithrin project which supports prospective and new parents, when opting for Welsh medium child care and education. The Cymraeg for Kids Officer works 4 days a week, which are split between Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen Councils. The local Cymraeg for Kids Officer runs weekly support sessions for parents and baby across the county such as:

- Welsh rhyme time & Sign
- Baby massage and yoga,
- Cuppa & Chat Cymraeg (online)
- Me and my baby sessions for prospective and new parents on the advantages of being bilingual (online)

Figure 5 provides an overview of the groups held in Blaenau Gwent, along with the number of parents who attended them. These groups include: Welsh rhyme time & sign, baby massage and baby yoga (Ebbw Vale, Tredegar, Aberbeeg, Blaina). 2020 onwards saw the development of online groups (including Me and My Baby, Cuppa & Chat Cymraeg, Baby Massage, Welsh rhyme time & Sign).

Figure 5: Group Data Overview

	Number of Groups	Number of Attendees
2018-2019	65	332
2019-2020	124	750
2020-2021	** 214 online	296

The Cymraeg i Blant Officer works closely with local Midwifery and Health Visiting teams, signposting parents to the groups, and maintaining regular contact with them, to provide updates on local opportunities available for new parents. Information is shared about the benefits of early bilingualism, how to access bilingual resources to use at home and online, and along with support to increase parent and carer confidence in using or in learning Welsh, by registering on a Clwb Cwtsh course, or for practise sessions.

Clwb Cwtsh is an eight-week taster programme focusing on speaking Welsh with young children. It's aimed at parents to be, parents/carers and extended family members. You don't need to be able to speak or understand any Welsh to join. This project is managed by Mudiad Meithrin

Clwb Cylch During the pandemic, Mudiad Meithrin launched a Welsh language activity in the home by providing open sessions under the banner of 'Clwb Cylch' (#ClwbCylch) for children of nursery age and their parents via digital platforms. Particular emphasis is placed on children from families where Welsh is not spoken at home.

Mudiad Meithrin's 'Set Up and Succeed' (SAS) programme, seeks to establish 40 new Cylchoedd Meithrin with a Cylch Ti a Fi by 2021 in specific areas of Wales where there isn't a Cylch Meithrin at present. Blaenau Gwent developments include:

- 1 Cylch Meithrin is currently being developed in the Tredegar area, with a Ti a Fi already having been established in the area.
- 1 Day Nursery provides Cylch Meithrin sessions daily with the support of Welsh Language programme Croesi'r Bont – with the aim of introducing Welsh language immersion methodology within Cylchoedd Meithrin and securing linguistic transition from the Cylch to Welsh-medium schools.

Promotional Material

The following literature is available through Mudiad Meithrin to support with information to parents about Welsh medium childcare that addresses frequently asked questions:

- Podcasts 'Baby Steps into Welsh' is a new and exciting podcast series. Presented by Welsh TV Presenter Nia Parry, the podcast provides an opportunity for well-known parents to openly discuss and share their real-life experiences around Welsh-medium education. [Podcast \(meithrin.cymru\)](#)
- Mudiad Meithrin You tube Channel [Mudiad Meithrin - YouTube](#)
- Multi lingual Pamphlet in 8 Languages describing options for childcare
- [taflen_amlieithog_cyflawn_9.9.19.pdf \(meithrin.cymru\)](#)
- [Why choose Welsh-medium education \(meithrin.cymru\)](#)
- [Frequently asked questions and answers \(meithrin.cymru\)](#)

Menter Iaith (BGM) have a dedicated Development Officer who is a member of the Blaenau Gwent WEF and assists in targeting prospective parents. The Officer provides information about the advantages of raising children bilingually and using Welsh in the family home, as well as promoting Welsh-medium education in general, by organising a timetable of family events in strategic geographic areas.

PACEY Cymru work with local authorities and other partners, to promote childminding as a career and support recruitment to the sector. PACEY have now been engaged within the WEF and will work closely with Blaenau Gwent moving forward to support the development of Outcome 1 and 7.

Numbers of Nursery and Reception Pupils & Overall Cohort

Figure 6 details the last 3 years' nursery and reception cohort (PLASC) data, along with the number of allocated Nursery and Reception places in Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. Applications for January and April rising 3's 2022 were live from 1st September 2021.

Figure 6: Nursery and Reception Cohort number, Places Allocated at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg and as a Percentage of the Cohort

	Nursery			Reception		
	Total Cohort	No in Bro Helyg	%	Total Cohort	No in Bro Helyg	%
2019/20	709	34	5%	728	40	5%
2020/21	676	42	6%	710	38	5%
2021/22	749	45	6%	683	42	6%

Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

In September 2023, Blaenau Gwent will open a 210 place Welsh Medium Seedling Primary School on the Chartist Way Site, in the Tredegar/Sirhowy Valley. The school will be developed via a seedling growth model. In its first year, the school will admit up to 24 Nursery, and Reception children.

We aim to secure increased Welsh medium childcare within the northern area of the Ebbw Fawr Valley, along with Tredegar/Sirhowy Valley area, to create increased demand and improved transition into Welsh medium education. Therefore, two additional Welsh Medium Childcare settings are also programmed for implementation from the autumn-term 2023 as follows:

- A 28 place pre-school setting co-located in the same building the new Welsh Primary School in Tredegar, which will also be considered for Flying Start registration; and,
- A Full Day Care setting offering places across its range of services (babies, toddlers, pre-school wraparound, after-school, holiday club). The setting be registered for 58 children, so no more than 58 children would be in at any one time. The provision will be located in the Glyncoed area of Ebbw Vale. The provision is being developed in line with the gaps identified as part of the CSA (2017).

The Council recognises that the number of children initially applying to attend both early-years settings will grow year on year, as the settings become established. Education and Social Services will work closely in order to monitor growth in line with pupil projections, pupil place planning and future feasibility studies aligned to the growth of Welsh medium education. This will be reported annually in line with the review of the 10-year WESP.

Blaenau Gwent Council aim to successfully implement our second Welsh medium primary school, alongside our Welsh medium promotion growth strategy, which will be complemented and enhanced by additional childcare provision. We will continue work closely with our colleagues in the early year's sector, to enhance transition rates between early years childcare and education providers, and statutory education.

In achieving our aims, we will:

- Formally, review and strengthen our Promotion and Engagement Strategy and associated communication action plan, in partnership with the WEF Communications sub-group, along with relevant key health professionals e.g. Health Visitors. In turn, enhancing and securing appropriate levels of resource to develop effective consultation processes, communication and marketing materials. Alongside this, working on a dedicated engagement action plan, with a focus on mapping and securing the involvement of key stakeholders.
- Develop guidance, tools and resources, along with an awareness raising programme for key partners to complement the aforementioned strategy. The aim of which, will be to support families to make informed early years and education decisions, whilst promoting the benefits of being bilingual, dispelling myths and addressing parent/carer concerns at an early stage.
- Support parents to access Welsh language skills and tools, by working closely in partnership with schools, adult education, further education and training providers. Also, raising awareness of and promoting existing resources for parents. This includes RhAG's parent engagement website, which is aimed at offering both support and information: www.welsh4parents.cymru.
- In partnership with the early year's sector, continue to review data and provision to plan and inform our Welsh medium growth strategy. The Council will work towards ensuring accessible Welsh medium childcare options are available throughout the borough, including Flying Start. The Council will use the 2022 CSA data in order to inform and direct development, along with subsequent reviews.
- Ensure effective project management of the of both childcare and school developments, to ensure that they are delivered on programme and profile, whilst employing the Promotion and Engagement Strategy to support increased uptake of Welsh medium pupil places.
- Develop an Immersion Strategy and provision for latecomers, whilst building in the capacity for this provision to develop and grow. Establish a best practice model to ensure consistency of application, improving opportunities for transition, by working in partnership with schools and councils throughout the South East Wales region.
- Ensure effective development and review of the Curriculum for Wales and associated pedagogy throughout the Welsh medium early years and education sectors. Contributing to effective pupil transition, engagement and outcomes at each stage of the learner journey.
- Undertake a feasibility study in line with the potential for increased capacity within the primary sector between 2027 and 2028, using the seedling growth model adopted by Blaenau Gwent to deliver on this strand of work. The feasibility study will be carried out by a dedicated project group and informed by key data sets, research and assessments including:
 - the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
 - a parent/carer demand survey
 - a catchment area review, and subsequent review of the Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy (the latter is subject to annual review)
 - school admission and pupil projection data
 - immersion provision mapping
 - secondary demand and planning data
 - a provision access audits (which will also take account of the distance from home to school)

A detailed options appraisal including site assessments, will be undertaken by Education in partnership with Planning, Community Services, Estates and Schools, and developed for consideration via the Council's political processes in 2028/29. The aim of this piece of work, will be to assess options in increasing the capacity beyond the target of 75, working towards the higher range target of 105.

- Work closely with the Health sector in order to inform the monitoring process aligned to achieving this outcome.
- Working closely with key partners to secure effective workforce development planning, in line with the recruitment of teaching and other relevant school staff to facilitate increased provision.

Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?

At the end of the 10-year plan, Blaenau Gwent aim to ensure that 100% of children accessing Welsh medium early years childcare and education, transition into statutory Welsh medium education.

We will successfully implement 2 additional childcare settings, along with our second Welsh Medium Primary School, whilst also growing the capacity at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.

The Council will have undertaken a feasibility study in line with the increased demand realised as a result of effective implementation of our Promotion and Engagement Strategy; informing our plan for further increased capacity within the childcare and primary sectors between 2028 and 2032.

Key Data 2022

The following data has been calculated based on achieving admitting pupils up to the maximum capacity at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg (51 full-time nursery places), the new 210 Place Seedling School (30 full-time nursery places). The percentages are calculated on the cohort of the 728 pupils.

Numbers and % of 3-year olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh

2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
45	6%	69	10%	71	10%	73	10%	81	11%
2027 - 2028		2028 - 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2032	
81	11%	81	11%	81	11%	81	11%	81	11%

Outcome 2

More reception class children/ five year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Where are we now?

There is robust pupil population planning, management and monitoring processes in place via the Council, which fall within the remit of the Education Transformation team. Pupil projections are undertaken twice annually taking account of live birth data, 3-year trend data, housing developments, current pupil numbers on roll, along with inward and outward migration. Figure are projected for a 5-year period with projection accuracy at 98% for primary and 100% for secondary.

Current pupil projection data demonstrates there is a need for the Council to increase the number of places available at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.

The capacity and associated admission number within the school was previously decreased, in order to address surplus places prior to the commencement, and during the initial phase of the 2017-20 WESP. Since this time, pupil numbers have begun to increase. The January 2021 pupil projections highlight an upward trend in terms of pupil numbers at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg between 2022 and 2025, resulting in sufficiency issues, with more pupils than places available.

There is a projected deficit of between -2 to -4 places, which is likely to increase based upon trend data, and would mean that unless the capacity is increased, the Council will be unable to meet the increased demand.

School capacity is subject to annual review as per the Welsh Government Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). School capacities are determined in line with number of pupils on roll and room usage, with the aim of reducing surplus places, and securing sustainable growth as required in line with pupil projections/demand. The Council aim to sustain a healthy surplus in order to aid the latter. Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg capacity has been adapted annually in order to reduce the surplus noted in recent years, however, this has been managed via a self-help approach. This approach has supported the school to grow in line with demand. The number of pupils projected for Welsh medium primary education within Blaenau Gwent is increasing, which supports the need for a second primary provision, along with the reconfiguration of the teaching and learning environment at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.

Figure 7 below, provides an overview of the overall Reception cohort for Blaenau Gwent, along with available reception places, uptake and available capacity to admit additional pupils, between 2017 and 2021.

