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Blaenau Gwent

Our Ref./Ein Cyf.
Your Ref./Eich Cyf.
Contact:/Cysylltwch â:

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

Dydd Mercher, 27 Medi 2023 Dydd Mercher, 27 Medi 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held in Ar MS Teams on Dydd Mercher, 4ydd Hydref, 2023 at 10.00 am.

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

Pages

1. CYFIEITHU AR Y PRYD

Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o rybudd os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais am hynny.

2. YMDDIHEURIADAU

Derbyn unrhyw ymddiheuriad am absenoldeb.

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

3. DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU

Derbyn unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant neu oddefebau.

PENDERFYNIADAU

4. CABINET

5 - 8

Derbyn penderfyniadau cyfarfod arbennig y Cabinet a gynhaliwyd ar 4 Medi 2023.

MATERION CYFFREDINOL

5. CYNADLEDDAU, CYRSIAU, DIGWYDDIADAU A GWAHODDIADAU

9 - 10

Ystyried yr adroddiad.

PORTFFOLIO CORFFORAETHOL A PHERFFORMIAD

6. BLAENRAGLEN GWAITH – 29 TACHWEDD 2023

11 - 14

Derbyn y flaenraglen gwaith.

7. GRANTIAU I SEFYDLIADAU

15 - 20

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

8. ADRODDIAD CYNNYDD CHWARTEROL CS092 CYNLLUN GWEITHREDU'R YMCHWILIAD A'R POLISI CYMRAEG YN Y GWEITHLE

21 - 308

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd, Llywodraethiant a Phartneriaethau.

9. STRATEGAETH TRAWSNEWID DIGIDOL AR GYFER Y CYNGOR

309 - 356

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol a Chwsmeriaid.

10. **STRATEGAETH GWASANAETHAU CWSMERIAID
AR GYFER Y CYNGOR** 357 - 416

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol a Chwsmeriaid.

11. **ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL IECHYD A DIOGELWCH –
1 EBRILL 2022 I 31 MAWRTH 2023** 417 - 442

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.

12. **MONITRO'R GYLLIDEB REFENIW 2023/2024
RHAGOLWG ALLDRO I 31 MAWRTH 2024 (FEL AR
30 MEHEFIN 2023)** 443 - 466

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

13. **MONITRO CYLLIDEB GYFALAF, RHAGOLWG AR
GYFER BLWYDDYN ARIANNOL 2023/2024 (FEL AR
30 MEHEFIN 2023)** 467 - 486

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

PORTFFOLIO LLE AC ADFYWIO

14. **ADRODDIAD PERFFORMIAD DIWEDD BLWYDDYN
2022/23 CYFARWYDDIAETH GWASANAETHAU
CYMUNEDOL AC ADFYWIO** 487 - 540

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

15. **DEDDF LLYWODRAETH LEOL 1972 CYNNIG I
DROSGLWYDDO MWY O DIR I BLUEBIRDS
ABERTYLERI** 541 - 548

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

PORTFFOLIO POBL A GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL

16. **STRATEGAETH/POLISIÄU/CANLLAWIAU
CYNHWYSIANT AC ADY (ADOLYGU A** 549 - 730

DIWYGIADAU)

Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Interim Addysg.

17. **TRAIS YN ERBYN MENYWOD, CAM-DRIN DOMESTIG A THRAIS RHYWIOL (VAWDASV): STRATEGAETH RANBARTHOL GWENT 2023-2027** 731 - 780

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd, Llywodraethiant a Phartneriaethau.

18. **ADOLYGU POLISI CLUDIANT RHWNG Y CARTREF A'R YSGOL AC ÔL-16 2024 – 2025** 781 - 806

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Interim Addysg.

To: S. Thomas
H. Cunningham
J. C. Morgan
H. Trollope
S. Edmunds

All other Members (for information)
Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officers

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**
SUBJECT: **SPECIAL CABINET – 4TH SEPTEMBER, 2023**
REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: **Leader/**
Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance
Councillor S. Thomas

Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member – Place & Environment
Councillor H. Cunningham

Cabinet Member – Place and Regeneration
Councillor J.C. Morgan

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services
Councillor H. Trollope

Cabinet Member – People & Education
Councillor S. Edmunds

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officer Resources
Interim Corporate Director Education
Interim Corporate Director Social Services
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Head of Organisational Development

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| No. 1 | <u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| | It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service. |
| No. 2 | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>No apologies for absence were received.</p> |
| No. 3 | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p> |
| | <p><u>DECISIONS</u></p> |
| No. 4 | <p><u>CABINET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the Cabinet Meeting held on 19th July, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be received as a true record of proceedings.</p> |
| | <p><u>PEOPLE AND EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u></p> |
| No. 5 | <p><u>ALN RESOURCE BASE CAPACITY – PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCE BASES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager, Education Transformation & Business Change.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Cabinet support Option 1, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend that Council considers and accepts this Objections report, with evidence from the Statutory Notice (Appendix 1) and grants approval to proceed to the implementation stage; and • The full business case (Appendix 2) be accepted in relation to the implementation of the resources bases from September 2023 onwards. |

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Agenda Item 5

Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **27th September, 2023**

Report Subject: **Conferences, Courses, Events and Invitations**

Portfolio Holder: **General Matters**

Report Submitted by: **Democratic Services**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| X | x | X | | | | 27.09.23 | | |

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To present a list of conferences, courses, events and invitations for consideration and determination by the Executive.

2. **Scope of the Report**

2.1 **WLGA Annual Conference – Llandudno 15th September, 2023**

To approve retrospective attendance of the Deputy Leader.

Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Wales – Annual Briefing – Cardiff, 19th October, 2023

To approve the attendance of Councillor D. Bevan.

3. **Options for Consideration**

3.1 To seek approval for attendance of the events outlined in the report.

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Agenda Item 6

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 29th November 2023**

Portfolio Holder: **All Portfolio Holders**

Report Submitted by: **Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance and Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| X | x | | | | | 04.10.23 | | |

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 29th November 2023.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Cabinet Work Programme is a key aspect of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and supports the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 All Scrutiny Committees and the Cabinet Forward Work Programmes have been aligned to the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.
 - 2.4 As the document is fluid there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1**
To agree the Forward Work Programme as presented for the Meeting on 29th November 2023.
 - 3.2 **Option 2**
To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

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Cabinet Forward Work Programme

Cabinet Meeting Date: Wednesday 29th November 2023
Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas: Tuesday 7th November 2023
 *Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Cabinet

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| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Committee Meeting Date |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| Portfolio: Leader / Corporate and Performance Services | | | |
| Workforce Strategy Review and year 3 action plan | Decision To consider the review and year 3 action plan. | Andrea Prosser | Corporate Overview and Performance – 26.10.23 |
| Sickness Absence Performance 2022/23 | Performance Monitoring To consider the annual review of staff sickness absence. | Andrea Prosser | Corporate Overview and Performance – 26.10.23 |
| Shared Resource Service | Performance Monitoring To ensure members have oversight of Governance Arrangements and monitor performance of SRS and to support the delivery plan for 2023/24. | Bernadette Elias | Partnership – 16.11.23 |
| Annual report of the Public Services Ombudsman | Performance Monitoring To receive the annual report of the Public Services Ombudsman. | Andrea Jones | Governance and Audit – 18.10.23 |
| Portfolio: People and Social Services | | | |
| Children’s Residential Provision in Blaenau Gwent | Performance Monitoring To receive progress on the establishment of the Local Authority Children’s Residential provision in Blaenau Gwent. | Tanya Evans | People – 07.11.23 |
| Portfolio: People and Education | | | |
| Self-evaluation (SE) | Performance Monitoring To ensure that Members contribute to the development of the self-evaluation report. | Luisa Munro-Morris | People – 07.11.23 |

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Committee Meeting Date |
|---|--|--------------------|------------------------|
| Improving Schools Programme | Performance Monitoring To provide Members with an update on any inspection report findings (when available) and progress within schools that are causing concern or subject to Council intervention. | Luisa Munro-Morris | People – 07.11.23 |
| Progress Against Estyn Recommendations | Performance Monitoring Members to receive progress on the Estyn Recommendations | Luisa Munro-Morris | People – 07.11.23 |
| Aneurin Leisure Trust Performance and Monitoring | Performance Monitoring Members to consider the content of the six-monthly ALT performance report and to discuss areas for future monitoring arrangements. | Luisa Munro-Morris | Partnership – 16.11.23 |
| Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) Annual Return 2021/22 | Performance Monitoring Members to consider the Annual Assessment from Welsh Government which highlights Blaenau Gwent's performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards. | Luisa Munro-Morris | Partnership – 16.11.23 |
| Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Places and Environment | | | |
| Waste and Recycling Annual Performance | Performance Monitoring Members to receive the annual performance report for Waste and Recycling. | Matthew Stent | Place – 17.10.23 |
| Portfolio: Place and Regeneration | | | |
| Decarbonisation Annual Report | Performance Monitoring To monitor the performance. | Andrew Parker | Place – 17.10.23 |
| Abertillery Placemaking Plan | Decision To approve the proposals for placemaking in Abertillery. | Amy Taylor | Place – 17.10.23 |

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: CABINET

REPORT SUBJECT: GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS – 4th Oct 2023

REPORT AUTHOR: RHIAN HAYDEN

**LEAD OFFICER/
DEPARTMENT CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES,
RESOURCES**

ABERTILLERY

Abertillery & Six Bells Ward – Councillor K. Chaplin

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 1. | Abertillery Piranhas Swimming Club | £90 |
| 2. | Abertillery & District Museum Society | £90 |
| 3. | Abertillery Rock & Blues Festival | £90 |
| 4. | Abertillery Cricket Club | £90 |
| 5. | Six Bells Over 50's | £90 |
| 6. | Pentref Tyleri | £90 |
| 7. | Abertillery BG RFC | £90 |
| 8. | Abertillery Amateur Dramatic & Musical Society | £90 |
| 9. | Abertillery Ladies Darts | £90 |
| 10. | Abertillery Orpheus Male Choir | £90 |
| 11. | Old Tylerians RFC | £90 |
| 12. | Abertillery Town Band | £90 |

Abertillery & Six Bells Ward – Councillor J. Holt

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Abertillery Ladies Darts | £100 |
| 2. | Abertillery & District Museum Society | £100 |
| 3. | Abertillery Piranhas Swimming Club | £100 |
| 4. | Abertillery Orpheus Male Choir | £100 |
| 5. | Ebenezer Chapel | £100 |
| 6. | Abertillery Town Band | £200 |

Abertillery & Six Bells Ward – Councillor R. Leadbeater

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Abertillery Ladies Darts | £100 |
| 2. | Chillax | £100 |
| 3. | Pentref Tyleri CBC | £100 |
| 4. | Abertillery Workmens Institute | £100 |
| 5. | Six Bells Crafts | £100 |
| 6. | Six Bells Over 50's | £100 |

Cwmtillery Ward – Councillors J. Wilkins & M. Day

| | | |
|-----|---|------|
| 1. | Abertillery Excelsiors FC | £250 |
| 2. | Abertillery BG RFC | £250 |
| 3. | Abertillery Bowls | £200 |
| 4. | Abertillery Netball | £200 |
| 5. | Abertillery Belles FC | £250 |
| 6. | Abertillery & District Museum Society | £100 |
| 7. | Abertillery Piranhas Swimming Club | £150 |
| 8. | Penref Tyleri CBC | £150 |
| 9. | Abertillery Cricket Club | £100 |
| 10. | Abertillery Ladies Darts | £100 |
| 11. | Chillax | £250 |
| 12. | Six Bells Tennis Club | £100 |
| 13. | Old Tylerian RFC | £150 |
| 14. | Blaentillery Allotments | £100 |
| 15. | 1 st Abertillery Scouts | £100 |
| 16. | Blaenau Gwent Foodbank | £200 |
| 17. | Royal British Legion Abertillery Branch | £100 |

Llanhilleth Ward – Councillor H. Cunningham

| | | |
|----|---|--------|
| 1. | Llanhilleth Community Mural Project (Retrospective Approval)* | £1,200 |
| 2. | Abertillery & District Museum Society | £50 |

Llanhilleth Ward – Councillor L. Parsons

| | | |
|----|------------------------|------|
| 1. | Llanhilleth Bowls Club | £100 |
|----|------------------------|------|

