

**Welsh Language  
Promotion Strategy  
2017-2022**



**Cymraeg**



## Overview

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets out to modernise the legal framework regarding the use of the Welsh language in the delivery of public services. In September 2015, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council was issued with a Compliance Notice<sup>1</sup>, which set out a requirement to implement 171 of the 176 Welsh Language Standards.

### The aim of the Welsh Language Standards is to:

- 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; and
- Ensure that there is an appropriate degree of consistency in terms of the duties placed on bodies in the same sectors.

This 5-year Promotion Strategy is in compliance with Welsh Language Standard 145 which states:

You must produce, and publish on your website, a 5-year Strategy that sets out how you propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in your area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters)

- (a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and
- (b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target; and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Equalities/Compliance\\_Notice\\_-\\_November\\_2016.pdf](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Equalities/Compliance_Notice_-_November_2016.pdf)

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## **Introduction**

The Council's vision is that we want Blaenau Gwent to be a better place to live, work and visit. Welsh and English language are key components in our history, culture and social fabric.

Welsh Government has recently launched its vision for one million speakers by 2050 across Wales. This is a significant challenge for Blaenau Gwent, which consistently has the lowest use of Welsh Language in Wales, along with other Authority areas in South East Wales.

Nevertheless Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to making a valued contribution towards this ambitious target, where together, we can grow the Welsh language and promote bilingual opportunities.

We recognise that the Council cannot achieve the necessary increases in Welsh language use by itself, and effective delivery of its Welsh Language Promotion objectives requires the concerted joined-up effort of our partners and the engagement and participation of the residents of Blaenau Gwent.

Working in partnership we will do our part in creating the strategy that can create the right conditions in which bilingualism can flourish and thrive, within families and communities, in children and young people, and within our workplace.

The Council has a legal obligation to produce this strategy under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, Standard 145. This five-year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy sets out how we propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in Blaenau Gwent County Borough.

The Strategy looks to build on the good work already achieved via our previous Welsh Language Schemes, and by further strengthening our well-established partnership networks.

The Welsh Language Promotion objectives we take forward in this Strategy will also be vital, to show how this Council is responding to the new legislation 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'. This will be particularly important for the Wales' national well-being goal for 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.

To make sure we are delivering, we will continually monitor and scrutinise the strategy as a key part of Council business, through integrating our actions into our corporate reporting and performance structures.

In line with the Welsh Language Standard 146, five years after publishing this strategy we will be required assess the extent we have followed the strategy and have reached the target set by it.

## Policy Context

The following section sets out the legal and policy frameworks that add shape to this Welsh Language Promotion Strategy:

### Government of Wales Act 2006

Section 78(1) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 requires Welsh Ministers to adopt a strategy stating how they propose to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. Section 78(4) requires the Welsh Ministers to keep the strategy under review and enables them from time to time to adopt a new strategy.

On 31 October 2016 the Welsh Government closed its consultation on its proposals for the new Welsh language strategy: 'A million Welsh speakers by 2050', which will supersede the current Strategy: *A living language: a language for living* (2012–2017) early next year.

### Welsh Language Wales Measure 2011<sup>2</sup>

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure was passed by the National Assembly for Wales and was given royal assent on 9 February 2011. The measure introduced new ways of working but in the main:

- *gives the Welsh Language official status in Wales a legal effect, which means that Welsh should be treated no less favourably than the English language in Wales;*
- *establishes the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner;*
- *creates a procedure for introducing duties in the form of language standards, which explain how organisations are expected to use the Welsh Language;*
- *makes provision regarding promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language;*
- *making provision regarding investigating an interference with the freedom to use the Welsh language.*

### Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 - Wales Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 996 (W. 68)<sup>3</sup>