Figure 7: Welsh Reception Cohort Data

	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
Cohort of Reception pupils	740		790		780		731		718	
Reception Places available in Welsh-medium	51	7%	36	5%	34	4%	30	4%	30	4%
Reception Places Filled in Welsh - medium provision/ % of total cohort	24	2%	25	3%	30	4%	39	5%	36	5%
Reception places capacity available in Welsh -Medium/ %	27	4%	11	1%	4	1%	-9	-1%	-6	-1%

In September 2023, the Council will open a second Welsh Medium Primary School in the Tredegar/Sirhowy Valley, which will be developed via a seedling growth model. The new school will address the latent demand identified within the Tredegar/Sirhowy Valley. As part of the Immersion Project being funded by Welsh Government, the Council are scoping the development of a satellite provision at the new school, in order to initiate immersion in line with demand upon opening of the provision in 2023. Further plans for which will be finalised by the start of the new financial year, upon conclusion of the initial phase of the project. The new school will also play a key role in increasing Welsh medium education places in line with the Blaenau Gwent target of increasing the number of Year 1 pupil's education via the medium of Welsh by 6%.

In-year transfers request for a place at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg over the last 3 years, post commencement of education in English medium education are as follows:

- 2018/19 – 10 pupils (6 Year 1, 1 Year 2, 1 Year 3 1 Year 4, and 1 Year 6 pupil)
- 2019/20 – 9 pupils (2 Nursery, 2 Year 1, 3 Year 2, 1 Year 5 and 1 Year 6 pupil)
- 2020/21 – 6 pupils (3 Nursery, 1 Reception, 1 Year 2 and 1 Year 5 pupil)

These pupils have been supported by existing staff, with limited capacity to fully address their second language Welsh needs in an immersive way, whilst ensuring that that these pupils are in a position to fully integrate with their already immersed peers.

Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

The Council has used current school capacity data along with projected pupil numbers, in order to model the required incremental increase in capacity required at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. This will be carried out in line with the development of the Promotion and Engagement Strategy which will target prospective parents. The growth at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, will enable the Council to meet increased demand and reach the overarching target for Year 1 pupils. The Council and school undertake annual capacity reviews, during which configuration and facilities management implications are addressed, in order to aid growth and development. This process is informed by school admissions, projection and surplus/sufficiency action planning. The outcomes of these assessments are used to inform transition programmes, promotion and engagement strategies with the families of prospective pupils.

In addition, modelling has also been undertaken in respect of the growth plan from the 210 place Primary School scheduled to open in Tredegar in 2023. Please refer to figure 8 below, which details the planned growth. The capacity will be increased annually in line with the Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education, supporting increased access via the admissions process, and in consideration of pupil projections and demand. The Council will work with the school in order to reconfigure the teaching and learning environment accordingly, addressing any maintenance and minor works issues to support this process.

Figure 8: School Capacities and Projected Numbers

Academic Years	Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	New Tredegar School	Projected No. of Reception places available
2021/22	30	0	30
2022/23	30	0	30
2023/24	34	24	58
2024/25	36	24	60
2025/26	40	26	66
2026/27	44	28	72

The Council aim to secure maximum growth and capacity within the two primary provisions, by aligning the growth plan to the Promotion and Engagement Strategy. The Council aim to develop a single phase immersion unit at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, with capacity to grow into a split phase immersion provision in line with potential future demand. In order to inform the development of this provision, we will seek to secure and use Welsh Government immersion funding to procure a qualified education professional to:

- scope out and develop immersion resources i.e. age specific packages and for Years 2 - 6;
- develop and implement a staff training programme to embed the principles and practices and effectively use resources to facilitate immersion provision;
- plan the development of a short-term transitional pilot programme using existing facilities, to run between 2022 and 2025;
- scope a satellite provision for implementation at the new Welsh medium Primary School in Tredegar;
- secure education resources to support the delivery of teaching and learning in an immersive way; and,
- support the development of a schedule of accommodation to inform capital project development.

We will ensure that this professional works closely with neighbouring authorities in order to compare models for immersion provision, identify and address any gaps, whilst also gauging and developing best practice. In addition, this development will be firmly aligned to and inform the Promotion and Engagement Strategy.

Once developed, the resources would be used in order to support WM pupils at the school, whose language acquisition has been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Working with the Headteacher and ALNCo at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg in order to assess the impact of the pandemic, we have established that, there are groups in each class from Year 2 - Year 6, who would benefit from the type of immersive language intervention. The

resource packs and interventions would be piloted with these groups in the first instance. These pupils would realise immediate benefits as a result of the immersion project.

A formal pilot will then take place in line with in-year transfer demand from September 2021, until the dedicated immersion unit has been constructed, which is anticipated by September 2025. The latter will ensure that the school are able to accommodate and promote immersion alongside the benefits of being bi-lingual. The Local Authority are committed to implementation of both the pilot project and future development of immersion provision. As such a project group has been established to plan and develop this provision, working on the development of both capital and revenue funding strategies, in securing sustainability.

In achieving our aims, we will:

- Cymraeg 2050 advocates that full Welsh language immersion is a key factor associated with successful growth of the Welsh language, meaning predominantly Welsh-medium and/or Welsh-medium settings are the most reliable way of creating language growth where the skills and confidence to use Welsh is used by pupils in their daily lives. Therefore, through consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, we will seek to develop more linguistic choice for pupils throughout the school estate.
- Secure further development of Welsh language progression by working with the EAS to promote and develop Ysgolion Cymraeg Campus Schools. Cymraeg Campus is a Language Charter that is used to promote the use of the Welsh language throughout the school, across the curriculum and in all areas of school life. Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg have established a 'Cryw Cymraeg', who are a pupil voice set-up to encourage and promote the Welsh language both inside and outside the classroom, will we work with this group in developing our Promotion and Engagement Strategy with a view to increasing pupil voice and engagement.
- Ensure the successful implementation and subsequent growth of the new 210 place welsh-medium seedling primary school in the Tredegar/Sirhowy area.
- Review the catchment areas and home to school transport requirements in order to improve Welsh medium school organisation, access and associated policy development.
- Blaenau Gwent has excellent collaborative working arrangements with the South East Wales Region (Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Newport), as well as Merthyr Tydfil/Powys. Council officers are working with their regional counter parts to develop secondary provision within the Heads of the Valleys region in line with the 21st Century School Band C Programme. This development will secure enhanced and sustainable progression opportunities for Welsh medium learners, and an increasing the capacity of the existing continuum of learning.
- Undertake a feasibility study in line with the potential for increased capacity within the primary sector between 2027 and 2032, using the seedling growth model adopted by Blaenau Gwent to deliver against the target of 75 Year 1 pupils education via the medium of Welsh by 2032. A project group will be established in order to undertake the feasibility study which will take the following form:
 - Researching and collating demand and projection data – including trends, transfers, transition and housing development data etc. whilst ensuring alignment with the growth and development of Welsh medium childcare provision;

- Mapping growth options to potential locations and assessing the costs and benefits of each option;
- Assessing the impact upon existing provision and the school estate both locally and regionally; and,
- Scoping options to increase provision and establishing a vision for future growth, which can be developed and monitored accordingly.
- The Council's priority will be the growth of Welsh medium education settings. However, over the course of the next 5 years we will work closely with the Education Achievement Service, school leaders and other key partners – including neighbouring authorities; to map existing and identify opportunities for enhancement of Welsh medium provision in English medium settings. We will also ensure to link this piece of work to workforce development plans. In order to do so, a sub-group of the WEF will be developed to plan and develop the provision mapping exercise, and collate outcomes. In turn, this will allow the Council to identify opportunities for application of the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Categorisation Guidance (with particular reference to Categories 2 and 3), throughout the school estate. The ultimate aim of this work being to increase opportunities for the delivery of Welsh medium education, whilst also improving the standard of teaching and learning in this respect, seeking to enhance and improve the journey of local and regional education settings journey on the language continuum. This will enable target setting to build capacity and work with other LA's.
- Develop a Blaenau Gwent Welsh Education Policy, to embed the WESP and associated developments within wider education planning and practice, also securing the required level of resource and investment to deliver the priorities detailed within the WESP (Please refer to page 6 for more information).
- Develop a delivery plan aligned to the WESP, for which progress monitored on a termly basis by the WEF, in order to effectively assess progress against our targets for each outcome. Outcome leads will be agreed, along with priority actions for each year, all of which will be subject to annual review. A dedicated action planning sub-group will be developed and meet on a bi-monthly basis, in order to review progress against the action plan and prepare quarterly reports/updates for the WEF. All actions will be agreed in a dedicated workshop with the WEF, and reviewed annually in the same way.
- Ensure the planning and review of Welsh medium education with other relevant Council policies and strategies, including but not limited to:
 - BG School Organisation Policy – ensuring that the right schools are the right size, in the right place at the right time;
 - BG Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy – scoping additional capacity to support improved access to Welsh medium education;
 - BG Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education (along with associated processes) – ensuring that the annual capacity review accounts for growth and demand, which is reflected within the admission number and associated policy review process. In addition, we will continue to work with colleagues throughout the region to secure the growth of secondary provision;
 - BG Local Development Plan – ensuring continued effective planning and alignment with pupil place management; enabling the Council to maintain, and where possible, improve the current level of projection accuracy (98%) whilst also contributing development of the Promotion and Engagement

Strategy. Finally, we will continue to work with Planning and other key stakeholders, to secure further opportunities for the development of Welsh Medium provision; and,

- o BG Medium Term Financial Strategy – ensuring that resource allocation is appropriate in line with the targets and action plan.

Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?

The Council plan to secure a continuum of accessible Welsh medium education provision, along with opportunities for improved Welsh language acquisition and use throughout the school estate.

Figure 9: Projected Reception Capacity (2028 – 2031)

Academic Year	Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	New WM Seedling Primary School	Projected Reception Place Availability
2028/29	51	30	81
2029/30	51	30	81
2030/31	51	30	81
2031/32	51	30	81

Key Data

Figure 10: Projected Pupil Numbers Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg

PROJECTED PUPIL NUMBERS:		Rec	Y1	Y2	Y 3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Totals
January 2022		30	33	38	26	26	22	38	213
January 2023		30	30	33	38	26	26	22	205
January 2024	241 cap	34	30	30	33	38	26	26	217
January 2025	250 cap	36	34	30	30	33	38	26	227
January 2026	280 cap	40	36	34	30	30	33	38	241
January 2027	310 cap	44	40	36	34	30	30	33	247
January 2028	330 cap	47	44	40	36	34	30	30	261
January 2029	360 cap	51	47	44	40	36	34	30	282

Figure 11: Seedling Primary School (Tredegar) Opening Sept 2023

PROJECTED PUPIL NUMBERS:		Rec	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Totals
January 2024	210 cap	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	24
January 2025	210 cap	24	24	0	0	0	0	0	48
January 2026	210 cap	26	24	24	0	0	0	0	74
January 2027	210 cap	28	26	24	24	0	0	0	102
January 2028	210 cap	30	28	26	24	24	0	0	132
January 2029	210 cap	30	30	28	26	24	24	0	162

Numbers and % of 5-year olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh

2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
30	4%	58	8%	60	8%	66	9%	74	10%
2027 - 2028		2028 - 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2032	
77	11%	81	11%	81	11%	81	11%	81	11%

Outcome 3

More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

Where are we now?

Welsh as a First Language

There is presently a regional partnership agreement in place, along with associated pupil place planning processes, whereby the Welsh medium primary school in Blaenau Gwent forms part of the Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw cluster.

Figure 12 below details the number and percentage of pupils in the Year 6 cohort, along with the number of Year 6 pupils in Blaenau Gwent and transition rate for the last 3 academic sessions.