BRYNWAWR

Brynmawr Ward – Councillor J. Hill

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1. | Brynmawr Takeover Town Centre Event (Retrospective Approval)* | £350 |
| 2. | Brynmawr & District Museum Society | £200 |
| 3. | Calvary Christian Centre | £200 |
| 4. | Archdiocese Cardiff St. Mary, Abertillery/Brynmawr | £250 |
| 5. | Abertillery Town Band | £200 |

Brynmawr Ward – Councillor J. Gardner

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1. | Brynmawr Takeover Town Centre Event (Retrospective Approval)* | £350 |
| 2. | Falcon Martial Arts | £350 |
| 3. | Brynmawr Interact | £300 |

Brynmawr Ward – Councillor W. Hodgins

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1. | Brynmawr Takeover Town Centre Event (Retrospective Approval)* | £350 |
|----|---|------|

EBBW VALE

Cwm Ward – Councillors D Bevan & G. Humphries

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Cwm Christmas Lighting Group | £300 |
| 2. | Cwm Livestock Society | £200 |
| 3. | Waunlwyd OAP Association | £300 |
| 4. | Waunlwyd & Victoria Events Committee | £300 |
| 5. | Waunlwyd Youth & Community Centre | £200 |

Rassau & Garnlydan Ward – Councillor G. Davies

| | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Special Movers (Retrospective Approval)* | £300 |
| 2. | Garnlydan Community Spirit (Retrospective Approval)* | £100 |
| 3. | Ebbw Vale Operatic Society | £100 |
| 4. | Toppers School of Dance | £100 |
| 5. | Garnlydan Community Spirit | £200 |
| 6. | Blaenau Gwent Young Stars | £100 |
| 7. | Garnlydan AFC | £100 |

Ebbw Vale North Ward – Councillor D. Davies

| | | |
|-----|--|------|
| 1. | Ebbw Vale Children's Contact Centre | £150 |
| 2. | One Life Autism | £100 |
| 3. | Gwent Valleys Integrated Activities Club | £100 |
| 4. | Willowtown Primary School PTA | £100 |
| 5. | EVI Food Pantry | £100 |
| 6. | Hilltop Tenants & Residents Association | £100 |
| 7. | Hilltop OAP Association | £100 |
| 8. | Garnlydan AFC | £100 |
| 9. | Ebbw Vale Works Museum | £100 |
| 10. | Ebbw Vale Male Voice Choir | £100 |
| 11. | Showstoppers Dance Group | £100 |
| 12. | Ebbw Vale Business Forum | £150 |

Ebbw Vale South Ward – Councillor C. Bainton

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. | One Life Autism | £100 |
| 2. | Tyllwyn Allotment Association | £150 |

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Blaina Ward – Councillor L. Winnett

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------|------|
| 1. | 275 Squadron Air Training Corps | £200 |
| 2. | Cwmcelyn Angling Club | £100 |
| 3. | Blaina Cricket Club | £100 |
| 4. | Blaina Rugby Club | £100 |
| 5. | Blaina Mens Bowls | £100 |
| 6. | Blaina Ladies Bowls | £100 |

TREDEGAR

Sirhowy Ward – Councillors M. Cross & T. Smith & D. Rowberry

| | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Immaculate Conception Church (Retrospective Approval)* | £100 |
| 2. | Waundeg & Nantybwhch Community Association (Retrospective Approval)* | £250 |

***Those marked retrospective approval were paid at the request of the councillor in advance of this meeting.**

CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES

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Agenda Item 8

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**

Report Subject: **CS092 Investigation Action Plan Progress Quarterly Report and Welsh in the Workplace Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Stephen Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member
Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 10.08.23 | 04.09.23 | | | 14.09.23 | 04.10.23 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to present the CS092 Investigation Action Plan Progress Quarterly Report, and the Welsh in the Workplace Policy.

2. Scope and Background

CS092 Investigation Action Plan Progress Quarterly Report

- 2.1 The CS092 investigation (“the investigation”) was opened by the Welsh Language Commissioners Office (WLCO) in November 2021 following concerns raised during a direct verification assessment of whether the Council was compliant with the Welsh Language Standards in terms of providing a Welsh language telephone service.
- 2.2 In April 2022, the Council provided an initial response to the investigation, which in turn raised further compliance concerns with regards to promoting services, assessing the language skills of staff, providing training opportunities and assessing the language needs of posts. This led to the terms of reference for the investigation being widened to include a number of additional operational standards.
- 2.3 In September 2022, a final determination of the investigation, in accordance with Section 77 of the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011 Measure, was provided to the Council. The determination outlined the steps required to reach compliance and expected delivery timeframes. It also requested the Council take forward an organisational approach (including clear accountability and governance framework) to develop an Action Plan, with a deadline 31 January 2023. The final draft Action Plan was presented to the Corporate Leadership Team for consideration and signed-off on the 26th January 2023. The WLCO signed off the report in March 2023.

2.4 The CS092 Quarterly Progress Report (Appendix 1) provides an update on the implementation of actions set out within the plan since March 2023 until the end of July 2023.

2.5 *Welsh in the Workplace Policy*

On the 28th March 2023 the Council received an Action Notice from the WLCO, explaining that during their standards compliance monitoring the Council failed to comply with standard 98. Standard 98 sets the requirement to produce a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language, which must also be published on the intranet.

2.6 To ensure the Council meets this requirement a draft Welsh in the Workplace Policy has been developed taking into consideration guidance from the WLCO as well as considering good practice from other public bodies under the same duty (Appendix 2).

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 CLT considered the CS092 Quarterly Progress Report (Appendix 1) and Welsh in the Workplace Policy (Appendix 2) on 10 August 2023.

3.2 The Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the report on 14th September 2023 and recommended Options 1a and 2a for approval.

3.3 *CS092 Quarterly Progress Report*

Option 1a

Consider and approve the CS092 Quarterly Progress Report (Appendix 1).

Option 1b

Consider the CS092 Quarterly Progress Report (Appendix 1), and make observations/recommendations on progress prior to approval.

3.4 *Welsh in the Workplace Policy*

Option 2a

Approve the Welsh in the Workplace Policy (Appendix 2) for publication.

Option 2b

Consider the Welsh in the Workplace Policy (Appendix 2) and make observations/recommendations to approval.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

Since 2016 the Council has a statutory requirement to work in accordance with our Welsh Language Compliance Notice set by the Welsh Language Commissioners Office, written in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

This Action Plan ensures compliance with the standards that the WLCO failed the Council on as part of the recent investigation, including the Council developing a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language (Standard 98).

The Corporate Plan recognises meeting our Welsh language requirements as a key policy area which will enable the Council to deliver its ambition.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

Failure to comply with any Welsh language standard could lead to penalties. The quoted figure is £5,000 by breach.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There is a reputational risk to the Council if the action plan is not implemented efficiently, and the Council is found non-compliant with standard 98.

5.3 ***Legal***

Failure to comply with any requirement set out within the decision notice requesting an action plan, may lead the Commissioner to apply for a court order requiring compliance.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

Organisational Development staff play a key part within the implementation of this plan, working to strengthen the recruitment processes' consideration of the Welsh language.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

The following standards are set out with actions to improve organisation-wide compliance within the plan:

- Standard 8
- Standard 11
- Standard 17
- Standard 81
- Standard 127
- Standard 130
- Standard 131
- Standard 132
- Standard 133
- Standard 136
- Standard 136a

Full investigation report and decision notice attached. (Appendix 3)

Monitoring Action Notice regarding the Welsh in the Workplace Policy attached. (Appendix 4).

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Actions taken to implement the plan are detailed in the progress report.

- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
The effective implementation of the Action Plan, supported by quarterly progress reports will improve our compliance with the service delivery standards.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
The core group set up to support implementation of the action plan meet 6-weekly to monitor progress, and received the Welsh in the Workplace Policy for comments.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
The Council has a statutory requirement to work in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the implementation and production of the Welsh in the Workplace Policy will strengthen our compliance moving forward.
- Furthermore, improving our consideration of the Welsh language contributes to the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and the Well-Being of Future Generations Act goal to provide 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
Meeting the requirements set by the Welsh Language Standards, will aim to prevent reputational and financial risk.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
Blaenau Gwent continues to work with neighbouring and regional local authorities to support the Council to work in accordance with the Welsh language standards, including regional partnership forums and networks (for example, Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network, Rhwydiaith, Deddf etc).
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
By considering a corporate approach to Welsh Language the Council is demonstrating it is taking an integrated approach.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
This report has no direct implications towards decarbonisation or reducing carbon emissions.
- 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA)***
The report considers Equalities throughout and seeks to ensure the Welsh language is valued and not treated less favourably across the Council.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 The CS092 Investigation Quarterly Progress Report and Welsh in the Workplace Policy is to be presented to the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1: CS092 Investigation Quarterly Progress Report

Appendix 2: Welsh in the Workplace Policy

Appendix 3: WLCO Full Investigation Report

Appendix 4: WLCO Monitoring Action Notice (Workplace Policy)

Appendix 1: CS092 Quarterly Progress Report (BGCBC)

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on actions taken to implement the Action Plan written in response to the investigation opened on the Council by the Welsh Language Commissioners Office. For background information on the investigations findings and our monitoring procedures please see supporting reporting at Appendix 4.

Telephone Actions

The investigation was opened due to concerns raised during the WLCO's monitoring of the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. The following information provides an update on the work that has taken place to improve our compliance with the standards raised during the investigation surrounding our telephone services.

Standards raised during the investigation:

Standard 8: When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must greet the person in Welsh.

Standard 11: When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must deal with the call in Welsh if the person so wishes –

- a) until it is necessary to transfer the call to a member of non-Welsh speaking staff who can provide service on a specific subject matter; until no Welsh speaking member of staff is available to provide service on that specific subject matter.

Standard 17: When there is no Welsh language service available on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must inform the caller (whether by means of an automated message or otherwise) when a Welsh language service will be available.

In order to improve our compliance with the standards raised surrounding our telephone services we began by reviewing the staff guidance on how to greet callers using the Welsh language. The Welsh Language Support Officer, assisted by feedback from customer service team managers updated the slides to simplify the language and including two sound clips of each phrase, one recited slowly the other at a regular conversational pace. These amendments are intended to make the slides more user friendly, even to staff who do not currently have any Welsh language skills. This improved guidance was used to support development of further training for staff with lower levels of Welsh language ability.

(Contributing to action points references S8.1a, S8.2a, S11.1a, S17.1a)

The updated guidance was promoted to all staff as part of the Welsh Language Communications Plan to highlight the importance of greeting callers in Welsh and support staff in fulfilling this requirement. **(S8.1d, S11.3b, S17.2a)**

Given the low numbers of staff members fluent in Welsh we have included guidance on how to arrange a call back in Welsh when a Welsh speaker is available. Having identified the priority phone lines, we have begun working with on developing their voicemails and IVR set ups to improve the quality of our Welsh language customer service. **(S8.1c)**

The Strategic Transformation Team is currently conducting an organisation wide telephony review and as such were able to identify the C2BG Contact Centre, Council Tax/Revenues and Housing to be the highest call volume service areas with automated messaging. **(S8.1b, S17.1b)** Work has begun to improve the quality of the automated messages and IVR functions on these lines, currently there are three fluent Welsh speakers across these lines with other staff in training. Furthermore, during the reviewing of the Welsh speaking staff on the intranet telephone directory's information, a problem was discovered when processing the update requests. This technical issue has since been resolved and we have planned promotion of the importance that staff keep their information up to date within the Welsh language communications plan. **(S11.1b, S11.1c)** For the time being the priority high volume call lines have nominated Welsh Language Champions across the teams that are able to provide a Welsh telephone service. **(S11.1d)**

The high call volume service areas identified within the telephony review, alongside a number of staff from the Children and Adults IAA teams, are currently attending weekly tutor-led virtual Welsh language training. **(S11.2a, S11.2b, S11.3a)** This course is a part of the Work Welsh Scheme delivered by Dysgu Cymraeg / Learn Welsh, and as such fully funded. The course will run for 35 weeks, meeting for two hours weekly accumulating 70 hours of training, those attending the sessions have also formed a community of practice to reflect on what they have learnt in between sessions. **(S11.1d)**

Exceptions / Looking Forward

S11.2d: Improve recruitment process for Welsh language speakers in accordance with Welsh Language Standard 136 (S136.1, S136.2, S136.3, S136.4 & S136A.1, S136A.2)

Work surrounding improving the recruitment process has begun, although prior to moving forward with our proposed improvements to the skills assessment arrangements Blaenau Gwent Council was invited to the WLCO's seminar surrounding recruitment. The WLCO undertook an in-depth review of 24 organisations' recruitment arrangements and assessment of the need for Welsh language skills, the findings were presented at the seminar in July 2023. In order to ensure we improve our recruitment process effectively, we delayed the implementation of the proposed changes to the skills assessment to check our changes reflected the best practice set out within the WLCO guidance.