From 31 March 2016, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council had to comply with the above regulations, which set out the new Welsh Language Standards. Of the 176 Standards, Blaenau Gwent must comply with 171 of the Standards as set out in its Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner. We have a current challenge application with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office, which may lead to a change in the final Compliance Notice.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/pdfs/mwa\\_20110001\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/pdfs/mwa_20110001_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.comisiynyddygyraeg.cymru/English/Publications%20List/20161019%20Compliance%20Notice44%20Blaenau%20Gwent%20CBC.PDF>

## **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act<sup>4</sup> 2015**

This Act aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act will make the public bodies listed in the Act consider the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. The Act introduces 7 well-being goals, which includes 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' with the expectation that we will aim for 'a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language...' This means there is already a duty on a number of public bodies listed in the Act to achieve that goal in the long term, and one of the steps to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

## **A living language: a language for living: Welsh language strategy<sup>5</sup> 2012 – 2017**

This is the Welsh Government's strategy for the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language in everyday life. The Welsh government's vision is to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales. To achieve that, the strategy aims to see an increase in the number of people who both speak and use the language.

## **Follow-on Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care<sup>6</sup>**

The aim of this follow-on strategic framework from the 'More than just words...' strategic framework that was published in 2012 is to maintain momentum but also support a greater level of recognition among service providers that the use of the Welsh language is not just a matter of choice but also a matter of need. It is especially important for many vulnerable people and their families who need to access services in their first language, such as older people suffering from dementia or stroke who may lose their second language or very young children who may only speak Welsh.

The 'active offer' continues to be a core element where the Council and its health and social care partners recognise that it is important that staff offer Welsh language services to users, rather than expect service users to have to ask for them.

## **Blaenau Gwent's Draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020**

The School Standard and Organisation (Wales) Act (2013) places a statutory requirement on local authorities to prepare and introduce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WESP focuses on the targets in the Welsh Medium Education Strategy and local authorities are expected to report annually on performance against these targets.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/pdfs/anaw\\_20150002\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/pdfs/anaw_20150002_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/122902wls201217en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160317morethanjustwordsen.pdf>

## **Summary: Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017 - 2022**

### **Vision**

Welsh Government has committed to 'A million Welsh speakers by 2050.'

### **Target**

Welsh Language Standard 145 sets out a requirement to set "a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area" by 2022 and "a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target".

In order to meet a target of 44% increase of Welsh speakers by 2050, we would need to gain an additional 2,324 Welsh speakers against the 2011 Census' Blaenau Gwent baseline of 5,284.

Therefore this represents an average annual increase of 70 additional Welsh speakers i.e. 3% of the target figure of an additional 2,324 in Blaenau Gwent for the next 33 years.

To achieve this target, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will need to work in partnership with a broad range of partners to promote Welsh language in education settings and more easy-to-access opportunities in communities; and promote Welsh in the workplace.

### **Objectives**

Blaenau Gwent has identified 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

### **Outcomes**

- More people engage with the Welsh language
- More people attain fluency in the Welsh language
- More Council employees are able to use Welsh Language

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

- Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Action Plan
- Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report

## **An Overview of Blaenau Gwent**

### **Geography**

Blaenau Gwent is located in South-East Wales. It is approximately 20 miles from Newport, and 30 miles from Cardiff, and directly south of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The area is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles long, and 8 miles wide, and is the smallest of the Welsh local authorities in terms of land area, at about 10,900 hectares. The area is physically defined by high hillsides dividing the three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which seem to merge together into one. However, each community proudly maintains its own character and traditions. The five main towns and settlements are seen as Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Nantyglo and Blaina, and Tredegar.

### **Population**

According to the 2011 Census, Blaenau Gwent was home to 69,814 people, making it one of the smallest Welsh local authorities in terms of population numbers. Even so, due to its relatively small geographical size, it has the 5th highest population density behind Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen and Caerphilly.

The 2011 Census identified 5,284 Welsh speakers living in Blaenau Gwent, which equated to 7.8% of its population, this was a significant increase compared to the 1991 Census, which showed only 2.2% (n1,539) spoke Welsh.

Population projections from the Office of National Statistics (mid-2011 based) suggest that the population of Blaenau Gwent is projected to decrease by 1.7% over 10 years and 5.6% over 20 years, although projections become less reliable over more extensive time periods.