Figure 12: Transition Rates – Year 6 pupils

	Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw			
	Total Cohort	No.'s in to Gwynllyw	%	Transition Rate
2019/20	788	37	5%	100%
2020/21	799	22	3%	100%
2021/22	790	31	4%	100%

Whilst Year 6 pupil numbers remain low in comparison to other feeder schools, Blaenau Gwent’s transition rate between primary and secondary education is excellent, with 100% of pupils transferring from KS2 to KS3 over the last 3 years.

The pandemic did not negatively affect transition rates. However, staff at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg have noted that there has been a negative impact upon oracy standards, acquisition and use of the Welsh language among pupils. It has been identified that there are approximately 40-50 pupils in need of additional immersive intervention.

Transition activities between 2020 and 2021 were conducted virtually. Blaenau Gwent Youth Service run a one-day fun day for year 6 pupils at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, which supports Year 6 pupils and focuses on transition. Figure 13 below, provides the number and percentage of pupils in Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg assessed through the medium of Welsh between 2017/18 and 2020/21 as a total and percentage of all KS2 pupils.

Figure 13: Number and % of Pupils Assessed via the Medium of Welsh

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
No of WM 187 (out of 4,567) = 4%	No of WM 182 (out of 3,923) = 5%	No of WM 169 (out of 4,636) = 4%	No of WM 184 (out of 4,566) = 4%

Figure 14 below, presents the number and percentage of Year 1 - 6 pupils attending Welsh-medium and English-medium schools (inclusive of faith and special school provision) in based on the September 2020 PLASC.

Figure 14: Number and % of Pupils in Welsh and English Medium schools

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6	
	No	%										
Welsh Medium	43	6	23	3	26	3	23	3	38	5	31	4
English Medium	694	94	747	97	758	97	708	97	723	95	752	96

The EAS support cluster literacy standards. From September 2021 onwards, there will be more emphasis on the voice oracy strategy, with collaborative practices in line with the Curriculum for Wales and cross progression phases. All schools are revisiting and planning their journey, as expectations have been raised around linguistic skills.

The EAS has an Early Years Lead and appointed a Welsh speaker to the team to support its delivery to Welsh-medium provision. Professional learning for language immersion approaches is provided by the Welsh team who are research informed in language acquisition, and are supporting and facilitating networking across lead schools for language immersion to develop approaches. There is transfer of language teaching pedagogy across specialism within the EAS, and across the Welsh language continuum with Welsh curriculum partners actively sharing approaches to language teaching with both Welsh and English medium schools. The team are providing support for the Council with the emerging immersion project referenced in Outcome 2. This project is currently under development, with a dedicated specialist having been recruited to oversee the implementation process. The Immersion Project will target pupils in Years 2-6, supporting increased and continued opportunities for engagement within Welsh Medium education.

The Early Years Childcare and Play team offer opportunities for upskilling of the workforce and also promotes courses and resources available through Camau. They have a transition policy and processes in place for children moving from pre-school to Foundation Phase Nursery provision in Blaenau Gwent schools. There is good engagement with transition meetings facilitated for settings and schools, to share documentation and information about children transitioning from one phase to the other. The offer is also available to childminders re: the transition process, but with limited success due to the timings of the meetings. Childminders are encouraged as good practice, to facilitate transition and share information with the schools which the children are planning to attend. This process is subject to continued review in order to incorporate learning into future practice.

Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Torfaen County Borough Council, currently have an arrangement, whereby places have been secured for Blaenau Gwent learners at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. Pupil projections for the next ten years indicate that the arrangements we have in place with Torfaen will be sufficient to meet demand until the turn of the decade (2030), when additional provision will be required. Pupil projections and associated demand is reviewed twice annually in order to inform place planning and allocation.

Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Powys have agreed to work collaboratively to deliver a new secondary provision in Band C of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. Directors of Education have commissioned the regional Planning School Places Group to review the demand for the school and this will lead to a strategic outline plan being concluded in 2024, with a progression into the full business planning process aligned to the Welsh Government programme. We will aim to open in 2028/29 recognising the potential pressures within existing settings.

Transition rates are likely to increase from September 2030, when the first cohort of Year 6 pupils from the second primary school will transition from KS2 to KS3. We aim to maintain the high transition rate as detailed within figure 15 below.

Figure 15: % of Welsh learners moving from KS2 to KS3

	Y6 cohort	Numbers of Learners Transitioning from KS2 to KS3	% of learners	Target transition rate
September 2022	764	38	5%	100%
September 2023	731	22	3%	100%
September 2024	789	26	3%	100%
September 2025	778	26	3%	100%
September 2026	728	38	5%	100%
September 2027	718	33	5%	100%
September 2028	683	30	4%	100%
September 2029	(728)	30	4%	100%
September 2030	(728)	54**	7%	100%
September 2031	(728)	58	8%	100%
September 2032	(728)	60	8%	100%

** 1st cohort from Tredegar to go into secondary provision

The increase in the availability of Welsh medium places within the primary sector, will inevitably impact upon the number of Welsh-medium places required in the secondary sector. In addition, Torfaen Council's school reorganisation proposal to extend provision on the current Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw site to establish a 3-18 Welsh-medium School, will likely impact upon the number of places available for Blaenau Gwent learners from 2029/30 onwards. The two Councils will continue to work closely together to plan pupil place allocation for the first 5-10 years of this plan.

In achieving our aims, we will:

- Continue to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities including Monmouthshire, Powys and Merthyr Tydfil, in order to secure a regional secondary school within the Heads of the Valleys region to create a sustainable a continuum of learning for all pupils. Plans are currently in development, and will be a key priority for delivery in line with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band C Programme. Pupils places for Blaenau Gwent have been secured at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw until the turn of the decade. Annual planning and monitoring processes are in place between Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Council's in order to monitor places in line with demand. BG's pupil projections indicate that we will have sufficient places in the interim. In addition, Blaenau Gwent Council facilitates the Regional Planning of School Places and Demand Group for Welsh Medium Education. This group are working on a plan aligned to the regional secondary provision, and will consider all transition planning requirements in line with the development of the new school, mapping and provisioning accordingly.
- Work with the EAS to map current education provision according to the Welsh language teaching and learning continuum, in line with the Welsh Government guidance 'Schools categories according to Welsh-medium provision'. Using baseline data from the PLASC surveys, a mapping exercise will be developed in 2022, to determine where and how schools are placed in line with the guidance. Further work will be undertaken to determine the opportunities for school categorisation moving forward.
- The Council will support schools in order for them to meet the relevant and expected educational/ linguistic outcomes. Also, identifying and working with schools who wish to consider re-categorisation in line with the Cymraeg Campus network.
- Work with English-medium schools to support linguistic developments and skills of school staff to transition from English-medium to Welsh-medium or Bilingual settings. Offering them further choice in the future.
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg would like to continue to support transition from primary to secondary, especially around Mathematics and Science ensuring early engagement at Year 5 are planned.
- Continue to work in partnership with schools and Youth Service to provide support around transition and emotional wellbeing.
- Monitor and increase linguistic progression in partnership with Torfaen County Borough Council and Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw.
- Consult with relevant stakeholders in order to plan the linguistic development and progression in K2 and K3, whilst reviewing the rates of progression for Blaenau Gwent learners.
- Provide support for pupils who have presented with issues across all age groups – especially those transitioning from primary to secondary.

- Undertake a mapping exercise on the Curriculum for Wales progression data.
- Review school capacity and demand in line with admission and in-year transfer requests.
- Continue to work in partnership with the Early Years Childcare and Play team to provide support around transition and emotional wellbeing for pre-school Children.

Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten-year Plan?

The Council plan work with neighbouring authorities to secure a regional secondary school solution within the Head of the Valleys area by 2028/29 (as detailed above), in order to create a sustainable continuum of provision for Welsh medium learners.

We will work to sustain the current transition rate of 100%, whilst ensuring that relevant policy reviews continue to support and improves access to Welsh medium education.

Key Data

Figure 16: Transition to Secondary School

	Y6 pupils will transition to Ysgol Gwynllyw Torfaen				Secondary Places Required from 2026 onwards						
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg Year 6 Pupil Places	38	22	26	26	38	33	30	30	30	34	36
New WM Primary School Year 6 Pupil Places	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	24	24
Totals:	38	22	26	26	38	33	30	30	54	58	60

Numbers and % of learners continuing to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
38	100%	22	100%	26	100%	26	100%	38	100%
2027 - 2028		2028 - 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2032	
33	100%	30	100%	30	100%	54	100%	58	100%

Outcome 4

More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

Where are we now?

Pupils attending Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg in Blaenau Gwent, receive their secondary education at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen. Figure 17 below, highlights the numbers of Blaenau Gwent learners in each year group at the aforementioned secondary school during the 2020/21 academic session.

Figure 17: Numbers on roll at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw 2020/21

Year Group	Numbers on roll							
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw Torfaen	136	144	132	112	114	48	61	8
Blaenau Gwent Learner no.'s at YGG	18	31	29	32	18	7	9	1

Number and percentages of pupils studying the first language specification in 2020/21

- KS4 – In the Summer of 2020, the number of Blaenau Gwent learners studying for a **First** language GCSE qualification at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw was 19.
- KS5 - In the Summer of 2020, the number of Blaenau Gwent learners studying for an A Level subject (who had previously studied Welsh as a first Language) at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw was 7 pupils in Year 13, and 2 pupils in Year 14.

Number and percentages of pupils studying the second language specification in 2020/21

- KS3 – GCSE Welsh (second language) is offered within all English-medium secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent.
- KS4 – In the Summer of 2020 (the 2019/20 academic session), the number of Blaenau Gwent learners studying for a **Second** language GCSE in Year 11 was (522 Pupils) 84.6% of the cohort.

Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw 3-16 School Options

Key Stage 4 - Pupils study all subjects through the medium of Welsh (with the exception of English). The vast majority will study either 10 or 12 subjects according to ability. This equates to either 90% (10 subjects) or 92% (12 subjects). The curriculum is comprised of 25 subjects as follows:

Core subjects include: Welsh Language, Welsh Literature, English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Numeracy, Science (suite of qualifications) and Welsh Baccalaureate is compulsory.

Figure 18 Pupil Options (pupils can choose 4 option choices from the following):

(GCSE and Vocational Qualifications)				
GCSE	Food and Nutrition	Health, Social and Child Care	Drama	Spanish
	Geography	Religious Studies	Music	Sociology
	Physical Education	ICT	Art	History
	Design Technology	Computer Science	Digital Technology	Travel and Tourism
Vocational	Business	BTEC Sweet Level 2	Construction	

Key Stage 5 – 30 subjects are offered at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw as shown in Figure 19 below. The vast majority study 3 A Levels or Level 3 Qualifications, and the Welsh Baccalaureate is compulsory. A minority of pupils will opt for 4 A Levels and the Welsh Baccalaureate. On the whole 100% of their curriculum is delivered through the medium of Welsh (with the exception of those who study English). In those cases, 75% of their curriculum is taught through Welsh and 80% for those studying 4 A Levels and Welsh Baccalaureate.

Figure 19 The curriculum offer is as follows:

Subject Choices						
Art	Biology	Business	Chemistry	Childcare	Computer Science	Criminology
Design and Technology	Drama	Economics	English	Further Mathematics	Geography	Health and Social Care
History	Hospitality	Information Technology	Mathematics	Media Studies	Medical Science	Music
Music Technology	Physical Education	Physics	Politics	Psychology	Religious Studies	Sociology
		Spanish	Travel and Tourism	Welsh		

Students either study at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw or Coleg Gwent at KS5. Blaenau Gwent secondary schools do not have sixth form provision. Figure 20 below provides an overview of second and first language Welsh learners in KS4 and KS5.