Standard 8: When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must greet the person in Welsh.

| S8.1 The Council must develop a standard Welsh language telephone greeting. | | | | | | | |
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| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments * | BRAG |
| S8.1A | Review current guidance for telephone greeting customer-facing service areas and make necessary amends. | Mar-23 | June-23 | Sarah King Bernadette Elias | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) Leanne Roberts (Customer Experience) | Policy & Partnerships / Customer Experience service area budgets | Working with customer service managers we have updated the telephone greeting guidance. |
| S8.1B | Identify service areas with automated messaging service and high-call volumes via BG Council Telephony Review Project (S8.4A) and review compliance. | Mar-23 | June-23 | Bernadette Elias | Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Strategic Transformation Team) | Strategic Transformation Team service area budget | The high-call volume service areas with automated messages have been identified work to strengthen compliance is underway. |
| S8.1C | Develop consistent pre-recorded Welsh greeting automated message to be used by Customer-facing services, where appropriate, including pre-recorded bi-lingual Voicemail messages (S8.4B). | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Strategic Transformation Team) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Strategic Transformation Team service area budget | As noted above this work is currently underway. |

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| S8.1D | Promote amended Welsh Language telephone greeting guidance to all staff via Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | June-23 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) | Communications service area budgets | Guidance has been promoted to all staff via email poster and is scheduled to be re-promoted within Welsh Language Communications Plan with supporting promotion included within managers brief. |
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| S8.2 | The Council must train all Council staff dealing with telephone calls from the public on how to give the standard Welsh telephone greeting accurately and in compliance with Standard 8. | | | | | | |
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| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments * | BRAG |
| S8.2A | Use improved guidance (S8.1A) to develop mandatory Welsh language training slides on greeting accurately for all staff. | Mar-23 | June-23 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | The updated guidance have been used to support the training slides available to staff on the intranet. |
| S8.2B | Promote Welsh language training slides on greeting accurately via Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | June-23 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) | Communications service area budget | See action S8.1d. |
| S8.3 | The Council must raise awareness within its staff of the importance of providing a Welsh greeting and of including a Welsh greeting at the beginning of calls. | | | | | | |
| S8.3A | Development and implementation of CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | Scheduled communications are in place following those that have already been sent out. |
| S8.3B | Management teams to proactively raise awareness of the importance of providing a Welsh greeting and at the beginning of calls via Team Meetings / 1-1s. Promotion via Managers Brief included with CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | See action S8.1d. |

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| S8.4 | The Council must evaluate any automated greeting messages to check that a greeting in Welsh is placed on the automated message if a greeting is given in English. | | | | | | |
| S8.4A | Identify service areas with automated messaging service and high-call volumes via BG Council Telephony Review Project (S8.4A) and review compliance | Mar-23 | Apr-24 | Bernadette Elias | Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Strategic Transformation Team) | Strategic Transformation Team service area budget | See S8.1C |
| S8.4B | Develop consistent pre-recorded Welsh greeting automated message to be used by customer-facing services, where appropriate, including pre-recorded bi-lingual voicemail messages | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Strategic Transformation Team) | Strategic Transformation Team service area budget | See S8.1C |
| S8.5 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 4 have been completed. | | | | | | |
| S8.5A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024. |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration.

Standard 11: When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must deal with the call in Welsh if the person so wishes –

a) until it is necessary to transfer the call to a member of non-Welsh speaking staff who can provide service on a specific subject matter; until no Welsh speaking member of staff is available to provide service on that specific subject matter.

S11.1 The Council must put in place guidelines for all staff on how to deal with telephone calls in accordance with Standard 11.

| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments * | |
|--------|---|--------|---------|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| S11.1A | Review current guidelines for Welsh language telephone answering procedure and make necessary amends (including development of process map) | Mar-23 | June-23 | Bernadette Elias | Leanne Roberts (Customer Experience) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Customer Experience service area budget | Telephone procedure that included the process map and sound clips have been updated and published on the intranet. |
| S11.1B | Review and update Corporate Welsh Language Speakers Intranet Directory for handling calls on 'specific subject matters' | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | SRS have identified the technical problems with processing phonebook update requests has been resolved with organisation wide request scheduled within CS092 Welsh Language |

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| | | | | | | | Communications Plan. |
| S11.1C | Promotion of Corporate Welsh Language Speakers Intranet Directory via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | Following staff wide request to review and update details if necessary further promotion will be completed as part of CS092 Communications Plan. |
| S11.1D | Development of Welsh Language Community of Practice and identification of Welsh Language Champions across service areas. | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | Customer facing staff have identified their fluent Welsh speakers nominated to deal with Welsh language calls, with ongoing identification across service areas underway. Furthermore, customer facing staff attending training have formed a community of practice to reflect on lessons. |

| S11.2 | The Council must ensure that it has resources to deal with all calls received in accordance with Standard 11. The Council must ensure that there are sufficient Welsh speakers in the call centre to deal with telephone calls from persons who wish to conduct the call in Welsh, in accordance with standard 11. | | | | | | |
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| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments * | |
| S11.2A | Establish Welsh language training budgets available across key customer-facing service areas identified via Telephone Project (S8.4A) | Mar-23 | June-23 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | We have opted to utilise the Work Welsh Scheme for key customer facing areas that is fully funded. |
| S11.2B | Provide long-term programme of training for existing customer service staff (call centre) upskilling them to deal with calls in accordance with Standard 11 | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | A number of customer service staff are enrolled on a Work Welsh scheme tailored to their areas. The class virtually once a week with a tutor and will have completed 70 hours of training by the end of February. |
| S11.2C | Conduct regular practice sessions with customer service staff (call centre) to assess functionality of procedure continually highlighting and addressing areas for improvement | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King/ Bernadette Elias / Tanya Evans | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | Now that customer service staff have improved their skills via Work Welsh training, practice sessions are to be conducted with the Welsh Language Support Officer over the coming weeks, to be conducted regularly as we progress through the action plan. |

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| S11.2D | Improve recruitment process for Welsh language speakers in accordance with Welsh Language Standard 136 (S136.1, S136.2, S136.3, S136.4 & S136A.1, S136A.2) | Mar-23 | June-23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | Review of the recruitment process is underway. These changes are significant and will affect all teams as such we had delayed the implementation to allow consideration of the WLCO's recruitment seminar and supporting review report presented in July. |
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| S11.3 | The Council must provide training to all staff dealing with telephone calls on how to provide a Welsh language service in accordance with Standard 11. | | | | | | |
| S11.3A | Delivery of long-term programme of training for staff dealing with telephone calls upskilling them to deal with calls in accordance with Standard 11 (S11.2B) | Mar-23 | Apr-24 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | See S11.2b |
| S11.3B | Promotion of training to all staff dealing with telephone calls on how to provide a Welsh language service in accordance with Standard 11 via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Apr-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | See S8.1d and S8.2b |
| S11.3C | Conduct practice sessions with staff to assess functionality of procedure continually highlighting and addressing areas for improvement | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King/ Bernadette Elias / Tanya Evans | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | See S11.2c |

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| S11.4 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 4 have been completed. | | | | | | |
| S11.4A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024 |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration

Standard 17: When there is no Welsh language service available on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must inform the caller (whether by means of an automated message or otherwise) when a Welsh language service will be available.

S17.1 When no Welsh language telephone service is available, the Council must inform callers when a Welsh language service will be available in accordance with standard 17.

| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments * | BRAG |
|--------|--|--------|--------|--------------------------------|--|--|------------|
| S17.1A | Review current guidelines for Welsh language telephone answering procedure and make necessary amends (including development of process map) (S11.1A) | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Leanne Roberts (Customer Experience) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships / Customer Experience service area budgets | See S11.1a |
| S17.1B | Identify service areas with automated messaging service and high-call volumes via BG Council Telephony Review Project (S8.4A) and review compliance. | Mar-23 | Jun-23 | Bernadette Elias | Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Strategic Transformation Team) | Strategic Transformation Team service area budget | See S8.1b |

S17.2 The Council must provide guidance to all staff dealing with relevant telephone calls on the new procedure.

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| S17.2A | Promote amended Welsh language telephone guidance to all staff via Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | See S8.1d |
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| S17.3 | The Council must provide staff with training on the new procedure. | | | | | | |
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| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments * | BRAG |
| S17.3A | Delivery of long-term programme of training for staff dealing with telephone calls upskilling them to deal with calls in accordance with Standard 11 (S11.2B) | Mar-23 | Apr-24 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | See S11.2b |
| S17.4 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed. | | | | | | |
| S17.4A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024 |

** Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration.*

Training

Standard 130: You must provide opportunities during working hours

- a) for your employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and
- b) for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

Standard 131: You must provide opportunities for your employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge to develop their language skills

Standard 132: You must provide training courses so that your employees develop –

- a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales);
- b) an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards;
- c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace

Standard 133: When providing information to new employees (for example, by means of an induction process), you must provide information for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.

Standard 130 is in place to ensure our organisation is providing basic Welsh language training opportunities for all staff. While the Council has provided training opportunities to staff since the Welsh Language Standards were introduced the following update outlines the actions we have taken to be more proactive in encouraging staff to utilize our training provisions.

The 'Post-Entry Training Policy' provides guidance to staff and their managers around the logistics of training during working hours. This policy concerns itself with courses that lead to a formally recognized qualification; despite this we felt it imperative that staff looking to this document for advice were made aware of all level Welsh courses given the benefits Welsh skills bring to all roles. As a result, we have included a section within the policy directing staff to the Welsh language training procedure that was developed in accordance with the training related actions within the CS092 Action Plan. **(S130.1a)**

This change was noted in the managers' brief along with the training procedure guidance that also notes that managers must inform the Welsh Language Support Officer when staff receive training. **(S130.1b, S130.2b)** This information, along with the data collected from training providers such as Dysgu Cymraeg is published within the Welsh Language Annual Report. **(S130.2a, S131.2a, S131.2b)** The Welsh Language training procedure explores the

training recourses available via the intranet, the e-learning portal and Dysgu Cymraeg's entry level and further training course options, and the process of arranging training time. **(S131.1a)** This update was promoted within the managers' brief as part of the CS092 Communications Plan with organisation wide promotion planned for the coming weeks. **(S131.1b)**

Our Welsh language training package outlines the courses available surrounding awareness of Welsh language history and culture, local authorities' legislative requirement to work in accordance to the Welsh language standards; and how to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace. **(S132.1a, S132.1c)** As noted above training promotion is included within the CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan. **(S132.1d, S132.2b)** The general guidelines for ensuring awareness of how to operate in compliance with the Welsh Language Standards have been reviewed and updated to reflect our current hybrid working model. This included a Sway that provides instructions for setting up simultaneous translation for Microsoft Teams calls.