The projected population decrease in Blaenau Gwent is in contrast to a picture of projected increases in general across other regions of Wales. The population of Wales as a whole is projected in increase in population by 4.1% over the next 10 years and 6.7% over 20 years.

Although life expectancy is increasing in Blaenau Gwent, reduced birth rates and net outward migration (albeit modest) contribute to the projected downward trend over the next 20 years.

The projected population decreases along with the reduced birth rates and net outward migration made the setting of a percentage target increase of Welsh speakers in Blaenau Gwent a real challenge.

## Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Objectives 2017-22

<b>Families and Community</b>	
<b>Objective 1: We will promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language within families and the community</b>	
Outcomes: What we want to achieve:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people engage with the Welsh language</li> <li>• More people attain fluency in the Welsh language</li> <li>• More Council employees are able to use Welsh Language</li> </ul>	
<b>Action 1.1</b>	Promote informal Welsh / bilingual social activities provided in Blaenau Gwent through a range of channels i.e. website, social media, posters etc.
<b>Action 1.2</b>	Promote opportunities for more formal learning i.e. cwrs Mynediad etc.
<b>Action 1.3</b>	Promote leisure opportunities through the medium of Welsh
<b>Action 1.4</b>	Promote Welsh medium or bilingual services in line with e.g. national guidance such as 'More than words..'
<b>Action 1.5</b>	Promote and evaluate access channels (i.e. website, social media, C2BG etc.) to local authority services in the medium of Welsh in line with the Welsh Language Standards
<b>Action 1.6</b>	Increase the number of children, young people and adults who declare their language preference (Welsh/English/bilingual) in relation to how they engage with local council services
<p><b>Partners:</b> We will be working with the following partners to achieve this objective:</p> <p>Children, young people and adults in Blaenau Gwent, Coleg Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Learn Welsh Gwent, Menter Iaith, Aneurin Leisure Trust, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Mudiad Meithrin, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, South East Wales Regional Forum, Blaenau Gwent Council's Family Information Service, RhAG ( Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg / Parents for Welsh Medium Education), Welsh Language Youth Forum, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Urdd Club in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, Grŵp Deddf, Corporate Equality Network, All Schools, Welsh Language Commissioner's Office</p>	

## Children and Young People

**Objective 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.**

Outcomes: What we want to achieve:

- More people engage with the Welsh language
- More people attain fluency in the Welsh language
- More Council employees are able to use Welsh Language

<b>Action 2.1</b>	Increase the early year's provision offer to stimulate parental demand
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<b>Action 2.2</b>	Increase transition rates from Welsh-medium nursery provision to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg
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<b>Action 2.3</b>	Raise the profile and levels of participation for Welsh-medium education
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<b>Action 2.4</b>	Improve Welsh medium learner outcomes
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<b>Action 2.5</b>	Work regionally with South East Wales Local Authorities and to promote Welsh medium opportunities in further and higher educational institutions
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<b>Action 2.6</b>	Promote extra-curricular Welsh language/bilingual activities and social opportunities for children and young people from both Welsh medium and English medium schools
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<b>Action 2.7</b>	Promote opportunities for parents/carers/grandparents to improve their Welsh language / bilingual skills to support their children through Welsh / bilingual education
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**Partners:** We will be working with the following partners to achieve this objective:

Children, young people and adults in Blaenau Gwent, Coleg Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Learn Welsh Gwent, Menter Iaith, Aneurin Leisure Trust, Mudiad Meithrin, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, South East Wales Regional Forum, Blaenau Gwent Council's Family Information Service, RhAG ( Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg / Parents for Welsh Medium Education), Welsh Language Youth Forum, Grŵp Deddf, Corporate Equality Network, All Schools, Welsh Language Commissioner's Office

## Welsh in the Workplace

### Objective 3: To increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace

Outcomes: What we want to achieve:

- More people engage with the Welsh language
- More people attain fluency in the Welsh language
- More Council employees are able to use Welsh Language