Figure 20: Number of Learners Studying Welsh

	GCSE Welsh First Language** in Ysgol Gwynllyw Torfaen	GCSE Welsh Second Language in Blaenau Gwent	AS/A-Level Welsh as a First Language ** in Ysgol Gwynllyw Torfaen	Coleg Gwent Provision
2020/21	228 learners	478 learners	116 learners (17 of which are BG)	10 learners (5 of which are BG)

Welsh as a Second Language in Blaenau Gwent

Figure 21 below, provides a comparative overview of learners (including as a percentage of the cohort) who took Welsh as a second language (sourced from the WJEC results summary and candidate report data). Numbers have fluctuated over the last 5 years, with 2021 being the lowest in terms of the number of learners undertaking Welsh as second Language; however, the percentages remain relatively stable over the 5-year analysis.

Figure 21: Welsh as Second Language- Learner Data

Academic Year end	Cohort	Welsh as a Second Language	% of Cohort
2017	607	503	83%
2018	586	499	85%
2019	532	479	90%
2020	617	522	85%
2021	559	478	86%

Welsh as a first Language for Blaenau Gwent Learners

Figure 17 (on page 28) showed number of Blaenau Gwent learners attending Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw based on 2020/21 numbers on roll. Blaenau Gwent Council aim to ensure that between 60 – 80% of this cohort Year 9, 10 and 11 continue their education through Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw 6th Form. Please refer to Figure 21a below.

	Numbers on Roll	Actual Numbers and % retention rate	Actual Numbers and % retention rate
Year 11	18	10 (60%)	14 (80%)
Year 10	32	19 (60%)	25 (80%)
Year 9	29	17 (60%)	23 (80%)

The Council will continue to work closely with Torfaen County Borough Council, undertaking annual planning and review, in order to establish clear targets and monitor accordingly going forward.

The Urdd and the Youth Service seek to offer opportunities for learners to use Welsh both inside and outside of their school/college setting. The Youth Service promote an accredited Welsh Culture Unit.

Number and Percentage of Learners at Coleg Gwent

Coleg Gwent language of learning and assessment using the following categories as per the Lifelong Learning Wales Record:

- B3 = a small amount of Welsh medium Learning
- B2 = a significant amount of Welsh medium Learning
- B1 = learning completed in a bilingual context
- C1 = learning completed in a Welsh medium context

There has been a significant decline in the number of learners who wish to undertake A Levels via the medium of Welsh over the last few years, this is a regional trend at present.

Coleg Gwent currently has under 10 learners studying their A Levels via the medium of Welsh.

Coleg Gwent have had some success in recent years in increasing the number of learners who fall into the B1 and B2 categories, in particular. However, the numbers are still relatively low and the college is ambitious in its vision to increase these numbers over the next 10 years. The latest data (number of learners in 2020-2021) is as follows:

Figure 22: number of Welsh learners KS5

B3: A small amount of Welsh-medium learning;	B2: A significant amount of Welsh-medium learning	B1: Learning completed in a bilingual context	C1: Learning completed in a Welsh-medium context
276	93	144	0

More subjects/courses have included sections to promote learning via the medium of Welsh. Currently, Coleg Gwent don't offer fully Welsh medium courses. However, childcare, health and social care, public services, engineering, land based and music are offered partly in Welsh. This will be extended in the following academic year. There are clear interdependencies between the success of the Coleg Gwent vision, and securing an appropriately qualified workforce and staffing levels to deliver the curriculum via the medium of Welsh.

A significant number of learners who reside in Blaenau Gwent study on a campus in neighbouring Local Authorities and the opposite is also the case. Coleg Gwent do not have the same provision on all campuses, therefore, obtaining specific targets would be very difficult and would not be meaningful. However, there is an expectation that all campuses to contribute towards the Coleg's target for all subject areas.

Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

Therefore, the Council plan to increase the capacity and uptake within the primary sector, whilst ensuring that transition from KS2 to KS3 remains at 100%. This in turn will increase the number of learners studying for assessed qualifications in Welsh and via the medium of Welsh.

In achieving our aims, we will:

- Provide support to English-medium secondary schools in line with the bilingual learner journey, to ensure Welsh language delivery is of the highest possible standard in English medium schools. The EAS provides support for schools and clusters to consider, plan for, and develop progression in language skills across phases. The EAS provides specialist support from Welsh in Education Advisors. It facilitates school to school working, develops of sabbatical champions in their roles, and works with cluster strategic leads for Welsh to provide training share exemplification materials and supports planning against the progression steps and descriptions for learning across the age range and in line Curriculum for Wales. For example, progression steps 1-5 for Welsh in English medium schools. <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/languages-literacy-and-communication/descriptions-of-learning/> The EAS also supports schools to

implement and quality assure Cymraeg Campus Bronze/Silver/Gold targets and outcomes;

- Work with Coleg Gwent and English-medium schools to promote and increase the uptake of A Level Welsh, this can be achieved by working together as a Council, EAS and School to consider an effective provision and pathway to A Levels. Coleg Gwent can support the progression of English medium pupils from schools to A Level Welsh, positively promoting and recruiting students for Welsh as an A Level;
- Work with the EAS to provide training and workforce development opportunities for teaching staff, enhancing both their skills and delivery;
- Work closely with Torfaen County Borough Council, to provide support and ensure that the Welsh medium secondary school accessed by Blaenau Gwent pupils, is fully compliant with the new Curriculum for Wales;
- Ensure that English medium secondary schools comply with the regulatory and curriculum based requirements in line with the delivery of Welsh as a second language;
- Work with the EAS and schools in order to assess and implement required changes and recommendation in line with the Qualifications Wales consultation;
- Create stronger partnerships with English-medium secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent and Coleg Gwent, ensuring effective collaboration with Heads of Departments in identifying learners to continue their Welsh second language journey, whilst also promoting A Level Welsh;
- Review and further develop 'Being Bilingual' marketing and communication materials and resources, in order to inform transitional options and engagement with pupils, parents and carers;
- Work cross border to encourage and elicit demand for Welsh-medium primary and secondary education, whilst ensuring that the continuum of learning for pupils is clearly mapped out understood by pupils, parents and carers.
- Ensure that for Post 16 learning, the EAS, Coleg Gwent, Careers Wales and Coleg Cymraeg are fully engaged in securing and enhancing career progression through the medium of Welsh;
- Following the steer from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Coleg Gwent will continue to focus on embedding full bilingual units into the main qualifications in priority bilingual curriculum areas. In the first 5 years, the focus will be on childcare, health and social care and public services. The College will employ new staff (or upskill existing staff) to deliver bilingual units in these three curriculum areas. This will contribute to achieving the following Coleg Gwent targets:

Figure 23: Coleg Gwent 5-year Targets

B3: A small amount of Welsh-medium learning;	B2: A significant amount of Welsh-medium learning	B1: Learning completed in a bilingual context	C1: Learning completed in a Welsh-medium context
2000*	400	600	***

***The college will develop a digital package that will enable most full-time vocational learners to achieve at least B3**

***** Coleg Gwent will focus on embedding Welsh and bilingual units into main programmes as opposed to delivering fully Welsh medium courses.**

Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?

It is expected that at the end of this 10-year plan, there will be more Blaenau Gwent learners studying through the medium of Welsh in a Welsh-medium secondary setting.

Through the existing partnership and collaboration with Monmouthshire, Powys and Merthyr Tydfil, a secondary school will be developed in the Heads of the Valley's region, increasing both Welsh medium secondary options and provision for Blaenau Gwent learners.

We will see an increase in the uptake of learners studying Welsh as a second language in English-medium secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent. In addition, the percentage of qualifications studied through the medium of Welsh will also increase.

Via the development of an effective Promotion and Engagement strategy, we will seek to:

- Alleviate any concerns that parents and carers have in relation to their child/children attending Welsh-medium education settings;
- Dispel myths and ensure that there is clear and concise information available for pupils, parents and carers on their education options and the benefits of being bilingual;
- Develop parent, carer and learner confidence in the linguistic journey; and,
- Ensure that learners, parents and carers are fully informed as to the progression and career routes available for Welsh learners/speakers.

The College will continue to develop bilingual modules across all remaining priority areas (7 curriculum areas in total). This will include developing resources in addition to recruiting skilled staff.

Coleg Gwent have established 10-year targets as per figure 24 which the Council are committed to supporting.

Figure 24: targets for bilingual delivery

B3: A small amount of Welsh-medium learning;	B2: A significant amount of Welsh-medium learning	B1: Learning completed in a bilingual context	C1: Learning completed in a Welsh-medium context
3000	500	1000	***

***** The college will focus on embedding Welsh and bilingual units into main programmes as opposed to delivering fully Welsh medium courses, unless a new opportunity arises. This will be evaluated on an annual basis.**

Key Data

The targets below for KS3 learners have been based on Blaenau Gwent’s transition rates from Y6 – Y7 (PLASC Jan 2021).

Figure 25: cohort and transition numbers

	Overall cohort Year 6 Learners	Numbers of Welsh Learners Transitioning from KS2 to KS3	% of learners
September 2022	764	38	5%
September 2023	731	22	3%
September 2024	789	26	3%
September 2025	778	26	3%
September 2026	728	38	5%
September 2027	718	33	5%
September 2028	683	30	4%
September 2029	(728)	30	4%
September 2030	(728)	54**	7%
September 2031	(728)	58	8%
September 2032	(728)	60	8%

** 1st cohort from Tredegar to go into secondary Welsh Medium provision

Figure 26: Projected number of year 11 learners studying for assessed qualifications in Welsh as a subject (GCSE)

Year 11	2032/33	2031/32	2030/31	2029/30	2028/29	2027/28	2026/27	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Total Cohort Size	627	663	674	736	744	685	706	743	646	682	568
Adjusted Cohort (85.5%) Entries	536	567	576	629	636	586	604	635	552	583	486

Numbers and % of learners studying for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
38	5%	22	3%	26	3%	26	3%	38	5%
2027 - 2028		2028 - 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2032	
26	5%	64	10%	64	9%	68	9%	71	10%

Numbers and % of learners studying for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) at GCSE

2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
568	85%	682	85%	646	85%	635	85%	604	85%
2027 - 2028		2028 - 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2032	
86	85%	636	85%	629	85%	576	85%	567	85%

Numbers of learners studying for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and Subjects through the medium of Welsh at Coleg Gwent (B1)

2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026	2026 - 2027
141	300	450	600	650
2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029	2029 - 2030	2030 - 2031	2031 - 2032
700	750	800	900	1000

Outcome 5

More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

Where are we now?

Blaenau Gwent collaborate with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to lead on the work of the 'Siarter Iaith', the primary and secondary language charter:

- Siarter Iaith Primary: 100% Silver (Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg).
- Siarter Iaith Secondary: Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw are implementing the Siarter framework (Step 1 of 5: EAS Siarter evaluation framework for secondary schools).
- Cymraeg Campus English-medium Primary: 35% of Blaenau Gwent schools have achieved Bronze award status, 20% have achieved Silver, and 45% are working towards Bronze.

In line with the Ysgolion Cymraeg Campus School initiative in Blaenau Gwent:

- 100% of our primary schools/campuses have engaged with the Cymraeg Campus framework baseline questionnaire.
- In 35% or 7 of our primary schools/campuses Bronze award has been achieved and verified.
- In 20% or 4 of our primary schools/campuses Silver award engagement and the baseline questionnaire has been undertaken.
- No schools have achieved and had the Silver award verified.

Blaenau Gwent: Bilingualism Secondary

Brynmawr Foundation School, Tredegar Comprehensive School and Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Secondary Phase are developing bilingualism initiatives with support from the EAS. In addition, these schools are engaging with the Urdd Cymraeg Bob Dydd programme.

Menter Iaith

Prior to the pandemic, Menter Iaith delivered after school club in Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, which re-opened in September 2021. Menter Iaith have a Community Development Officer who supports delivery of activities in partnership with Youth Service and Urdd.

Menter Iaith also run events and virtual sessions for younger children and families. During 2019/20 22 events were held in Blaenau Gwent, with over 346 children and families in attendance. In 2020/21 there were 2 family events and 55 online events delivered during lockdown, with approximately 26 attendees at the family events and 43 children engaged in online events.