Amendments have been made to the induction programme to establish more proactive consideration of how to work in accordance with the Council's Welsh language requirements. A key development being directing employees to the Welsh language guidance and training elements surrounding the telephone procedure. **(S.133.1Ai, S.133.1Aii, S133.2a)** To guarantee managers are implementing these changes, the updates to our induction procedure were sent out in a managers brief. **(S133.1b, S133.2b)**

Exceptions / Looking Forward

Action S132.1b within the plan is to ensure a Welsh language training package is made available via the new e-learning portal currently being commissioned, by October 2023. Although, the new portal will not be available to staff until the beginning of 2024. As such while Welsh language training is being factored into the portal's development a delay to this actions completion will occur. As a result, the development of a monitoring procedure that ensures Welsh language training is repeated periodically via the e-learning portal will begin once the portal is available to staff. **(S132.2b)**

Standard 130: You must provide opportunities during working hours - (a) for your employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and (b) for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

S130.1 The Council must create a procedure to provide opportunities during working for its employees to have basic Welsh language lessons, and for employees who manage other people to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
|---------------|---|--------|---------|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| S130.1A | Review and development of Post-entry Training Policy to include procedure to provide opportunities for all staff to receive basic Welsh language training during work time. | Mar-23 | June-23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | Inclusion of section surrounding Welsh language training is now included within the Post-Entry Training Policy. |
| S130.1B | Revised Post-Entry Training Policy promoted to all staff via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | May-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | Managers have been briefed on this change in order to arrange training for their teams effectively. |
| S130.2 | The Council must record how many staff are offered this training and how many staff receive this training annually. | | | | | | |
| S130.2A | Quarterly performance information to be collated from Welsh Government, Dysgu Cymraeg and training providers re numbers of staff receiving training. | Mar-23 | Oct- 23 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | Welsh language training figures are collated and published within the Welsh language Annual Report. |
| S130.2B | Managers and staff encouraged to inform the Welsh Language Support Officer when staff receive Welsh language training via | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Communications / Policy & Partnerships service area budget | The new training procedure notes the need for managers |

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| | CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | | | | | | and staff to inform the Welsh Language Support Officer. |
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| S130.3 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed. | | | | | | |
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| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRSAG |
| S130.4A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024. |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration.

Standard 131: You must provide opportunities for your employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge to develop their language skills

S131.1 The Council must create a procedure to provide opportunities for its employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge, to develop their language skills.

| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
|---------|---|--------|--------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| S131.1A | Development of Welsh Language Training - Managers & Staff Guide to include procedure to provide opportunities for all staff to receive further Welsh language training free of charge, to develop their language skills | Mar-23 | May-23 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | The Welsh Language Training Procedure includes guidance on further training opportunities available to staff. |
| S131.1B | Revised Welsh Language Training - Managers & Staff Guide promoted to all staff via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Jun-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | This guidance has been included within a managers brief and further promotion to all staff is being developed as part of the CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan. |

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| S131.2 | The Council must record how many staff are offered this training and how many staff receive this training annually. | | | | | | |
| S131.2A | Quarterly performance information to be collated from training providers re numbers of staff receiving further Welsh language training. | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | See S130.2a. |
| S131.2B | All Council managers must keep a record of staff receiving Welsh Language Training and must provide annual summary to Policy & Partnerships Team | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | See S130.2b. |

| S131.3 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed. | | | | | | |
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| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
| S131.3A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024. |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration

Standard 132: You must provide training courses so that your employees develop -

- (a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales);**
- (b) an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards;**
- (c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.**

S132.1 The Council must provide training to its employees on awareness of the Welsh language, an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and an understanding of the way in which the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.

| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
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| S132.1A | Welsh language training package to be developed in accordance with Standard 132. (S132.1D) | Mar -23 | Jun-23 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | The Welsh Language Training Procedure offers guidance on the recourses available to staff surrounding awareness of the Welsh language, including its history and cultural impacts, guidance on how to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards and how the language can be used in the workplace. |
| S132.1B | Welsh language training package to be made available to all staff via the Council's new e-learning | Oct - 23 | Oct - 23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | The e-learning portal will be made available to staff at the |

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| | portal (currently being commissioned). | | | | Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) | | beginning of 2024. |
| S132.1C | Review and development of Welsh language awareness guidelines available to all staff via the intranet ensuring it includes required learning elements in accordance with Standard 131 | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | Guidelines surrounding training procedure have been updated, with additional Welsh language awareness training being developed. |
| S132.1D | Promotion of Welsh language training package and Welsh language awareness guidelines via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | This has been included within a managers' brief, training options have been sent out to all staff with further promotion scheduled as part of the CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan. |

| S132.2 The Council must have a procedure in place that ensures this training is repeated periodically. | | | | | | | |
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| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
| S132.2A | Develop procedure for ensuring Welsh language training is repeated periodically via e-learning portal (including refresher training) | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | See action S132.1b. |

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|---------|---|--------|--------|------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| S132.2B | Periodic Welsh language training (e.g., refreshers) to be promoted via the CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan | Oct-23 | Dec-23 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | Training opportunities have been promoted to all staff will further promotion scheduled into the CS092 Welsh Language Communications plan. |
|---------|---|--------|--------|------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|

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|---------------|---|--------|--------|------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| S132.2 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed. | | | | | | |
| S131.3A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024. |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration

Standard 133 : When providing information to new employees (for example, by means of an induction process), you must provide information for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.

S133.1 The Council must modify its induction procedures and sessions to include the provision of information to new employees for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.

| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
|-----------|--|--------|----------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| S133.1Ai | Developing and providing information to support the induction programme | Mar-23 | Jun - 23 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | The Corporate Induction Booklet and Managers Checklist have been updated to ensure staff are aware of where to seek Welsh language guidance/resources. |
| S133.1Aii | Review and development of existing online / PDF induction programme to ensure it includes required learning elements in accordance with Standard 131 | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | See S133.1ai. |
| S133.1B | Promotion of revised online / PDF induction programme via the Welsh language via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | All managers have been briefed on the amendments made to the induction programme. |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| S133.2 | The Council must prepare an information pack on the Welsh language and share this pack with all new members of staff. | | | | | | |
| S133.2A | Development of information pack on the Welsh language to be included within induction information for new staff and include in Welsh Language Guidance for staff (S133.1A) | Mar-23 | June-23 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | Resources available to all staff have been updated on the intranet's Welsh Language Guidance section and will be continuously monitored to reflect the most up to date guidance and training opportunities. |
| S133.2B | Promotion of revised induction procedure and sessions via the Welsh language via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) (S133.1B) | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | See S133.1b. |
| S133.3 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that it has carried out enforcement actions 1 and 2. | | | | | | |
| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
| S133.3A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024. |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration

Recruitment

Standard 127: You must assess the Welsh language skills of your employees.

Standard 136: When assessing the requirements for a new or vacant post, you must assess the need for Welsh language skills, and categorise it as a post where one or more of the following apply:

- a) Welsh language skills are essential
- b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post;
- c) Welsh language skills are desirable; or
- d) Welsh language skills are not necessary

Standard 136A: If you have categorised a post as one in which Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, you must:

- a) specify that when advertising the post, and
- b) advertise the post in Welsh

The Council currently uses the Association of Language Testers in Europe's framework to assess the skills of staff, measured via staff self-assessments on iTrent. We are currently working with the Organisational Development Team to consider the current framework and benefits of switching to the Common European Framework of Reference. This decision process being supported by feedback from our Welsh language network members who are in the process of making this transition for their Council's assessment procedures.

The current iTrent system does not facilitate the attachment of hyperlinks to the assessment framework or the documents themselves, as such staff must view the assessment on the intranet or request a copy from their managers. Following Organisational Development's scheduled developments to the system we plan to provide a copy of the framework on iTrent itself, **(S127.1a)** accompanied by promotions to staff explaining the skills levels. **(S127.1c)** These arrangements are intended to make the completion of this assessment quicker and easier for staff to amend their information, resulting in strengthened compliance as this information is reviewed and updated more regularly.

Despite the forthcoming developments to the iTrent system, we recognise the importance of continuing to assess the skills of staff in the meantime. This has been highlighted by reminders being sent out to staff to keep this information up to date as part of the CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan. **(S127.2b)** This information will be published in our Welsh Language Annual Report, and used to ensure we have adequate staffing resilience for Welsh language service. **(S127.3a)**

We have begun working on how our organisation assesses the skills needed for roles, and their subsequent advertising arrangements. Research into Welsh language recruitment platforms has been undertaken, with potential to seek corporate investment to utilize these sites audience for roles categorised as 'Welsh essential'. (Prices range from £100 - £150 per advert) **(S127.1b)** The Recruitment Authorisation Form that is used by managers to establish the Welsh language skills needed for any given role is under review. One of our primary

focus' of this review is to include the consideration of capacity within the posts area of work to provide Welsh language service. **(S136.3a)** Once the form has been updated, managers will be made aware and given guidance on effective use as part of the CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan. **(S136.1, S136.2a, S136a.1a)** Furthermore, amendments to the job advert template to strengthen compliance with standard 136a are awaiting sign off. The proposed amendments see that applicants are made aware of the roles skills category without having to go into the full job description.

Using feedback from our own Organisational Development Team, surrounding authorities' Welsh Language Officers and all research available to us, we continue to explore the barriers of hiring Welsh speakers. **(S136a.1b)** This information, and more importantly, the solutions to overcome said barriers will support the development of the upcoming communications campaign which promotes the value the Council, from an employer's perspective, places on Welsh language skills. **(S136a.1c)**

| Standard 127: You must assess the Welsh language skills of your employees. | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| S127.1 The Council must ensure that it has a procedure in place to assess the Welsh language skills of its employees. | | | | | | | |
| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments * | BRAG |
| S127.1A | Review and development of existing Welsh Language Skills Assessment Procedure, including iTrent system, and update in accordance with Standard 127 | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) Jane Thomas (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | Currently in progress. |
| S127.1B | Scope and test use of online recruitment platforms for Welsh-speakers, particularly for new or existing posts requiring Welsh as an essential skill | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | Would need corporate investment to extend our advertising to these sites. |
| S127.1C | Promote amended Welsh Language Skills Assessment Procedure guidance to Managers and Staff via Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Sept-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | Will commence following action S127.1a's completion. |

| S127.2 The Council must ensure that those skills are assessed annually. | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------|---------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
| S127.2A | Annual assessment of staff Welsh language skills via iTrent system reporting and analysis to inform human resource plan to ensure adequate resources for Welsh language telephone services. | Mar-23 | Oct -23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) Jane Thomas (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | Most recent assessment was published on the 30 th of June 2023 in the Welsh Language Annual Report. |
| S127.2B | Quarterly reminders for staff to update their personal information on iTrent via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) | Organisational Development service area budget | Reminders have been sent out to all staff and more are scheduled as part of the CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan. |
| S127.2C | Promotion to staff explaining Welsh language skills levels (e.g., 'a little' versus 'moderately') via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | In progress as we complete action S127.1a. |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration

Standard 136: When assessing the requirements for a new or vacant post, you must assess the need for Welsh language skills, and categorise it as a post where one or more of the following apply:

- (a) Welsh language skills are essential;**
- (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post;**
- (c) Welsh language skills are desirable; or**
- (d) Welsh language skills are not necessary.**

| S136.1 | The Council must provide training to staff who assess the language skills needs for a new or vacant post on how to carry out assessments that comply with the requirements of Standard 136. | | | | | | |
|---------|---|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
| S136.1A | Support, information, and training provided to staff assessing language skills in-line with revised Welsh Language Skills Assessment procedure promotion via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) (S127.1A) (S127.1C) | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Organisational Development /Communications / Policy & Partnerships service area budget | In progress as we complete action S127.1a. |
| S136.2 | The Council must prepare guidelines for staff on how to carry out an assessment of the linguistic skills needs of a post. | | | | | | |
| S136.2A | Guidelines on assessing linguistic needs of a post, embedded within relevant documentation, to be promoted via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) (S127.1A) (S127.1C) | Mar-23 | Oct-23 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Organisational Development /Communications / Policy & Partnerships service area budget | In progress as we complete action S127.1a. |

| S136.3 | In carrying out assessments under Standard 136, the Council must, on all occasions, consider capacity within the post's area of work to provide a Welsh language service in accordance with the Standards and consider whether the post should be advertised as a post where Welsh language skills are essential. | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------|--------|---------------|--|--|--|--|
| Ref. | Action | Start | | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
| S136.3A | Revise Welsh language skills assessment procedure to include consideration of providing a Welsh language service and the advertisement of Welsh language skills as essential (S127.1) (S127.2A), and monitoring implementation. | Mar-23 | | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Organisational Development) Lee McDonald (Organisational Development) Jane Thomas (Organisational Development) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Organisational Development / Policy & Partnerships service area budget | In progress as we complete action S127.1a. |
| S136.4 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed. | | | | | | | |
| S136.4A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024. |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration

Standard 136A: If you have categorised a post as one in which Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, you must:

(a) specify that when advertising the post, and

(b) advertise the post in Welsh.