<b>Action 3.1</b>	Increase the number of employees who can use Welsh and encourage them to wear the 'Dysgu' and badges to help Welsh learners socially and improve their confidence.
<b>Action 3.2</b>	Encourage employees to improve their fluency in Welsh and encourage them to wear the 'Cymraeg' badges to help promote bilingual services.
<b>Action 3.3</b>	Promote Welsh training courses and encourage more employees to attend these
<b>Action 3.4</b>	Provide a range of guides and support materials to increase engagement with and confidence in the use of Welsh language in the workplace
<b>Action 3.5</b>	Support all departments to effectively implement the Welsh language standards as per the Council's Compliance Notice
<b>Action 3.6</b>	Effectively monitor the jobs within the Council advertised that go through the Welsh language assessment process
<b>Action 3.7</b>	Promote more opportunities for colleagues to engage with each other in the medium of Welsh

**Partners:** We will be working with the following partners to achieve this objective:

Blaenau County Borough Council employees, Menter Iaith, Coleg Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Learn Welsh Gwent, Aneurin Leisure Trust, Grŵp Deddf, Corporate Equality Network, all School-based staff, Welsh Language Commissioner's Office

**Objective 1: We will promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language within families and the community**

<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partners</b>
1.1	Promote informal Welsh / bilingual social activities provided in Blaenau Gwent through a range of channels i.e. website, social media, posters etc.	English medium schools, Coleg Gwent, Learn Welsh Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Menter Iaith, Aneurin Leisure Trust, Mudiad Meithrin, Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Urdd Gobaith Cymru etc.
1.2	Promote opportunities for more formal learning i.e. cwrs Mynediad etc.	Schools, Coleg Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning,Zone, Learn Welsh Gwent, Mudiad Meithrin
1.3	Promote leisure opportunities through the medium of Welsh	Aneurin Leisure Trust
1.4	Promote Welsh medium or bilingual services in line e.g. national guidance such as ‘More than words’.	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (i.e. Social Services etc.), Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
1.5	Promote and evaluate access channels (i.e. website, social media, C2BG etc.) to local authority services in the medium of Welsh in line with the Welsh Language Standard.	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
1.6	Increase the number of children, young people and adults who declare their language preference (Welsh/English/bilingual) in relation to how they engage with local council services	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, All schools

**Objective 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.**

<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partners</b>
2.1	Increase the early year's provision offer to stimulate parental demand	As per Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
2.2	Increase transition rates from Welsh-medium nursery provision to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	As per Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
2.3	Raise the profile and levels of participation for Welsh-medium education	As per Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
2.4	Improve Welsh medium learner outcomes	As per Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
2.5	Work regionally with South East Wales Local Authorities and to promote Welsh medium opportunities in further and higher educational institutions	As per Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
2.6	Promote extra-curricular Welsh language/bilingual activities and social opportunities for children and young people from both Welsh medium and English medium schools	As per Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
2.7	Promote opportunities for parents/carers/grandparents to improve their Welsh language / bilingual skills to support their children through Welsh / bilingual education	As per Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

**Objective 3: To increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace**

<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partners</b>
3.1	Increase the number of employees who can use Welsh and encourage them to wear the 'Dysgu' and badges to help Welsh learners socially and improve their confidence.	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
3.2	Encourage employees to improve their fluency in Welsh and encourage them to wear the 'Cymraeg' badges to help promote bilingual services.	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Coleg Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Learn Welsh Gwent etc.
3.3	Promote Welsh training courses and encourage more employees to attend these	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Coleg Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Learn Welsh Gwent etc.
3.4	Provide a range of guides and support materials to increase engagement with and confidence in the use of Welsh language in the workplace	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
3.5	Support all departments to effectively implement the Welsh language standards as per the Council's Compliance Notice	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
3.6	Effectively monitor the jobs within the Council advertised that go through the Welsh language assessment process	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
3.7	Promote more opportunities for colleagues to engage with each other in the medium of Welsh	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council