For the Menter Iaith activities, emphasis is placed on giving opportunities to children and young people to speak Welsh in informal settings, although the majority of these activities have historically taken place at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. Further venues will be explored as part of the development of Promotion and Engagement Strategy, and associated WESP delivery planning work.

The range of activities has been mapped in the past, but due to the pandemic, staffing structure changes at the Urdd and turnover of staff in Menter Iaith, the number and nature of activities has changed significantly. This work will be revisited once again and mapped regularly in order to identify gaps in provision, and inform the development of a plan to address these gaps.

Prior to the pandemic, Menter Iaith were able to provide at least one weekly club for primary schools and would liaise with teachers to ensure that the objectives of these clubs e.g. ukulele clubs or arts & crafts sessions reflected the educational needs of children. Outcomes relating to language use and were monitored on a six-monthly basis and reported Welsh Government - this will be included in the WESP Planning process going forward.

Youth Service

Blaenau Gwent Youth Service works towards an existing business plan which includes the development of Welsh Language and Culture opportunities. This is underpinned by a workforce development programme including development of Welsh language skills across the workforce and a focus on upskilling through recruitment. An annual plan is agreed between the Youth Service and the Urdd, and this is in part led by the views gathered from young people through consultation but is also bound by the grant funding requirements and timescales. More recently, the funding received has moved to a 3-year indicative allocation and this will allow for a longer term plan of activity. It makes sense to develop a longer term strategy for young people's Welsh language provision in the community, as the short to medium term can be measured against the long term plan. Young people's involvement in this provision is voluntary as it is not compulsory nor in school time, and therefore, success is measured by the numbers of young people accessing the opportunities over a consistent period and the number of opportunities available, rather than capturing whether or not Welsh language skills have improved. Other outcomes, such as accredited outcomes for courses, are also captured.

The Youth Service has a Service Level Agreement with the Urdd to secure and deliver activities through the medium of Welsh for young people. The Youth Service in Blaenau Gwent work with young people between the ages of 11 and 25 years. Where possible – they have introduced Welsh language into youth club settings, ensuring bilingual engagement opportunities for Welsh speakers.

The Youth Service works in partnership with the Urdd to either fund or directly provide the following opportunities for young people to meet together and to socialise in Welsh and/or to provide support through the medium of Welsh:

- Year 6 after school transition club in Bro Helyg (to support transition from Bro Helyg to Gwynllyw) approximately 20 young people supported, BG youth worker and Urdd youth worker support activities
- Weekly after school Welsh language club Tredegar (approximately 20 young people supported, Urdd youth worker during term time, BG youth workers in the evenings throughout the year)
- Volunteering programme delivered with Blaenau Gwent pupils in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw (approximately 10 young people, Urdd youth worker)
- Welsh Language Youth Forum facilitated in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw – Blaenau Gwent pupils then represent on the Blaenau Gwent Council Youth Forum (Urdd youth worker)
- Volunteering opportunities provided for an additional 10 young people from Blaenau Gwent in the Urdd through Eisteddfod, residential trips and activities
- Arts based activities provided during school holidays through Welsh (Urdd youth worker)
- Welsh Language and Culture focussed activities held across all Blaenau Gwent youth clubs. Planning towards next Eisteddfod competitions. (BG youth workers)
- Welsh Language and Culture focussed activities are delivered by all full time youth workers based in every secondary school in BG. (BG youth workers)
- Welsh language D of E group provided (BG youth worker)
- Welsh language lead on young people's information group (BG youth worker)

The Urdd provides a small part of the Youth Service activity – and the Youth Service funds the Urdd to provide this activity as this ensures that young people accessing this opportunity are also able to access the wider Urdd opportunities such as the Eisteddfod and residential activities. The two direct clubs (at Tredegar Comprehensive School and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg), are supported at various times by 1 Urdd member of staff and 1 Youth Service member of staff. It is the Youth Service that continues this provision if and when the Urdd are not able to support. Additionally, all youth clubs in Blaenau Gwent, and all secondary schools have Welsh language and culture and focussed activities facilitated by Blaenau Gwent youth workers. However, it is timely to review the existing provision, and to open up opportunities to work in partnership with a wider range of organisations with this focus.

The Youth Service already sets itself targets on an annual basis and also agrees targets with the Urdd. This is part of a 5 year planning process and feeds into an annual Welsh Government audit. The Council would support setting a baseline using these historic figures.

The Youth Service facilitates a strategic multi-agency partnership which oversees provision for young people but also facilitates a Youth Support Service network. Youth Service provision is also led and developed by the views of young people, which are gathered through a bi-annual County Borough wide consultation, annual survey with Youth Service members, project focussed consultation and design and individual discussions with young people. Young people in this context are considered our most valid partner. This information is then fed into the Welsh in Education Forum, to support planning and development of the WESP.

Urdd Gobaith Cymru

Urdd Gobaith Cymru is a voluntary national movement for children and young people that provides various opportunities to use the Welsh language, and gain experiences in the language, outside of the classroom, and in their local communities. The Urdd offer the following:

Community

- Officials that provide community arts opportunities throughout the year
- Departments, households, youth clubs and community clubs for children and young people to enjoy and use the Welsh language
- Digital provision for all ages

Sports

- Community clubs
- County, regional and national sports competitions
- Regional and national sports festivals
- Digital activities
- Physical literacy education provision for schools

Urdd Camps

- Llangrannog, Glan-llyn, Cardiff and Pentre Ifan
- Residential experiences providing learning experiences, fun and positive memories of using Welsh

The Eisteddfod and the Arts

- Area and County Eisteddfodau that offer opportunities for schools and pupils to experience arts, develop self-confidence and learn more about Welsh culture and literature
- The Urdd National Eisteddfod and being a part of a national festival
- Digital arts, music, theatre, art and backstage provision

Welsh-medium apprenticeships

- Educational and employment progression for young people who wish to gain qualifications and experience in Welsh

International

- Peace and Goodwill Message – extending the hand of friendship and discussing subjects of importance to young people on a world-wide basis
- Specific projects with partners in Ireland, America and Japan
- Opportunities for international volunteering and exchange visits

Resources

- The Urdd's digital magazines
- A collection of educational resources to support the new Curriculum.

Figure 27: Youth Engagement Activities and Events via the Urdd

2018 - 2019	No. of children Primary age	No. of children Secondary	Total	Location
Residential trips	60	40	100	Urdd Centres - Llangrannog, Glan-Llyn and Cardiff
Eisteddfod	30	0	30	Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni- Caerphilly & Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw
Welsh Club	0	20	20	Tredegar
Sporting tournaments	30	25	55	Various locations across Gwent
Jambori	50	0	50	Pontypool
Adran	15	0	15	Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg
Totals	185	85	270	

The Urdd community officer works across Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Mynwy, Caerffili and Newport, meaning that there is no dedicated officer for Blaenau Gwent. The targets agreed as part of the Blaenau Gwent Service Level Agreements are detailed within Figure 28 below:

Figure 28 - Youth Work in Blaenau Gwent

Task	Description
Task 1	1 weekly Welsh Club at Ysgol Gyfun Tredegar staffed by Urdd member of staff
Task 2	Accredit 10 young people from Blaenau Gwent – Volunteering and Engaging with the community credit – 20 hours of volunteering – Pupils at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw
Task 3	Transition work with Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg – work closer with Year 6 at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg
Task 4	Ensure representatives from Blaenau Gwent on Youth Forum – Make sure they are part of the Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw Youth forum and link in with the Blaenau Gwent forum
Task 5	Work in partnership with Blaenau Gwent Council – Raise the profile of the Welsh Language.
Task 6	Volunteering opportunities for 10 young people from Blaenau Gwent – including at the Eisteddfod, in clubs
Task 7	Offer a range of art activities for Young People in Blaenau Gwent - School holiday activities.

Welsh afterschool club at Ysgol Gyfun Tredegar offers the pupils an opportunity to practice their Welsh. Eisteddfodau includes competitions for Welsh speakers and learners, Sporting activities for Welsh speakers and learners. All these groups etc. offer the opportunity for Welsh speakers and learner to use their Welsh in an informal setting.

Coleg Gwent

All learners with Welsh language enrichment opportunities by Coleg Gwent. In line with the Coleg Gwent partnership with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, 5 Welsh Ambassadors are appointed each academic session. Their role being to promote, encourage and facilitate Welsh language provision throughout each campus, working with key partners such as the Urdd in doing so.

Participation and engagement differs at each campus and across departments. However, approximately 8-12 learners engage with Welsh medium extra-curricular activity. During the 2020/21 academic session, 142 learners engaged with Welsh and bilingual activities. The pandemic has negatively affected engagement levels.

Blaenau Gwent's 5-year Promotion Strategy

One of the aims of the Blaenau Gwent's Welsh Language Strategy includes:

'Increase the provision of Welsh language education and informal activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language'

The aforementioned aim is firmly aligned to this outcome. We will seek to establish a working party to map and review existing provision, using this to inform a delivery plan for Outcome 5 going forward, in order to further develop and enhance provision - where possible. The work will be centred around the following key themes:

- Stakeholder mapping
- Access
- Services and partners
- Resources
- Engagement and participation
- Review

Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

Education would work with schools and key partners such as those detailed above, to undertake mapping exercise which captures activities both within classroom and outside of the classroom that reinforce Welsh Language Skills. This piece of work will be undertaken within the first year of the plan, and provide a baseline from which target setting can take place, also informing development planning processes.

The mapping will take place across both English and Welsh medium settings, in order to enable the Council to understand:

- Current levels of engagement and activity associated with community partners
- Exploring how the development of Welsh-medium provision features in School Development Plans
- Identifying key contacts with whom the working party detailed in the above section can work, in order to further develop and enhance provision

Working closely with the EAS to continue promoting and developing the Siarter Iaith throughout the school estate, we aim to achieve the following targets:

- **Siarter Iaith Primary Target** Blaenau Gwent: 100% Gold (Bro Helyg)
- **Siarter Iaith Secondary** Torfaen: Maintaining (Step 4 of 5: EAS Siarter evaluation framework for secondary schools)

Blaenau Gwent's target to achieve Bronze, Silver and Gold

Figure 29: Cymraeg Campus Cynradd: English Medium Primary

	2021		Target 2026		Target 2032	
Cymraeg Campus Cynradd Achieved or working towards						
Primary : Bronze	7/20	35%	20/20	100%	20/20	100%
Primary : Silver	4/20	20%	10/20	50%	20/20	100%
Primary: Gold	0/20	0%	7/20	35%	10/20	50%

Coleg Gwent plan to expand and develop Welsh Language enrichment provision, establishing a vibrant, diverse and inclusive Welsh community. Continuing to adapt to the needs of learners, it is expected that learner participation levels for Welsh language activities will increase to 70% over the next 5 years.