S136A.1 The Council must change its procedures so that when the Council categorises a post as one where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, the body must specify that when advertising the post and advertise the post in Welsh in accordance with standard 136A.

| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments | BRAG |
|---------------|---|--------|--------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| S136A.1A | Revise Welsh Language Skills Assessment procedure to consider Welsh language skills post categorisation (S127.1) (S127.2) | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay, Lee McDonald, Jane Thomas (Organisational Development) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Organisational Development / Policy & Partnerships service area budget | In progress as we complete action S127.1a |
| S136A.1B | Undertake research to understand the barriers of hiring Welsh language speakers into posts | Mar-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | In progress. |
| S136A.1C | Develop proactive engagement and communications campaign which promotes the value of Welsh language skills for employers and use within the workplace | Sep-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Policy & Partnerships) Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) | Policy & Partnerships / Communications service area budget | In progress. |
| S136.4 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed. | | | | | | |
| S136.4A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024. |

Promotion of improved Welsh language service

Standard 81: You must promote any Welsh language service you provide and advertise that service in Welsh.

Work will begin on developing and publishing an external campaign that promotes access to the Council's services through the medium of Welsh once we have completed the actions within the action plan to improve our delivery of said services. Once we have strengthened our Welsh language services we intend on using Carmarthenshire County Council's '[Pabynnag ffordd... / Whichever way...](#)' as an example of good practice.

Standard 81: You must promote any Welsh language service you provide and advertise that service in Welsh.

S81.1 For specific promotion campaign about the Welsh language telephone services would be advantageous. Such a campaign should be carried out when the body is confident that its Welsh language telephone services comply with the service delivery Standards.

| Ref. | Action | Start | Finish | Corporate Leadership Team Lead | Action Lead(s) / staffing commitments | Budgetary Commitments * | BRAG |
|--------------|--|--------|--------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| S81.1A | Delivery of specific promotion campaign via CS092 Welsh Language Communications Plan (S8.3A) | Feb-24 | Mar-24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Communications) Louise Bishop (Communications) | Communications service area budget | Work on the development and delivery of this campaign will commence following the completion of all action within this plan as we better our compliance with the service delivery standards. |
| S81.2 | The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement action 1 have been completed. | | | | | | |
| S81.2A | CS092 Action Plan Progress Report | Dec-23 | Mar-24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Policy & Partnerships) | Policy & Partnerships service area budget | This Quarterly Progress Report will aid the completion of the final report for WLCO in March 2024. |

* Additional costs association with budgetary pressures will be presented to Corporate Leadership Team for consideration.

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Appendix 2:

Welsh in the

Workplace Policy

Using the
Welsh Language Internally



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council



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

| Version | Key Changes | Approved by |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| July 2023 | | |

The policy applies to all Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council employees and will support the Council in meeting its statutory duties as set out in the Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice.

The Welsh language is an integral part of Blaenau Gwent’s cultural identity, it helps shape our heritage and our future. The Welsh language is also recognised within the Council’s Corporate Plan 2022/27 as a key performance measure which looks to support the vision of ‘Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open, and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities’.

Therefore, providing opportunities for our staff to use Welsh within the workplace is of great importance to the Council. Increasing the use of Welsh within the workplace furthermore strengthens the quality of service we provide to our residents through the medium of Welsh.

Internally the Council is committed to considering the Welsh language standards in all areas of our authority’s work. We thrive to contribute to the Government’s strategy to reach 1 million speakers by 2050, using our 5-year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022/27 as a framework.

The purpose of this policy is as follows:

- a) To encourage a positive attitude towards the Welsh language that embraces Welsh culture with pride and respect.
- b) Increase the number of staff with Welsh language skills by providing opportunities for employees to learn or improve their linguistic ability.
- c) Ensure the Welsh Language Measure 2011 is upheld on an organisation-wide level.

The policy applies to employees, volunteers and elected Members.

We will promote positive attitudes which encourage our workforce to take pride in the Welsh language and culture

- Welsh language guidance, in relation to meeting our Welsh Language Standards is made available to staff via the Intranet. The information provided is monitored and updated regularly.
- Saint David's Day (Dydd Gwyl Dewi) and Welsh Language Rights Day (Diwrnod Hawliau'r Gymraeg), including other events in the Welsh calendar will be celebrated at work and promoted in the community.
- We will celebrate the achievements of our Welsh learners with internal and public communications work.
- Working with the Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network we will identify and promote opportunities, with our staff and the wider community, where the Welsh language can be used locally.
- Good practice surrounding the Welsh language standards will be noted within our Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report.
- Council reception areas will display the Iaith Gwaith signs encouraging the use of Welsh.

We aim to increase the number of staff with Welsh language skills by providing opportunities for employees to learn or improve their linguistic ability.

Recruitment

- Welsh language requirements for all new or existing roles will be assessed in-line with our Recruitment & Selection policies. This assessment will shape the job advert description and subsequent interview process.
- It is the Council's policy that all posts advertised, internally and externally must note Welsh as a 'desirable' skill as a minimum requirement.
- All job vacancies will be advertised bilingually.
- Applicants will be able to apply through the medium of Welsh and be interviewed through the Welsh language should they wish too.
- Language preference for correspondence surrounding individuals' application is established within the initial application form and recorded appropriately.

New Employees

- Our corporate induction process, for new starters, considers the importance of the use of the Welsh language and Welsh Language Standards as part of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, alongside the 9 protected characteristics noted by the Equality Act (2010).

- New employees will be provided with Blaenau Gwent's Corporate Induction Booklet that establishes the Council's ethos of respect and equality surrounding the Welsh language.
- Managers must direct new employees to the Welsh language guidance section in the Intranet.
- All employees are encouraged to report their Welsh language skills in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding via the iTrent system which is managed by Organisation Development. This information will be used to better understand the Welsh language skills needs across our different directorates.

Increasing the linguistic ability of existing staff

- Welsh language training opportunities and services will be regularly communicated to staff.
- In-house training slides for beginners to learn conversational workplace Welsh are available to all staff via the intranet, these slides offer guidance on how where to access further training.
- Slides surrounding the following are accessible for all staff via the Council's [Intranet](#) :
 - Bilingual Greetings and Key words
 - Useful phrases
 - Out of office templates
- Microsoft Teams backgrounds that display the Work Welsh logo for Welsh speakers and learners are available and will be promoted to encourage staff to use via online meetings. Therefore, promoting and encouraging business to be conducted through the medium of Welsh.
- Work Welsh lanyards and badges are made available for all staff (including lanyards for Welsh language learners).
- The Welsh language training procedure guide will be monitored and updated accordingly to reflect the current provision in place.
- Welsh in the workplace signs will be displayed within Council buildings to promote the use and practice of the Welsh language.

Ensuring the Welsh Language Measure 2011 is upheld on an organisational wide level.

- As part of the induction process managers must direct staff to the Welsh language guidance on the intranet to ensure all staff are aware of our commitments and work in accordance with the Welsh Language Measure 2011.
- The following guidance will be available to all staff on the [Intranet](#):
 - Welsh Language Standards Overview
 - Translation Procedure
 - Telephone Procedure
 - Training Guidance
- All staff will be provided access to training on how to work in accordance with the Welsh Language Measure 2011 via the e-learning portal. Guidance on finding these resources will be outlined in the Welsh Language Training Procedure available on the intranet.
- Employees can update their Welsh language skills assessment via iTrent accounts. Managers are to encourage staff to update their assessment and remind them of the importance of doing so. Further reminders will be communicated to staff throughout the year.
- Welsh language skills workforce data recorded on the iTrent system will be analysed and reported as part of the Council's Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report.
- The Welsh Language Promotion Strategies objectives are to be included within the Council's business planning arrangements. This is to ensure our organisation-wide progress is captured effectively (see Appendix A for the Welsh in the Workplace promotion strategy objectives)
- The Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network meet 6-weekly to share best practice and monitor the progress of the current Welsh Language Promotion Strategy among our partner organisations and relevant internal staff.

Implementation

The successful implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all staff, with managers playing a key role in supporting and overseeing the practical application of this policy.

Further information on meeting the Welsh Language Standards in relation to recruitment & selection and service delivery is available on the Intranet.

Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is consistent with the Welsh Language Standards and current legislation.

Our Welsh Language Compliance commitments will be reported quarterly to the Corporate Leadership Team and will be considered as part of the Forward Work Programme.

How we meet our Welsh Language Standards will also be published via our Welsh Language Annual Monitoring report. This will include:

- The number of new and vacant posts which were categorised as posts where:
 - Welsh language skills were essential
 - Welsh language skills were desirable
 - Welsh language skills must be learnt if appointed
- Welsh language skills data of all staff as presented on the iTrent system.
- Number of employees attending Welsh language skills training by level of training.
- Number and percentage of employees who have completed the Welsh language awareness e-learning training.
- Number of employees who attend courses through the medium of Welsh.
- Reviews and updates of guidance/procedures surrounding the implementation of service delivery, operational, policy making and record keeping standards made throughout the year.

Appendix A: Welsh in the Workplace promotion strategy objectives

| Welsh in the Workplace | |
|---|---|
| Objective 3: <i>To increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace</i> | |
| Indicator(s): | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of staff employed by partner organisations who use the Welsh language in the workplace. • The number of staff learning Welsh. • The number of positions advertised encouraging Welsh language skills 'essential', 'desirable' and 'willing to learn'. | |
| Outcomes: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people engage with the Welsh language. • More people attain fluency in the Welsh language. • More Council employees can use Welsh Language. | |
| Action Reference | Action |
| Action 3.1 | Increase the number of employees who can use Welsh via training and encourage them to wear the 'Dysgu' badges to help Welsh learners socially and improve their confidence. |
| Action 3.2 | Encourage Welsh-speaking employees to improve their fluency in Welsh via training and encourage them to wear the 'Cymraeg' badges to help promote bilingual services. |
| Action 3.3 | Promote Welsh language awareness and language training courses and encourage more employees to attend these |
| Action 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 |
| Action 3.5 | Support all departments to effectively implement the Welsh language standards as per the Council's Compliance Notice |
| Action 3.6 | Effectively monitor the jobs within the Council advertised that go through the Welsh language assessment process |
| Action 3.7 | Provide informal opportunities for colleagues to engage with each other in the medium of Welsh |
| Action 3.8 | Increase Welsh language skills of Social Services staff in-line with More than just words 2022/27 strategy |
| <p>Partners: We will be working with the following partners to achieve this objective:</p> <p>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</p> | |

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Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Standards enforcement investigation: Report and decision notice

This report was prepared in accordance with sections 73 and 74 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

The investigation of a suspicion of failure to comply with standards set by Welsh Ministers was conducted in accordance with section 71 and Schedule 10 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Case number: CS092



Background

The principal aim of the Welsh Language Commissioner, an independent body established by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, is to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh. This is done by raising awareness of the official status of the Welsh language in Wales, by imposing standards on organisations, and by regulating compliance with the Welsh Language Measure. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers.

Two principles will underpin the Commissioner's work:

- in Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language;
- persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they choose to do so.

Contact details

- Phone: 0345 6033 221
- E-mail: post@welshlanguagecommissioner.wales
- Website: welshlanguagecommissioner.wales
- Post: Welsh Language Commissioner
Market Chambers
5–7 St Mary Street
Cardiff
CF10 1AT



Legislative context

Part 4 of the Welsh Language Measure

- i. Part 4 of the Welsh Language Measure sets out a legal framework for imposing a duty on some organisations to comply with one or more standards in relation to the Welsh language. Organisations subject to standards are known as 'relevant persons'. The standards apply to the following areas:
 - service delivery;
 - policy making;
 - operational;
 - promotion;
 - record keeping.
- ii. The duties resulting from the standards require that relevant persons should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, and should promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language.
- iii. Compliance notices given to relevant persons by the Commissioner under Part 4 of the Welsh Language Measure specify the standards requiring compliance, together with the days from which it is required to comply with each standard or to comply with each standard in a particular respect ('imposition days'). Copies of the compliance notices that are in force will be on the Commissioner's website.
- iv. Whilst a compliance notice specific to a relevant person is in force, that person will be required to comply with the standards specified within it.

Part 5 of the Welsh Language Measure

- v. Part 5 of the Welsh Language Measure gives the Commissioner statutory regulatory functions to ensure that relevant persons comply with their duties. Duties may include compliance with Welsh language standards (as stated above), and also requirements imposed on persons by the Commissioner in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure as a result of a failure to comply with a relevant requirement. The Commissioner's Enforcement Policy provides advice and information regarding how the Commissioner will exercise those regulatory functions.
- vi. The regulatory functions resulting from Part 5 of the Welsh Language Measure are:
- to consider whether or not to investigate if there is a complaint regarding the conduct of relevant persons;
 - to investigate suspected failures by relevant persons to comply with duties, to determine investigations and to produce investigation reports;
 - to consider whether or not to take further action (by giving recommendations or advice) if an investigation finds that there was no failure to comply;
 - to take one of the three steps below if an investigation finds that there was a failure to comply:
 - take no further action;
 - do one or more of the following:
 - require the relevant person to prepare an action plan for the purpose of preventing the continuation or repetition of the failure;
 - require the relevant person to take steps for the purpose of preventing the continuation or repetition of the failure;
 - publicise the relevant person's failure to comply with the relevant requirement;
 - require the relevant person to publicise the failure to comply with the relevant requirement;
 - impose a civil penalty on the relevant person.
 - do one or more of the following:
 - give the relevant person or any other person recommendations;
 - give the relevant person or any other person advice;
 - seek to enter into a settlement agreement with the relevant person.
 - to make applications to a county court for orders to enforce compliance;
 - to comply with the duties resulting from appeals and applications for reviews made to the Welsh Language Tribunal;
 - to produce an enforcement policy document;
 - to create and maintain a register of enforcement action.
- vii. The Commissioner will follow the required statutory processes in exercising the Commissioner's regulatory functions.
- viii. The Commissioner's Enforcement Policy contains full information regarding the way in which the Commissioner will exercise the Commissioner's regulatory functions under Part 5 of the Welsh Language Measure.

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1 Summary

- 1.1 This section summarises the background to the investigation and my findings regarding the compliance of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (the Council) with the Welsh Language Standards set out in the investigation's Terms of Reference.

Background to the Investigation

- 1.2 The Welsh Language Commissioner's Regulatory Framework 2021 outlines the methods I use to monitor organisations' compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Those methods include direct checking, namely accessing services as a real customer in order to ascertain what the real experience is for those who wish to use the Welsh language when receiving services from bodies subject to the Welsh language standards. Direct checking exercises are carried out for services such as telephone services, reception areas, websites and correspondence.
- 1.3 The results of monitoring and assessing the Council's service raised suspicions of a failure to comply with service delivery Standards 8, 11 and 17 relating to the Council's telephone services. On the basis of this suspicion, I decided to hold an investigation due to the lack of Welsh telephone services available to our mystery caller on three occasions. The CS092 investigation was therefore opened to consider the suspected failure by the Council to comply with the telephone Standards.
- 1.4 In the Council's original evidence in response to the investigation, however, it became apparent that there was a lack of staff who could speak Welsh and who could provide a telephone service that complied with the requirements of the standards, working as part of the telephone call taking team. The Council relied on staff from other departments who volunteered to support the service, although that was not what happened to our mystery caller during his calls to the Council. In one of the calls made by our mystery caller, the agent showed no awareness that our mystery caller had spoken in Welsh. The Council also showed the original evidence that there was a failure in the Council's understanding of the requirements of the telephone service Standards.
- 1.5 As none of the members of the centre dealing with telephone calls were able to speak Welsh, this raised suspicions that there were wider problems in terms of recruiting, training and awareness of the Welsh language within the organisation. The investigation's Terms of Reference were therefore amended to include additional standards to try to discover whether there were structural problems that prevented the Council from being able to offer a quality Welsh language service to users.

The Commissioner's Findings

- 1.6 From my investigation, I have seen here a list of failures to comply with the Welsh Language Standards in the areas of telephone services, promoting services, assessing the language skills of staff, providing training opportunities and assessing the language needs of posts. This investigation is one of the greatest examples of a failure to comply that I have come across and shows complacency and disrespect on the part of the Council towards the Standards system. I call on the Council to

respond and change its attitude towards compliance with the Welsh Language Standards as a matter of urgency.

- 1.7 In order to succeed in offering quality Welsh language services, an organisation must consider the Welsh language from the top of the organisation downwards. Here, I saw a lack of leadership to ensure that adequate arrangements were put in place to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, to scrutinise that compliance and to provide sufficient resources to be able to offer a Welsh language telephone service. This investigation has shown a lack of long-term structures, planning and vision for the Welsh language in the work areas covered by the Operational Standards (such as training and recruitment). I am of the opinion that the lack of long-term planning in these areas has led directly to a Welsh language telephone service that failed to comply with the Standards.
- 1.8 Staff are a key part of the public face of an organisation, especially so the 'front-line' staff of an organisation dealing with telephone calls and customer service. Staff can influence the language people use when accessing services with an organisation. It is important that staff are trained and directed to behave in a way that encourages users to use the Welsh language. Greeting people in Welsh and offering a Welsh language service by default or proactively is key to ensuring that users choose a Welsh language service. Having robust structures in place for assessing language skills, recruitment and language training, along with building staff confidence in Welsh is therefore vital in order to increase those who can provide a Welsh language service within an organisation.
- 1.9 One of the main influences on the ability of organisations to provide suitable Welsh language provision is the number of their staff who have Welsh language skills. The strategies of providers offering Welsh language services should focus on assessing the Welsh language skills of their staff in order to take advantage of existing skills, build staff confidence and add to the capacity of the Welsh language through recruitment and training.
- 1.10 However, in the evidence presented as part of the inquiry I saw here a failure to assess the language skills of staff, to offer and record Welsh language training to staff and to adequately assess the language requirements of posts. The evidence submitted by the Council raised questions regarding the Council's arrangements for planning training and tracking progress, and their ability to plan and identify those staff who need training to meet the requirements of roles. If there is a lack of recording Welsh language training, there must also be a lack of evaluation of these courses in order to ensure continuous improvement. If the courses are not recorded it also suggests that the Council does not set any targets in terms of staff learning or improving their Welsh. This is despite the fact that, in looking at the evidence submitted and the evidence gathered by the mystery caller and my officers, there is a shortage of staff who can or who are confident enough to offer a Welsh language telephone service in accordance with the Standards. The impression I have from the evidence that has been presented to me is that there is a lack of consideration of the Welsh language in the planning of staffing and training.
- 1.11 This shortcoming in terms of planning, training and assessing language needs means that it is inevitable that the Council will fail to provide a Welsh language service that complies with the Standards. I am of the opinion that the Council will continue to do so if there is no change in the organisation's attitude towards the Welsh language.

- 1.12 In the context of services, the lack of structures in terms of staff planning, training and recruitment has a direct impact on the Welsh language services that the Council can offer.
- 1.13 Furthermore, the evidence suggests that staff awareness of the Welsh language is also low within the organisation. When telephoning the Council, the mystery caller did not receive any acknowledgement that he had used the Welsh language in his calls. The Council's evidence on training provided to staff on Welsh language awareness was also very scant. In the report *'English by default: Understanding the use and non-use of Welsh language services'* by Citizens Advice dated 2015, it is noted:
- "A lack of language awareness or sensitivity on the part of staff members can impact negatively on consumer experience and also deters future use of Welsh on the part of the consumer."*
- 1.14 Customers expect that they can use services quickly and easily, and that there are clear routes to the service. The Council needs to improve its provision if they want Welsh speakers to use the Welsh language services and to offer a welcoming, inclusive service. A low-quality Welsh language service can lead to a lack of confidence or trust in Welsh language services that becomes a barrier to using them.
- 1.15 It is vitally important that the Council takes a more proactive and positive approach to the Welsh language within the organisation. It is necessary that the Council creates a culture where there is awareness and respect for the Welsh language and for Welsh language users. The Council must consider the processes and procedures in place in terms of the Welsh language among its staff to ensure that Welsh language services are accessible to users and that it is a quality service.
- 1.16 It is vitally important that the Council increases the levels of its staff who have Welsh language skills in order to comply with the requirements of the Welsh language standards. Increasing the levels will lead to improving Welsh language services and creating opportunities for users to speak Welsh. The investigation's Enforcement Action requires the Council to create an Action Plan that ensures that the Council undertakes a root and branch review of its arrangements for complying with the Welsh language standards, and to prepare longer-term strategies and plans for the Welsh language in the context of assessing the Welsh language skills of staff, training and assess new job skills. The Council must take these steps so that there are enough Welsh speakers to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards across the organisation and provide a quality Welsh language telephone service to users. The Enforcement Action also gives senior managers in the organisation a specific role in scrutinising progress against that strategy.
- 1.17 Due to my dissatisfaction with several elements of the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards within the investigation, I will publicise the results of this investigation. I believe that the lack of strategic planning in terms of the Welsh language is of public interest in Wales.

2 Terms of reference

Suspicion of failure to comply with Welsh language standards

- 1.2 The Welsh Language Commissioner's Regulatory Framework 2021 outlines the methods we use to monitor organisations' compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Those methods include direct checking, namely accessing services as a real customer in order to ascertain what the real experience is for those who wish to use the Welsh language when receiving services from bodies subject to the Welsh language standards. Direct checking exercises are carried out for services such as telephone services, reception areas, websites and correspondence etc.
- 1.3 The results of service monitoring and assessment of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (the Council) have raised suspicions of failure to comply with service delivery standards 8, 11 and 17 relating to telephone calls.
- 1.4 Three telephone calls were made to the Council's main telephone number namely 01495 311556. At the beginning of the three calls, our caller chose the Welsh option on the automated system and therefore noted their preference for a Welsh language service. The service received by our caller on all calls is set out below.
- 1.5 During the first call on 13/09/2021 at 10:49am:
 - Our caller started the conversation in Welsh and asked whether the Council was distributing dog faeces bags. No greeting was received in Welsh, no Welsh language service, or any acknowledgement that the caller had spoken in Welsh. It was also noted that the caller had felt uncomfortable asking for a Welsh language service especially considering that this option had already been noted.
- 1.6 During the second call on 01/10/2021 at 09:23am:
 - Our caller called the telephone line. There was no answer after 6 minutes and the call was brought to an end.
- 1.7 During the third call on 05/10/2021 at 09:08am:
 - Our caller started the conversation in Welsh but no bilingual greeting was received. Our caller asked in Welsh for the e-mail of the Chief Executive 'Michelle Morris'. The receptionist's response was "I will see if she is available". Our caller had no choice but to intervene in the call by turning to English to explain that he was asking for the e-mail address of Michelle Morris and not to speak to her. In response, the receptionist provided the Chief Executive's e-mail address immediately with no acknowledgement that our caller wanted a service in Welsh.
- 1.8 The evidence gathered as part of our monitoring scheme did not provide a high assurance of compliance with the standards. The evidence raised suspicions that a Welsh language telephone service in accordance with the Standards is not being provided to users by the Council. This is an issue that is likely to affect many of the

borough's residents. In order to ensure the Council's compliance with the Standards, I decided to open a statutory investigation into the suspicion of failure.

Relevant standards

- 1.9 The Council has a duty to comply with the following standards, which was also the case on the date relevant to the complaint:

Standard 8

When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must greet the person in Welsh.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

Standard 11

When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must deal with the call in Welsh if the person so wishes -

- (a) until it is necessary to transfer the call to a member of non-Welsh speaking staff who can provide service on a specific subject; and
- (b) until no Welsh speaking member of staff is available to provide service on that particular subject.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

Standard 17

When no Welsh language service is available on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must inform the caller (whether by means of an automated message or otherwise) when a Welsh language service will be available.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

Decision to investigate

- 1.10 Based on the above, I decided to conduct an investigation under section 71 of the Welsh Language Measure, in order to determine whether there had been a failure by the Council to comply with the standards noted. I issued a notice of the decision to investigate, and of the proposed terms of reference, to the Council on 11/11/2021.
- 1.11 I gave notice of the investigation's final terms of reference to the Council on 15/11/2021. The final terms of reference can be seen as an appendix to this report.

Additional investigation standards

- 1.12 Having received the Council's first evidence in response to the Evidence Notice, however, I decided to extend the investigation's Terms of Reference.