In achieving our aims, we will:

- Work with the EAS to provide professional learning opportunities for senior leadership, including a focus on strategic development of Cymraeg Campus in English medium schools;
- Develop networks for coordinators (Welsh and English-medium schools) and drop-in meetings every half term;
- Offer bespoke support for schools in line with the Regional School Improvement approach;
- Support schools to consider the development of Cymraeg Campus as part of their wider self-evaluation, with the latter informing the verification process;
- Raise the profile of and promote Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus;
- Promote effective cluster working and celebrate successes at school, cluster, local and regional levels;
- Ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for schools to share good practice, and develop school to school working initiatives, ensuring increased engagement;
- Promote the work of, and create opportunities for learners and families to engage with Mudiad Meithrin, Blaenau Gwent Youth Services, Urdd Gobat Cymru and Menter Iaith;
- Develop a baseline questionnaire to be completed by English-medium secondary settings about pupil's perception and confidence in using Welsh as a second language. Use this data to target the development of opportunities, whilst continuing to measure confidence and progression;
- Work with the lead for the Welsh Language Charter in Blaenau Gwent, to support engagement capturing views through a series of qualitative questionnaire, used to determine linguistic tendencies, barriers and opportunities;
- Continue and strengthen the current Welsh in Education Forum, supporting the vision to grow the Welsh language and associated opportunities;
- Review the structure and membership of the WEF, including sub-groups and outcome themed leads, to ensure effective monitoring and implementation of the WESP 10-year plan;

- Collaborate with key partners to secure resources to further develop extra-curricular opportunities for Blaenau Gwent learners;
- Develop an effective communication plan to ensure that learners and parents are aware of and engage with opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school;
- Support language progression in English-medium primary schools;
- Highlight the importance of the Urdd's residential opportunities, that offer totally Welsh 24 hour experiences, creating positive and long-term memories of Welsh amongst pupils;
- Increasing school participation in the Urdd Eisteddfod to foster self-confidence, experience the arts and an understanding of Welsh literature, music and art; and,
- Ensure effective joint planning for youth work (11-25) via the medium of Welsh.
- Map provision on a six-monthly basis with representatives from Menter Iaith BGTM, the Urdd and Youth Service. This could be achieved via the Blaenau Gwent Welsh Language Forum facilitated by Menter Iaith BGTM, who are currently working to offer ideas feedback on the new Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.
- Increase Urdd and Youth Service provision within English medium primary and secondary schools, to provide more Welsh language community work such as clubs, holiday provision etc.

Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?

Cymraeg Campus Cynradd: English medium primary targets for 2032 are as follows:

- 50% gold
- 100% silver
- 100% bronze

At the end of the 5-year review, Welsh-medium schools who have achieved the gold award, will have full confidence to robustly self-evaluate their provision for implementing the Siarter Iaith, and will be responsible for independently sharing their good practice in developing the Charter with others.

All schools established between the 5-year review, and the end of the 10-year cycle, will implement the Siarter Iaith and aim to achieve an award that reflects appropriate progress according to the school's establishment date.

For Cymraeg Campus, maintaining gold award expectations and high standards in schools that have achieved the award, including ensuring an effective process to evaluate, monitor and plan for maintaining or improving standards. To ensure that this take place, there will be extensive sharing of best practice, between and across schools, with schools independently supporting each other with their evaluation of the programme's delivery. The Council will work with the EAS to ensure systematic and effective monitoring processes are in place, to ensure that high standards are maintained.

Over the next 10 years, Coleg Gwent's objective is to grow and expand Welsh Language enrichment provision, striving towards doubling engagement levels by 2032, which equates to 284 learners or 90%.

Finally, we aim to increase extra-curricular activities and associated engagement, through an effective partnership approach which is informed and monitored by the work of the WEF.

Key Data

Increasing opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
0	0%	2	10%	4	20%	6	30%	7	35%
2027 - 2028		2028 - 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2032	
8	40%	9	45%	9	45%	10	50%	10	50%

Outcome 6

An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) (in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018)

Where are we now?

In September 2021/January 2022 the ALNET Bill came into force and the focus has now changed on how data is recorded in Local Authorities and schools. The focus is now on schools meeting the needs of pupils under the universal and targeted provision. PLASC data has changed with the removal of general learning difficulties.

The Local Authority has planned for a review of all provision for children with ALN across the County Borough. It is expected that this review will take place during the Spring/Summer-term 2022, to ensure that the Local Authority is compliant with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. The expectation is that a Welsh-speaking Educational Psychologists will form part of the Review team. The findings of the review and scoping visits will also provide intelligence to shape planning, in readiness for the opening of the second Welsh medium provision.

A revised plan, with updated timescales, will be produced as soon as possible. In addition, a working party of headteachers representing all clusters, phases and settings from across Blaenau Gwent was established in January 2022, with a ALN Reform implementation remit. It is the expectation that the working party will also inform future planning for supporting all learners with an additional learning need, including Welsh medium settings.

A series of guides have been published to support local authorities, practitioners, parents and carers during the first year of implementation. These guides set out the transitional arrangements for the first year of implementing the Additional Learning Needs and

Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (the ALN Act), including a mandatory timetable for specific groups of children to move to the new ALN system.

The discrete guide for parents and families about how children with additional learning needs will be supported under the new system is available both in Welsh and English, and has been distributed and shared widely with schools within Blaenau Gwent.

The parents and families guide:

- introduces the new ALN System;
- outlines what difference it makes for children, their parents, and young people;
- states the Statutory role of Individual Development Plans (IDPs);
- explains the new way of working, including rights and resolution process;
- sets out when and how children and young people will move to the new system on a phased basis over the next 3 years under the phased approach.

[Additional learning needs \(ALN\) system: parents' guide \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

Additional resources to support schools and parents in understanding the ALN Reforms have also been produced by the SEWC Region and housed on Hwb, in its own Network Group. The Local Authority is also in the process of creating an ALN area on the wider Blaenau Gwent website, which will house all ALN-related information and resources for the general public to access. All information will be available bi-lingually and the aim is for this to be achieved by September 2022, and updated and added to on a regular basis.

<https://hwb.gov.wales/networks/a320785a-8213-4746-8543-691445c49081/redirect>

BG's one Welsh Medium Primary School is supported throughout the academic year by a Welsh-speaking Educational Psychologist (EP). The EP is invited to participate in all Person Centred Planning (PCP) and/or IDP Review Meetings, providing an opportunity for parents to seek additional support for their child who has an ALN. Again, all planning tools and documents are available in bi-lingual format, as evidenced by the following selection of relevant documents:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/4158c843-1441-42f9-a64a-027e21cd8fbe/Parent%20ALN%20Info%20session%20Welsh.pptx?preview=true>

<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/06a32f4e-76f8-41b8-a024-72b90bcfe7ea/PCP%20Brochure%20for%20parents%20CYMRAEG.pub?preview=true>

The appointment of an Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (EYALNLo) in the Local Authority – a statutory role – has already improved partnership working with parents of children with an AN/ALN from ages 0-7 years. The EYALNLo has also worked closely with maintained and non-maintained pre-school settings to ensure robust transition planning from pre-school to school for those children with an ALN. Parents are again involved in the transition process and supported by the EYALNLo.

Blaenau Gwent does not currently have a Special Needs Resource Base (SNRB) for children with complex additional learning needs. Therefore, parents and carers of pupils with ALN access SNRB provision for their children at English-medium schools, due to the fact that the provision does not exist within the Welsh-medium primary. As such, the 'perception' is that the demand for such provision is low. As at 2021, there is only one pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Need. However, the school has identified a cohort of pupils either pending or having received a diagnosis, who would benefit from SNRB provision. Figure 30 details the ALN pupil profile of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.

Further work is required in order to analysis and understand the level and complexity of need within the Welsh medium sector in Blaenau Gwent. The term 'complex additional learning needs' can be used to describe children and adults with multiple barriers to learning and co-existing learning difficulties such as communication, cognition, sensory (vision & hearing) and physical.

Figure 30: ALN Pupil Profile at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg

	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	Behaviour Emotional Social Disorder	Dyslexia	Global Developmental Delay	Hearing Impaired	Speech Learning and Communication Difficulties	Visual Impaired	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Total
2017	1	5	8	6	1	11	1	1	34
2018		6	2	11	3	12	1	1	36
2019		5	2	8	2	9	1	1	28
2020		5		5	2	5	1		18
2021		10	1	5	1	4	1		22

Currently, there are 8 pupils who have ASD/ADHD traits at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. As yet, not all of the aforementioned pupils have received a formal diagnosis, however, all except 2, are in receipt of Educational Psychology engagement with referrals having been made. Nursery provision at the school is offered on a full-time basis, therefore, the pupils needs tend to be identified relatively early on. Currently, in Key Stage 2, there are a number of pupils who would benefit from small-class teaching. It is also recognised that the provision of a resource base would not only provide tailored support to the pupils who have been identified as needing this consistent level of intervention and support; but would also free up teacher time to focus on pupils requiring additional support e.g. pupils with a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD). As of September 2021, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg released the Specialist Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), from teaching 4 days per week, in order to concentrate on interventions with pupils.

Blaenau Gwent currently has 3 members of staff in the Education Psychology team who are able to speak fluently and deliver via the medium of Welsh. However, 1 of these staff members is presently on secondment to Welsh Government. A cross-consortia working group has been established. In addition, tools and resources are now available on Hwb for all staff in schools to access as well as relevant local authority staff across Wales in both English and Welsh.

As a special school Pen y Cwm have 6 Welsh speaking staff at school. Different levels of Welsh are employed depending upon the needs of the learners, with incidental Welsh being the primary use. In addition, the School has a Welsh Co-ordinator, and they recognise and reward the Welsh speaker of the week.

From a Local Authority perspective, any child presenting with additional learning needs in any childcare setting would be subject to the same assessment/referral process and the same support would be offered regardless of the language of the setting. Language would not be a barrier to the school receiving specialist advice and guidance from Welsh speaking Educational Psychologist.

There are inter-county arrangements and planning processes in place for Welsh medium secondary pupils with ALN, who's needs are met in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. Blaenau Gwent Council funds pupils with ALN on a needs (individual pupil) basis. This process is managed via the Council's ALN Panel, in partnership with Torfaen County Borough Council.

Local Authority ALN Implementation Lead

Considerable support for schools in readiness for implementing ALN reform has been provided at a local and regional level, with all training material available in both English and Welsh. There is a SEWC Regional ALN Group, which meets on a half-termly basis, discussions then inform LA Working Group discussion around ALN implementation.

Within Blaenau Gwent, Tredegar Comprehensive School is the Implementation Lead, and as such, coordinates the Cluster Group ALN Transformation group, represented by an ALN Lead from each cluster. The Cluster Lead then cascades and leads on the priorities for each school within their own cluster.

In addition, the ALN Lead from BG's sole Welsh Medium Primary school is also part of a Welsh Medium regional group, organised by the EAS. Ysgol Bro Helyg also work closely with YGG Gwynllyw on matters relevant to the needs of learners with ALN and ALN reform. It is this group that will take forward actions arising from local ALN Cluster Group meetings and discussions.

During the Spring and Summer Term, of 2022, the Transformation Implementation Leads have focus on IDPs and ensuring all concerns and requests for support are addressed. All schools will have had the opportunity to engage in meaningful and worthwhile professional learning opportunities to build further confidence and knowledge with the IDP process and paperwork, with a view to confirming a BG consistent approach.

ALNCo Forum

The Educational Psychology Service in BG also coordinates a half termly ALNCo Forum, providing ALNCOs the opportunity to share best practice. An example of productive collaborative working, as reported by ALNCOs, was the opportunity the forums provide for all ALNCOs to consider their own school's additional learning provision (ALP). In addition, through the Person Centred Planning (PCP) process and creation of One Page Profiles (OPP), ALNCOs were more confident in ensuring their schools were able to consider the learning needs of an individual learner.

Headteachers' Working Party: ALN Reform and Implementation

The ALN Manager is also leading on a strand of work being undertaken by a working party of Headteachers from across the LA. This work runs alongside and will complement the work of YGTCS, as Implementation Lead for Blaenau Gwent. As the role of Regional Lead for ALN ended in March 2022, the LA and schools themselves will now drive the changes required for the successful implementation of the ALN reforms.

Autumn Term 2022

The Local Authority's ALN Implementation Lead will engage with school leaders to consider the following:

- Schools from within and without of their own clusters to share their Action Plans - joint scrutiny of cluster plans and individual schools plans (RAG rating)
- Self-reflection - where are we now? Where do we want or need to go next?
- Formulate individual Action Plans for ALN implementation
- ALN Action plan to link to schools' Self-evaluation reports (SER) and School Improvement Plans (SIPs)
- Audit of CPD needs - link to school's Professional Learning plan
- Revisit Provision Maps in line with current ALN cohort and needs (again, will inform CPD needs)
- Audit of delegated ALN spend

Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

An ALN sub-group of the WEF will be established in September 2022, in order to inform the planning and implementation of ALN reform locally in Welsh medium education settings. The group will seek to establish key targets, whilst also seeking to plan opportunities for engagement with parents, schools and key partners.

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg remodelling project, is a Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Project the objectives of which are to:

- secure growth of the pupil population;
- address current gaps in provision i.e. the school is not currently able to offer outdoor learning or nurture provision, and does not have suitable spaces to support pupils with behavioural and additional learning needs – which make up a significant proportion of the pupil population;
- transform unusable spaces which are deteriorating in condition and not suitable for use in line with Health and Safety;
- create flexibility to support growth;
- secure improved standards of teaching and learning, along with improved pupil outcomes; and,
- secure improved suitability in line with the new curriculum, along with the condition of the facility.

Blaenau Gwent Council are committed to the development of a Special Needs Resource Base (SNRB) at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg by 2025. The SNRB would initially cater for up to 10 ALN pupils, with the capacity to grow to a split phase provision. Plans to secure a satellite provision at the new seedling school are also under development, with associated design development having been considered. An Expression of Interest was submitted to Welsh Government in November 2021, in line with the Welsh Medium Capital Grant.

In achieving our aims, we will:

- Ensure effective early identification processes are in place working closely with the early years and childcare sector, to facilitate effective transitional support packages and processes from pre-school into education settings.
- Audit ALN needs throughout the Welsh-medium sector and review annually, in order to inform and develop effective transition and provision for learners;
- Ensure that the statutory duty of school(s) to ensure ALN provision can be offered bilingually, by committing to the development and recruitment of Welsh language practitioners;
- Ensure that the right level of support is provided throughout the Welsh-medium early years and primary sectors, ensuring that provisions have the required facilities and resources to effectively support learners presenting with ALN;
- Review the research undertaken via the consortia, and use it to develop a training and intervention plan for staff and pupils;
- Review, adapt and use resources which are tailored to the specific needs of learners, engaging with and understanding best practice i.e. North Wales assessment tools such as reading machines for SPLD children;
- Ensure early identification processes are in place, by ensuring an effective partnership approach, informing and developing provision for ALN pupils prior to statutory schooling;
- Work with the Inclusion team to support implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Reform for Wales (2021);
- Ensure the capability to engage with parents in the language of their preference;
- Work with the Inclusion Services to effectively implement and monitor Individual Development Plans (IDP's) for all pupils aged 0-25 with Additional Learning Needs; and,
- Ensure effective alignment with the Promotion and Engagement Strategy, to inform parents of the support available for children and young people with additional learning needs throughout the secondary sector.

Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?

- Regional working collaboration to continue supporting the demand for immersion and Welsh-medium education.
- Ensure that the Inclusion Service continues to offer a wide range of specialist services through the medium of Welsh within the primary sector.
- Continue to support schools with the development of Welsh language provision, and work more collaboratively with them to deliver against and ensure compliance with the ALN Code.

- Undertake a full review for Special Education Needs Resource Bases in both Welsh and English-medium schools.
- Ensure effective implementation of provision for ALN learners, securing growth and development.

Outcome 7

Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

Where are we now?

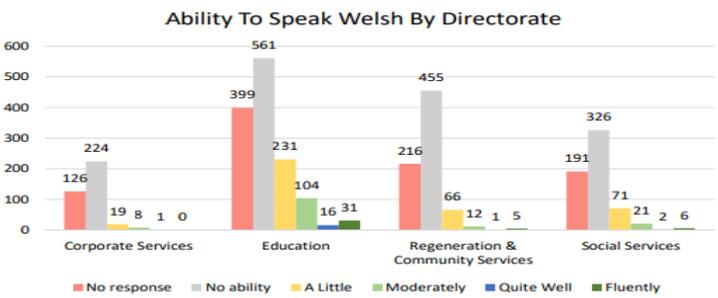
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Workforce
 The number of employees who have Welsh language speaking skills as at 31st March 2021 (as per the Welsh_Language_Annual_Report_2020-21.pdf (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)), amounts to 594 (19%) staff; these staff can speak ‘fluently’, ‘quite well’, ‘moderately’, or ‘a little’. However, just over half of the total number of staff declared that they have no Welsh speaking ability, which is a slight decrease compared with the last reporting period (2019-20). The number and percentage of staff that can understand, speak, write and read Welsh varies slightly between each comparator.

Figure 31 shows there is a total of 42 staff who declare fluency, with no significant change in comparison to the previous reporting period (43, 2019/20). The Education Directorate has the most fluent Welsh Speakers (31).

Figure 31 Fluent Welsh Speakers by Directorate and Contract Type

The following graphs and tables reflect the total number of Fluent Welsh Speakers by Directorate and Contract Type across the organisation.

Directorate	Ability to Speak Welsh						Total
	No response	No ability	A Little	Moderately	Quite Well	Fluently	
Corporate Services	126	224	19	8	1	0	378
Education	399	561	231	104	16	31	1,342
Regeneration & Community Services	216	455	66	12	1	5	755
Social Services	191	326	71	21	2	6	617



Education Workforce Capacity / Language Skills (Schools) (SWAC 2019 baseline)
 Nearly all Blaenau Gwent schools at present, are English-medium schools. Staff with the highest levels of proficiency work in the Welsh-medium sector with the Welsh language skills of staff in English-medium schools requiring considerable development.

A number English-medium primary and secondary school practitioners identify as having no entry, or foundation level Welsh language skills. Very few identify as having higher language skills or as being proficient. The 2019 School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) data has been reviewed and presented below, detailing the current skill levels throughout the English medium sector in Blaenau Gwent.

English-Medium Primary Schools

Figure 32: Overview English-medium Education Staff Welsh Medium Skill Levels

No Skills	Entry Level	Foundation Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level	Proficient Level	The information was not obtained	Total
1	104	98	6	4	4	0	217
0.5%	48%	45%	3%	2%	2%	0.0%	99.5%

English-medium Secondary Schools

Figure 33: Overview English-medium Education Staff Welsh Medium Skill Levels

No Skills	Entry Level	Foundation Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level	Proficient Level	The information was not obtained	Total
52	15	6	2	0	7	0	82
63%	18%	7%	2%	0%	8%	0%	98%

Ability to Teach Through the Medium of Welsh

Very few staff working in Blaenau Gwent English-medium primary or secondary schools, are able to teach via the medium of Welsh.

Primary

Figure 34: Number of Staff able to Teach or Work Through the Medium of Welsh

Teaching / working through the medium of Welsh		
Can teach / work through the medium of Welsh	Total	Can teach / work through the medium of Welsh
27	228	12%

Secondary

Figure 35: Number of Staff able to Teach or Work Through the Medium of Welsh

Teaching / working through the medium of Welsh		
Can teach / work through the medium of Welsh	Total	Can teach / work through the medium of Welsh
3	82	4%

The role of the EAS in delivering and promoting Professional Learning for Welsh is to:

- Work with school leaders, cluster Professional Learning leads for Welsh and Welsh language coordinators to support accurate assessment of Welsh language

needs in line with the Welsh Language Competence Framework and to identify cluster and school level training needs.

- Direct schools to a range of regional, online and Welsh for Adults training options in support of the development of the Welsh language.
- Collaborate with Welsh Government to identify Sabbatical training needs.
- Deliver language training, particularly to the English medium sector to support their ability to deliver of Welsh along the Welsh language continuum.
- Provide professional learning on the pedagogical and methodological approaches to teaching Welsh to support Welsh language acquisition and immersion.
- Work in partnership with schools to develop and share resources and planning in support of the delivery of Welsh.
- Provide networking opportunities to support delivery of key messaging and to enable the sharing of best practice in the delivery and development of Welsh.

Welsh Sabbatical Scheme Uptake Data

Figure 36: Schools Engaged with the Sabbatical Scheme (2018 -2021)

Year	Course Type	School
2018-19	Welsh in a Year	Cwm Primary School
2018-19	Welsh in a Year	Blaen y Cwm Primary School
2019-20	Welsh in a Year	Deighton Primary School
2020-21	Welsh in a Year	St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School
2020-21	Welsh in a Year	Abertillery Learning Community

All staff who have participated in the scheme are invited to participate in a Regional Sabbatical Network. Figure 37 below, highlights other courses beyond Welsh in a year, which Blaenau Gwent Schools have engaged with, along with the level at which they have engaged:

Figure 37: Blaenau Gwent School Engagement:

Academic Year	Level of Engagement	Schools Participated
2018-19	Mynediad / Entry level	Pen y Cwm
2018-19	Mynediad / Entry level	Pen y Cwm
2018-19	Mynediad / Entry level	Pen y Cwm
2018-19	Sylfaen / Foundation	Glyncoed
2018-19	Sylfaen / Foundation	Blaen y Cwm
2018-19	Sylfaen / Foundation	Sofrydd

The Education Achievement Service (EAS) support Welsh in a Year graduates post programme. Staff are supported to implement school and cluster level projects, including development of exemplification materials and approaches to the delivery of Curriculum for Wales, enabling practitioners to maintain their language skills, and develop their expertise. Participant are also encouraged to develop the language skills of colleagues, particularly TA's within their school and cluster.

The EAS will continue to recruit to the Sabbatical Scheme utilising SWAC data to support schools/cluster to identify needs and practitioners that would benefit from the programmes and lead on Welsh following their secondments.

The EAS are working with clusters to strategically plan for participation of teachers in the Welsh in a Year scheme. Each cluster has a strategic lead for Welsh, who is encouraged to identify suitable staff members to attend courses. They are also encouraged to work in partnership with Welsh in a Year graduates to share expertise across the cluster. All 4 clusters have at least one EAS Sabbatical Champion and part of their EAS defined brief is to support staff in their schools and clusters with professional learning in support of language development, sharing resources and pedagogical approaches.

All Welsh medium schools have access to support across the professional learning pathway. The EAS Professional Learning (PL) team working collaboratively with the cross regional Professional Learning group, with Welsh Government, **Education Workforce Council (EWC)**, **National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL)** and **Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)** to develop provision for all staff, including provision through the medium of Welsh, along the Professional learning pathway.



Delivery of National Professional Learning programmes to support progression of staff, including Welsh medium provision for Welsh medium schools, along the national professional learning pathway, thus supporting development of a skilled Welsh medium workforce and capacity for leadership. For example:

- Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway (TALP) - A fully bilingual National professional learning offer for Teaching Assistant TAS including: Induction for newly appointed TAs, Practising TA programme, Aspiring Higher Learning Teacher Assistants (HTLA) programme and HLTA assessment.
- Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) – National induction professional learning offer for NQTs, Induction Mentors and External Verifiers (fully bilingual offer)
- National Leadership Development Pathway – that includes a fully bilingual offer for MLDP (Middle leaders development programmes), Senior Leadership etc., Aspiring Headteacher development programme- preparation for National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), New & Acting Headteachers and Experienced Headteachers development programmes.
- Strategic Initial Teacher Education Partnership working with Higher Education Institutes (HIEs) to ensure Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students and NQTs have positive experiences of teaching in local Welsh medium schools to support local recruitment. e.g. EAS partnership for the primary phase with University South Wales.



The EAS support Welsh in a Year graduates to implement school and cluster level projects, including development of exemplification materials and approaches to the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales, enabling practitioners to maintain their language skills and develop their expertise.