- 1.13 The Council noted in its evidence in response to the original Evidence Notice that none of the members of the Council's contact centres dealing with calls from the public can speak Welsh fluently. We understand that the Council is reliant on staff in other roles with the Council, who are Welsh speakers, to volunteer to answer Welsh telephone calls but that there were no staff within the relevant department who had Welsh language skills. This created suspicion of a failure to comply with further standards and therefore, following receipt of the evidence, I decided to revise the investigation's Terms of Reference to include consideration of compliance with additional standards.
- 1.14 The Council has a duty to comply with the following standards, which was also the case on the dates on which the mystery calls were made:

Standard 81

You must promote and advertise any Welsh language service you provide, and do so in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Standard 82

If you provide a service in Welsh which corresponds to a service you provide in English, any publicity or document you produce, or website you publish, which refers to the English language service must note that a corresponding service is available in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Standard 127

You must assess the Welsh language skills of your employees.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Standard 130

You must provide opportunities during working hours -
(a) for your employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and
(b) for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Standard 131

You must provide opportunities for your employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge to develop their language skills.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Standard 132

You must provide training courses in order for your employees to develop -
(a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales);

(b) an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards;

30/09/2016

(c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.

Imposition day: 30/09/2016

Standard 133

When providing information to new employees (for example, by means of an induction process), you must provide information to raise their awareness of the Welsh language.

Imposition day: 30/09/2016

Standard 136

When assessing the requirements for a new or vacant post, you must assess the need for Welsh language skills, and categorise it as a post where one or more of the following applies

-

(a) Welsh language skills are essential;

(b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post;

(c) Welsh language skills are desirable; or

(ch) Welsh language skills are not necessary.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Standard 136A

If you have categorised a post as one in which Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, you must -

(a) specify that when advertising the post, and

(b) advertise the post in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

- 1.15 I decided to conduct an investigation under section 71 of the Welsh Language Measure, in order to determine whether there had been a failure by the Council to comply with the additional standards noted above. I issued a notice of the decision to extend the investigation's Terms of Reference and provided a copy of the proposed revised terms of reference, to the Council on 02/02/2022.
- 1.16 I gave notice of the investigation's final terms of reference to the Council on 02/03/2022. The final revised terms of reference can be seen as an appendix to this report.

3 Evidence taken during the investigation

Evidence notice

- 2.1 On 15/11/2021, I issued an evidence notice to the Council. The evidence notice required the Council to provide the following evidence:

Information and documents

1. In the letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner to the Council dated 11/11/2021 evidence was presented that the service received by our mystery caller on 13/09/21, 1/10/21 and 5/10/21 raised suspicion that a Welsh language telephone service in accordance with the Standards is not being provided by the Council. Does the Council accept the evidence submitted by the Welsh Language Commissioner? If the evidence is accepted and if the Council accepts that a Welsh language telephone service in accordance with the Standards is not being provided, please explain why there is a failure to comply.
2. What procedure is in place to ensure the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards relating to telephone services? Please provide a copy of any relevant policies or documents.
3. What instructions or guidelines have been given to Council staff on how to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards when answering telephone calls?
Please provide evidence and copies of these instructions or guidelines to staff.
4. When do staff receive the information discussed in question 3 and how often are staff reminded of these instructions or guidelines?
5. What training has been given to Council staff on how to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards when answering telephone calls? When and how often do staff receive this training?
6. What is the Council's monitoring or inspection process to ensure that calls from users wanting a Welsh language service receive a telephone service in Welsh in accordance with the Standards? Please provide evidence.
7. How many members of staff can speak Welsh within the Council Offices and deal with the public's Welsh language telephone calls?
8. How is the workforce within the Council organised so that a member of staff who can speak Welsh is available at any time for dealing with calls in Welsh from the public?
9. If the Council accepts that the Commissioner's telephone caller has received service which raises a suspicion of failure to comply with Welsh

Language Standards, what steps have been taken or will be taken in the future to ensure that the same behaviour does not occur again?

10. Please provide any additional information or evidence you wish us to consider when determining your compliance with the standards noted in the inquiry's terms of reference.
11. Please provide a copy of any policy, procedure, guideline or other document you wish us to consider when determining your compliance with the standards noted in the inquiry's terms of reference.

2.2 In response, I received evidence from the Council on 20/12/2021. Also, copies of the following documents were provided:

- Annex A – Code of Conduct;
- Annex B – Telephone Answering Flowchart;
- Annex C – Bilingual greetings;
- Annex D – Useful phrases;
- Annex E – Welsh Language Measure Compliance Notice;
- Annex F – Staff Guidance on Welsh Language Standards.

2.3 I considered all the information provided in response to the evidence notice.

The evidence received

2.4 In response to question 1 within the Evidence Notice, the Council stated that it accepts the evidence submitted and acknowledges its failure to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.

2.5 The Council said in relation to Standard 17 however, they believe that the call came during a period when the contact centre received a large number of calls leading to longer waiting times for all customers who needed to speak to a contact centre agent. The Council claimed that this had led to an inconsistency in service as the call would have been answered as soon as the next agent was available. The Council explained that all calls are processed by the Contact Centre's general call handling processes where there is no favourable treatment for Welsh or English calls received. The Council stated that it was not clear whether a Welsh language service would have been offered as the mystery shopper had not waited on the line long enough for this to be assessed.

2.6 In response to questions 2 and 3 within the Evidence Notice, the Council stated that its staff Code of Conduct outlines the Council's statutory policies and sets out the guidelines which must be adhered to. However, the Council stated that after consideration, there could be a greater emphasis on adhering to their Compliance Notice in relation to the Welsh Language Standards.

2.7 The Council stated that the Welsh Language Guidelines are also promoted on the front page of the intranet which is accessible to staff and provides information on the telephone services procedures and the Welsh Language Standards.

- 2.8 The Council explained that a Telephone Answering Flow Chart and a bilingual Greetings document is provided to all contact centre Agents and that they are all aware of the Welsh language requirements.
- 2.9 I asked in question 4 when did staff receive the information and how often are staff reminded of these instructions or guidelines. The Council explained that the information was available to staff via the intranet. The Council stated that it was compulsory to ensure that new staff were aware of the Welsh Language Standards and policies during their induction period. The Council explained that it was the responsibility of Heads of Service to ensure that services complied fully with the Welsh Language Standards but no explanation was given of the arrangements made by the relevant Head of Service in this case. The Council explained that the contact centre Agents were informed of the above document in the form of e-mails and team meetings or on-line. The Council stated that an internal bi-monthly communications campaign was currently being developed to promote the Welsh Language Standards, alongside the instructions and guidance available in the new year.
- 2.10 In response to question 5 regarding what training has been given to staff on how to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards when answering telephone calls and how often staff receive this training, the Council stated that limited training had been provided to Council staff on an intermittent basis. The Council explained that opportunities through the Welsh Government's Learning Welsh website were also being promoted to encourage staff to learn Welsh. A basic Welsh language training course for staff was currently being developed which was being tailored to support staff to be able to answer Welsh language calls confidently and competently.
- 2.11 The Council stated that the training would be delivered face to face on-line, but there would be PowerPoint slides available for reference which would also include embedded audio files from general telephone conversations. The Council claimed that further bespoke sessions were also being developed to address the needs of a particular service area. Additional training is currently available for staff with intermediate and advanced Welsh language skills, particularly for staff who volunteer to support the Corporate Welsh Speakers List and these would be promoted in the new year.
- 2.12 The Council explained that before covid-19 and before moving to work more flexibly, some contact centre Agents and face-to-face receptionists were undertaking basic training courses on speaking Welsh. One of these Agents had recently moved across to the Council's new Community Hub services supporting the provision of a Welsh language service in this area.
- 2.13 In response to question 6 regarding the Council's processes for monitoring or inspecting telephone calls, the Council explained that the Professional Lead for Engagement, Equality and the Welsh Language supported the contact centre to consider the requirements of a Welsh language service during a customer service review project in order to facilitate service excellence. That support related to ensuring compliance with the changes to the Welsh language response system and included consideration of the telephone services provided and assisting them to improve the service.

- 2.14 As part of our annual Welsh Language Self-Assessment in August 2021, the Professional Lead for Engagement, Equality and the Welsh Language undertook a 'direct check' of the Welsh telephone service. This internal inspection highlighted concerns about meeting standards 8 and 11 with one particular agent. This was reported to Senior Staff where guidance was provided on how to address the concerns. The Council explained that, as a result, all Agents were reminded of the importance of greeting and adhering to the Welsh Language Standards bilingually. Bespoke training courses are being developed and are included in the Agents' Training Needs Analysis. The Council stated that this was included in the Customer Service review in order to continue to improve Customer Experience.
- 2.15 In response to questions 7 and 8 the Council explained that no member or agent of the Blaenau Gwent contact centre dealing with calls from the public speaks Welsh fluently. There was 1 member of staff who used to follow basic Welsh language skills training, as was noted, and that they were now part of the Council's Community Hubs service. However, the Council explained that 12 members of staff volunteered to assist the Council in providing Welsh language services as part of their Corporate Welsh Speakers List. Of those, a high proportion dealt with calls from the public. The Council stated that the list aimed to ensure that a Welsh speaking member of staff was available at any time to deal with Welsh language calls from the public.
- 2.16 In question 9 I asked whether the Council accepted that the mystery caller received a service that raised suspicions of failure to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, what action had been taken or would be taken in the future to ensure that the same conduct does not happen again. The Council stated that there would be a Review of the Council's Code of Conduct to include information specifically on meeting the Welsh Language Standards and Compliance notice. Regular internal training will be available to staff on the requirements of the Welsh Language Standard and Welsh language training (beginners, intermediate and advanced).
- 2.17 Furthermore, the Council stated that there would be a review of the full end-to-end process for providing a Welsh language telephone service in accordance with standards 8, 11 and 17. The Council stated that if they were unable to provide a Welsh language service, due to circumstances beyond their control, then an automated message would explain that the service is not available and when it will be available.
- 2.18 The Council stated that an internal bi-monthly communications campaign would be developed to promote and reinforce the Welsh Language Standards, guidance on the procedure for providing a Welsh language telephone service, information and training opportunities. There will also be regular 'direct check' internal inspection by a Professional Lead for Engagement, Equality and the Welsh Language to ensure that the Council meets its Welsh language requirements in relation to the provision of telephone services.
- 2.19 A 'Telephone Answering Flow Chart', 'Bilingual Greetings', and 'Useful Phrases' were provided to contact centre Agents immediately after our investigation became known. The Council stated that there were also regular discussions at 1 to 1 meetings with the contact centre Agents to ensure that they understood the importance of complying with the Welsh language standards regularly and that they are adhered to.

2.20 No further evidence was submitted in answer to questions 10 and 11.

2.21 Due to some of the evidence submitted (as detailed above), I served a second Evidence Notice on the Council on 02/03/2022. The Second Evidence Notice required the Council to provide the following evidence:

Information and documents

1. Does the Council believe that the process detailed in the Telephone Call Answering Process flowchart submitted as part of the Council's evidence dated 20/12/21 complies with Standard 11?
2. Please provide details of how the Council promotes its Welsh language services.
3. Please provide details of how the Council promotes its Welsh language telephone service.
4. Please provide evidence that any publicity or document produced by the Council, or a website published, which refers to an English language telephone service, also states that a corresponding service is available in Welsh.
5. In the Council's evidence dated 20/12/21, it was noted that no agents at the contact centre dealing with calls from the public were fluent in Welsh. It was explained that 12 members of staff volunteered to assist the Council in providing Welsh language service as part of their Corporate Welsh Speakers List. Please provide full information on how this volunteering process works taking into account the other duties of those staff and their availability to volunteer.
6. As it is volunteers who provide the Council's Welsh language telephone service, how does the Council ensure the quality of that telephone service and its compliance with the requirements of the Standards.
7. Please provide details of what organisation the Council has in place to assess the Welsh language skills of its employees.
8. How many posts within the contact centre have been advertised in the last three years? Of the posts advertised, how many have been advertised as posts where (a) Welsh language skills are essential; (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post; (c) that Welsh language skills are desirable; (d) that Welsh language skills are not necessary.
9. Please provide a copy of your linguistic needs assessments for each post advertised for the contact centre in the last three years.
10. When advertising posts for the contact centre where Welsh language skills for the posts were essential, desirable or needed to be learnt, please provide evidence that the Council noted this in the job adverts. Please also

provide evidence that the posts have been advertised in Welsh. Please provide this evidence for the posts that have been advertised for the contact centre in the last three years.