EAS Staff

The EAS have a dedicated regional Welsh language team including:

- Lead for Languages Literacy and Communication
- Curriculum Partner Welsh and Literacy (1st language)
- Curriculum Partner Welsh in English medium and International Languages
- Associate Curriculum Partner, Welsh in English-medium (secondary)
- Associate Curriculum Partners, Welsh in English-medium (primary)

The EAS provides dedicated Welsh medium Challenge Adviser support to schools and draws headteachers from within the EAS and across regions to ensure Welsh medium expertise at both primary and secondary level. School to school support for the Welsh-medium sector is drawn from best practice within and across regions. There are individuals within the organisation that have Welsh language skills, including within the Professional Learning team, however, it is recognised that the wider workforce need to be supported to develop their language skills. Over the next 5 years, the EAS plan to develop and embed professional learning for Welsh (informal and formal as appropriate) as part of the EAS staff's professional learning entitlement.

Coleg Gwent Post 16 Provision:

Figure 38: Welsh language skills of Coleg Gwent academic staff (June 2021)

Fluent	Advanced	Intermediate	None
6 (1%)	14 (2%)	23 (4%)	553 (93%)

The number of staff with Welsh language skills at a level where they can confidently deliver curriculum in Welsh, is far below the levels we need in order to significantly expand our Welsh medium and bilingual curriculum offer. Historical and continuing issues around the recruitment of Welsh speaking lecturing staff with relevant subject specialism is also an issue within the SEWC region.

The College has had some success over the last few years in upskilling staff with basic Welsh skills, up to intermediate level (via Work Welsh and other Welsh for Adults provision), but this organic approach alone will not have a significant impact on Welsh medium delivery and the curriculum offer in the medium to long-term.

Childcare and Early Years

Mudiad Meithrin's Cam wrth Gam for Schools scheme is currently supporting pupils who are attending Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw.

Mudiad Meithrin's Apprenticeship Scheme is also available to give individuals the opportunity to undertake a childcare qualification although, at present, there is no uptake within Blaenau Gwent.

Mudiad Merithrin Academi scheme aims to offer a wide range of development and training opportunities for all staff and volunteers that form part of the Mudiad Meithrin community. This training is provided in various formats, combining traditional face-to-face and online contact, enabling learners to study at times convenient to them.

Croesi'r Bont also introduces language immersion methodology within Cylchoedd Meithrin and securing linguistic transition from Cylchoedd to Welsh-medium schools.

School Workforce Needs

In line with the growth planned throughout the primary sector (including the seedling, immersion and SNRB developments), our current workforce needs assessment highlights that we will need to recruit an additional 32 staff to facilitate this provision. Project transition planning process are in place for each project, which including a human resource workstream, are in place in order to identify, programme and monitor key activities such as recruitment.

Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

Blaenau Gwent Council

The Council plan to recruit a dedicated Welsh Language Support Officer in the Corporate team to oversee the Welsh Language Strategy and Action Plan, whilst ensuring alignment with the 10-year WESP.

Blaenau Gwent Council will continue to respond positively to the Welsh Language Standards, and is committed to meeting its duties under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. As a Council, there is recognition that there is still further work to be done around reinforcing the requirements and seeking to continually improve the quality and availability of services through the medium of Welsh.

As part of our work in the forthcoming year we intend to take forward the following key actions:

- Promotion of the use of Welsh in the workplace and increased training opportunities for staff; particularly staff who are key in supporting the upholding of our operational delivery standards;
- Continue to take forward our Welsh Language Internal Audit Action Plan, which includes key actions such as a review of our internal verification processes;
- Support the delivery of our policy making standards through the review and development of a new Integrated Impact Assessment, which will consider how we ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably.

Over the forthcoming period the Council aim to continue our progress, in relation to meeting our Welsh language duties, and make any necessary improvements to ensure we deliver the best possible services for our staff, residents, partners and stakeholders.

In order to achieve the target which seeks to increase the number of learners in Welsh-medium education, we will ensure a partnership approach to planning the workforce needs with Welsh Government, the EAS, other Local Authorities and relevant stakeholders. This will include:

- Analysing and reviewing all data sources to understand and map the level demand for Welsh-medium teachers. This will include projections aligned to annual transition rates and associated trend data for primary and secondary education, e.g. the number of teachers moving into leadership roles, moving schools or leaving/retiring from the profession.
- Based on the data analysis of the Welsh language skills of the workforce, the Council will seek to establish targets for increasing the proportion of our workforce with language skills at foundation level, intermediate level or higher, and report as part of the WESPs annual monitoring.

Childcare and Early Years

We will work with partners including RhAG and Mudiad Meithrin to undertake a skills analysis for staff within the early years and childcare sector, to plan and inform how the sector is able to contribute to the overarching target. Promoting training and development opportunities within the sector, to enhance and develop Welsh language skills.

Recruitment in the childcare sector in Blaenau Gwent has become challenging in the last 18 months. It is understood that this is a national issue, specifically in respect of Welsh medium practitioners. The EYCP Team will be working on plans to attract more people to undertake Childcare training at a local level. In addition, they will be working with Welsh Government and other Local Authorities, to consider what could be done on a national and regional level to support all childcare settings with the recruitment of high quality, well trained practitioners.

Teaching and Specialist Education Staff

Within the first 5 years of our plan, we aim work with key partners in order to undertake a workforce needs analysis, to ensure that we are able to effectively map, train and recruit staff to deliver against the priorities identified within this plan.

We will ensure that our Welsh-medium schools and provision are appropriately staffed, with suitably qualified staff who are able to deliver to the highest standard possible in terms of education. In addition, we aim to promote and develop opportunities for the education workforce to improve and develop their Welsh language skills.

The education workforce is ever changing. Therefore, we will work with key partners including the EAS to continue to provide and direct schools to a range of professional learning opportunities, supporting staff to maintain and develop skills. We will continue to recruit to the Sabbatical Scheme, utilising SWAC data to support schools/clusters, to identify training needs and practitioners that would benefit from the programmes and lead on Welsh following their secondments. Over the next 5 years, EAS are to develop and embed professional learning for Welsh (informal and formal as appropriate) as part of the EAS staff's professional learning entitlement. That staff make progress in their ability to speak Welsh in their roles.

We will support schools and clusters to grow, and capitalise on language expertise within the education system, including the support of Sabbatical Graduates who have undertaken the Welsh in a Year programme.

There is also a 2021/22 programme that has been launched in relation to the secondary postgraduate ITE programme enabling them to teach through the medium of Welsh and initial teacher education (ITE) providers in Wales.

In line with the Promotion and Engagement strategy, we will explore the development of resources to promote opportunities for training and employment in the education sector.

Develop Governor training and engagement programmes, to support awareness raising and shared accountability in successfully achieving the established vision, aims and targets set out within the WESP, whilst also securing effective training and recruitment processes.

Coleg Gwent

In the first 5 years, targets will be a 50% increase in the number of academic staff with fluent Welsh skills, and 50% increase in the number of academic staff with advanced level Welsh skills. These targets are as follows:

	Fluent	Advanced
5 Year Target:	9	21

This increase will enable the College to expand its current Welsh-medium and bilingual provision to other priority Welsh medium curriculum areas (as set by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol).

The college will focus on the following areas in order to facilitate this increase:

- Continue to deliver the Work Welsh programme in Coleg Gwent with the primary aim of upskilling Intermediate level staff to Advanced level;
- Participate in the Sgiliaith mentoring scheme in order to support staff with Welsh medium and bilingual delivery;
- Seek opportunities to incentivise and attract Welsh speaking staff from all over the country; and,
- Look at options to relax PGCE requirements in some situations in order to attract more applicants. These individuals will be sponsored to complete our in-house PGCE in their first 2 years of employment.

Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?

Blaenau Gwent Council

The Council will look to recruit a dedicated Welsh Language Support Officer in the Corporate team to oversee the Welsh Language Strategy and Action Plan, whilst also ensuring effective alignment with the 10-year WESP. Education also aim to increase the Education Transformation team's capacity over the next year, including a member of the team who would be dedicated to the WESP action plan.

Over the next 10 years, we will work with the EAS to develop and embed professional learning for Welsh (informal and formal as appropriate) as part of the EAS professional learning entitlement.

Blaenau Gwent has an increased education workforce able to teach and work via the medium of Welsh, whilst also increasing the number of staff able to teach Welsh as a subject.

Blaenau Gwent has an established workforce development plan, which enables the Council and its partners to secure appropriately qualified and experienced teaching and other specialist school staff, to successfully deliver the curriculum via the medium of Welsh and bilingually, in achieving the Blaenau Gwent target for Year 1 pupils.

By the end of the 10-year plan, Coleg Gwent will aim to achieve a 100% increase in the number of both fluent and advanced Welsh speaking academic staff (from the current levels in June 2021). The 10-year targets are as follows:

	Fluent	Advanced
10 Year Target:	12	28

This increase will enable the college to offer Welsh medium and bilingual modules in all curriculum priority areas as set by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The priority areas are as follows:

- Childcare
- Health & Social Care
- Public Services
- Sports
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Land based
- Business, IT and Media

The actions identified in order to achieve the 5-year targets will be extended into the second phase to support the progress against Coleg Gwent's 10-year targets.

Increasing the number of staff able to deliver in Welsh is critical if we are to meet our ambitious targets for increasing Welsh medium and bilingual provision in the college.

How we will work with others to achieve our vision

The Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) will be the strategic driving force behind the 10-year WESP. The purpose of the WEF is to contribute towards strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of Blaenau Gwent 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WEF will meet on a termly basis, with dedicated sub-groups taking place in and around meetings, to focus on specific themes.

The Forum provide a formal channel of communication between key partners and stakeholders, who work collectively towards achieving the vision, aims, objectives strategic priorities and targets set out within the plan.

The Forum act as a consultative group, contributing towards the development, monitoring and implementation of the WESP by:

- contributing towards the development of, and monitoring the WESP;
- monitoring Welsh medium demand, along with the uptake and provision of Welsh-medium education, determining as a group key strategic priorities; and,

- supporting the development of an annual report to the Welsh Government describing progress in terms of implementing the WESP's targets against the approved timetable.

In addition, WESP progress reports are taken via the Council's political processes annually. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is also a key focus of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme Board and Admissions Forum, with updates reported accordingly.

WEF Membership
Executive Member for Education
BGCBC Education Transformation and Business Change Services
Coleg Gwent
Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG) – Parents for Welsh Medium Education
BGCBC Early Years Childcare and Play team
Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw
Education Achievement Service
BGCBC School Improvement and Inclusion Services
BGCBC Youth Service
Headteacher - Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg
BGCBC Organisational Development
Mudiad Meithrin
BGCBC Policy and Partnerships team
BGCBC Transport team
Menter Iaith
Urdd Gobiath Cymru
Welsh Government - Welsh Language Division
BGCBC Corporate Communications
Public Health Wales and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
English-medium Headteacher

Consultation Information

The statutory consultation period will run from Friday 5th November 2021 for 8 weeks, concluding on Monday 3rd January 2022. Please ensure to provide your feedback and responses prior to the closure of the consultation.

A copy of the draft WESP is available to download at the bottom of this page.

You can give your views on the draft WESP by either completing the questionnaire (link below) or by contacting us via one of the following:

Survey: <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/179j>

Email: 21centuryschool@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Mail: Sustainable Communities for Learning, Education Department, Anvil Court, Abertillery, Blaenau Gwent. NP13 3DB.

All forms of communication and/or questionnaires must be completed by Monday 3rd January 2022 at 12pm.

What happens next?

At the end of the consultation period, all responses received will inform any updates and/or changes that need to be made to the plan. In January 2022, the plan will be taken via the Council's Executive Committee for, prior to being submitted to Welsh Ministers for consideration and approval by 31st January 2022.

Following submission of the plan, Welsh Ministers may:

- approve the plan as submitted,
- approve the plan with modifications, or
- reject the plan and prepare another plan which will then be treated as the authority's approved plan.

The approved plan will run from September 2022 until August 2032.

For queries email 21centuryschools@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or call 01495 357704/355470