11. In the last three years, when a post was advertised for the contact centre as a post where Welsh language skills were essential, how many applications were received from applicants with the necessary Welsh language skills?
12. In the last three years, when a post was advertised for the contact centre as a post where Welsh language skills were not necessary, please explain how you made that assessment in relation to language skills.
13. How many Council staff have received basic Welsh lessons in the last three years? Please indicate in which departments these staff worked.
14. How many Council staff have completed further Welsh language training in order to develop their Welsh language skills in the last three years? Please indicate in which departments these staff worked.
15. How many of the staff who deal with receiving telephone calls to the Council's general numbers have received Welsh language skills training in the last three years? Of those staff who have received training, please state the level of Welsh language courses.
16. To what extent has language skills development been incorporated into the requirements of the posts and job descriptions within the Contact Centre.
17. Please provide details of all training sessions provided to staff on (a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales); (b) an understanding of the duty to act in accordance with Welsh language standards; (c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace in the last 3 years. Please give details of the posts held by the staff who attended the training and their areas of work.
18. Please provide details of all Welsh language awareness training sessions that have been given to contact centre staff in the last 3 years.
19. Please provide full details of the guidelines and/or training provided to new staff on Welsh language awareness and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.
20. Please provide any additional information or evidence you wish us to consider when determining your compliance with the standards noted in the investigation's terms of reference.
21. Please provide a copy of any policy, procedure, guideline or other document which you wish us to consider when determining whether you have complied with the standards noted in the investigation's terms of reference.

2.22 In response, I received evidence from the Council on 27/04/2022. Also, copies of the following documents were provided:

- Annex A – Introduction to the Welsh language (including telephone answering procedure)
- Annex B – Workforce Competency Framework (non-management)
- Annex C – Bilingual Greetings and Key Words;
- Annex D – Useful Phrases
- Appendix 1 – Recruitment Authorisation;
- Appendix 2 – Job Description.

2.23 I considered all the information submitted in response to the evidence notice.

The evidence received in response to the Second Evidence Notice

2.24 The Council has asked me to note in their response that the evidence requested over the last three years was information during the years of the Covid-19 pandemic when the Council was dealing with an emergency.

2.25 I asked firstly whether the Council believed the process detailed in the Telephone Call Answering Process flowchart submitted as part of the Council's first evidence dated 20/12/21 complied with Standard 11. The Council replied that it was not of the opinion that the Flow Chart complied with the Standards. The Council explained that the telephone procedure introduced in December 2021 was in place before the letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office on 27 August 2019 which provided an explanation on how to interpret Standard 11 was received.

2.26 The Council explained that since then a revised Telephone Answering Procedure Flowchart had been developed which complies with Standard 11 and has been shared with all staff. The Council stated that this procedure is promoted and referred to at team meetings. A copy of this revised procedure was attached with the Council's response.

2.27 In response to the second question, the Council stated that it publishes and shares information about its Welsh language services through social media, their web page, leaflets and advertisements. No evidence was given of this and there are no references to this relevant information on their websites submitted by the Council. The Council explained that the Community Hubs delivery model has been in place since July 2021 and operated in the communities across Blaenau Gwent from 6 Libraries and from an Organisation. Community Hub staff promote Welsh language services in the face-to-face customer service setting, through adverts displaying opening times and through banners used in the Libraries.

2.28 The Council explained that the Hub dealing with the Council's telephone service promotes Welsh language services by automated message. The Council stated that

all callers were greeted in Welsh before being offered the option to take up the call with a Customer Service agent in Welsh or in English.

- 2.29 The Council stated that promoting and advertising Welsh language services was not treated less favourably than English language services and was promoted regularly with equal prominence and accessibility. For example, the Council stated that its welcome screen website offers visitors a clear language choice and gives users the opportunity to use the Welsh language when accessing the website's services.
- 2.30 In response to question 3 which asked how the Council promoted its Welsh language telephone service, the Council responded:
- Corporate Contact Centre automated message – by telephoning 01495 311556, the Council's main contact details you will be greeted in Welsh immediately with an option to press 1 for Welsh and press 2 for English.
 - Contact Centre agents answering the telephone bilingually – following the Telephone Answering Procedure Flowchart
 - Contact Centre agents, in greeting the caller provide information that a Welsh language service is available if they wish to continue the conversation in Welsh
 - The Contact Centre promotes the Welsh language and welcomes correspondence from users in Welsh
 - Contact details on the Council's Website are available in Welsh and in English
- 2.31 In response to question 4 within the Second Evidence Notice, the Council stated that its website and all the Council's publicity materials were in Welsh and in English.
- 2.32 The Council stated that there are social media messages from the Corporate Communications teams when publicising the Council's telephone system across all social platforms in Welsh and in English but no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate these messages.
- 2.33 The Council claimed that the Council's Corporate e-mail address, info@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk, also promoted the Council's telephone service by providing the choice of Welsh and English. The Council stated that it promoted the Corporate Contact Centre's telephone service to residents on specific projects, including the option of speaking to an agent in their chosen language. The Council stated that the Customer Relationship Management system operated within the Contact Centre also promoted the choice of Welsh or English and could record the language choice of residents for telephone conversations.
- 2.34 In question 5, I asked the Council about the 12 members of staff who had volunteered to assist the Council in providing Welsh language service as part of their Corporate Welsh Speakers List. I asked the Council to provide full information regarding how this volunteering process works considering the other duties of those staff and their availability to volunteer.

- 2.35 The Council explained that there was a Corporate Welsh Speakers List of staff who volunteered to support the Contact Centre. The Council stated that the List included staff who were fluent in Welsh from across the organisation and who worked in a variety of different service areas. The Council said that all volunteers had clerical roles and usually handled calls as part of their day-to-day duties. The Council claimed it was possible to contact them via Microsoft Teams. The list is available on the Council's intranet via the Telephone Directory.
- 2.36 The Council claimed that when telephoning the Contact Centre an automated message is provided which specifically informs the customer that a Welsh language service is available or will continue to be available in Welsh. If a customer chooses to receive the service in Welsh, they will be transferred to a call centre agent. The Council explained that the call centre agent greets the customer bilingually and establishes the nature of the call. At that point, the customer waits while the agent makes every effort to transfer the customer to a volunteer on the Corporate Welsh Speakers List from the relevant department, who can continue to deal with the call in Welsh. However, depending on the nature of the call, it may be necessary to transfer the call to a member of staff who does not speak Welsh who can provide a service on a specific subject matter. The Council referred specifically to Annex A.
- 2.37 The Council stated that the Corporate Welsh Speakers List is reviewed and updated twice a year, but volunteers are encouraged to inform the Policy and Partnerships Team if they change roles or leave the organisation. Communication campaigns are also promoted to encourage existing or new staff to volunteer. All volunteers are also encouraged to attend higher Welsh language training opportunities to further develop skills and confidence and allow them to do so within work time which is also aimed at increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace. The Council explained that since then, one member of staff in the Contact Centre service has asked to take part in Welsh language training. The Council stated that all 6 Community Hub Officers had also expressed the same request and this was currently being supported to establish Welsh Language training for them. This will improve and support the delivery of Customer Services across the Council in the face-to-face setting and over the telephone.
- 2.38 In question 6, I asked the Council, as it is volunteers who provide the Council's Welsh language telephone service, how does the Council ensure the quality of that telephone service and its compliance with the requirements of the Standards. The Council stated that all volunteers were fluent in Welsh and that all staff had a duty to provide a quality service to all their customers, in accordance with their Workforce Competence Framework (not managerial).
- 2.39 The Council further claimed that internal verification checks were carried out annually by the Policy and Partnerships Team where mystery calls were made to the Contact Centre in Welsh to monitor and assess the quality of the telephone service provided. Any areas identified for development or improvement were considered and discussed by the Customer Experience and Transformation Service Manager. The Council stated that these arrangements were established following receipt of '*Compliance Supervision - A good practice advice document*' from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office which enables them to comply with our statutory requirements.
- 2.40 In question 7, I asked the Council to provide details of what arrangements it had in place to assess the Welsh language skills of its employees.

- 2.41 The Council stated that the Council's workforce data, including the selection of Welsh language correspondence and Welsh language skills and capabilities, were stored on a system called iTrent. New staff were encouraged to provide this information when joining the organisation and existing staff were encouraged to update their information regularly through communication notifications. The Council stated that iTrent was able to analyse all workforce data and produce reports that are used to assess the Welsh language skills of its employees.
- 2.42 In question 8, I asked how many posts within the contact centre had been advertised in the last three years? Of the posts advertised, how many have been advertised as posts where (a) Welsh language skills are essential; (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post; (c) Welsh language skills are desirable; (d) Welsh language skills are not necessary.
- 2.43 The Council stated that the Contact Centre had advertised on two occasions over the 3 years and that both posts had been categorised as posts where Welsh language skills were desirable.
- 2.44 In question 9, I asked the Council to provide a copy of their linguistic needs assessments in respect of each post advertised for the contact centre in the last three years. The Council attached a copy of its 'Recruitment Authorisation form and report' document in relation to recruitment to the team.
- 2.45 I asked for evidence in question 10, where Welsh language skills for the posts were essential, desirable or Welsh language skills needed to be learnt, that the Council had noted this in the job adverts. I also asked the Council to provide evidence that the posts had been advertised in Welsh. The Council has provided a copy of the 'Job Description' document for 4 posts within the Contact Centre which were advertised in 2022.
- 2.46 In question 11, I asked, when a post was advertised for the contact centre in the last three years as a post where Welsh language skills were essential, how many applications were received from applicants with the necessary Welsh language skills? The Council stated that on both occasions where Contact Centre posts had been advertised over the last three years, none of the applicants had Welsh language skills.
- 2.47 In question 12, I asked the Council, when a post was advertised for the contact centre in the last three years as a post where Welsh language skills were not necessary, to explain how that assessment was made in relation to language skills. The Council replied that all posts within the Contact Centre had been advertised with Welsh language skills desirable
- 2.48 I asked the Council in question 13 how many Council staff had received basic Welsh lessons in the last three years and asked them to note in which departments these staff worked. The Council stated that since 2019 it had promoted the Welsh Government's Welsh at Work language course on-line. Staff from across the entire organisation were allowed to attend training during normal working hours. The Council claimed that a number of basic Welsh resources were also available to members of staff such as on their intranet 'Bilingual greetings and key words' and 'Useful Phrases'.

- 2.49 The Council stated that they do not know how many Council staff have received basic Welsh lessons in the last three years as this is not something that is currently recorded. Within Customer Services, the Council stated that all staff (the Contact Centre and Community Hubs) were currently receiving basic training in Welsh. With all Community Hub staff and 1 Contact Centre member of staff moving on to more advanced longer term Welsh courses in the near future. This will form part of their future training and development plans and support the delivery of Customer Services to users.
- 2.50 In question 14, I asked the Council how many of its staff had completed further Welsh language training in order to develop their Welsh language skills in the last three years? I asked the Council to indicate in which departments these staff worked. The Council stated that it was not aware how many Council staff had completed further Welsh language training as this was not something they recorded. However, the Council stated that further Welsh language training opportunities were currently being promoted across the organisation.
- 2.51 The Council stated that within their Customer Services all staff (in the Contact Centre and Community Hubs) were currently receiving basic training in Welsh. The council claimed that all Community Hub staff and 1 Contact Centre member of staff were moving on to more detailed long-term Welsh courses in the future. This would form part of their future training and development plans and support the delivery of Customer Services to our residents.
- 2.52 In question 15, I asked how many of the staff dealing with answering telephone calls to the Council's general numbers had received Welsh language skills training in the last three years? Of those staff who had received training, I asked the Council to state the level of Welsh language learning courses.
- 2.53 The Council stated that all staff dealing with telephone calls to the Council's Contact Centre telephone number had received basic Welsh language skills training during the last three years. The Council stated that this process was currently ongoing and had been extended to staff within the IAA Social Services and Benefits Services teams. This would be an ongoing process over the coming years to support refresher training and the training and development needs of staff members.
- 2.54 I asked the Council in question 16 to what extent had language skills development been incorporated into the requirements of the posts and job descriptions within the Contact Centre. The Council stated that Welsh language skills had been a desirable skill within Job Descriptions as part of the recruitment process. However, developing language skills is not part of staff members' training needs allowance and staff development.
- 2.55 I asked the Council in question 17 to provide details of all training sessions provided to staff on (a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales); (b) an understanding of the duty to act in accordance with Welsh language standards; (c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace in the last 3 years. I also asked the Council to give details of the posts and the area of work of the staff who attended.
- 2.56 The Council stated that the Council's Workforce Development Strategy promoted and encouraged staff to seek out training and development opportunities, including

in Welsh, and this is facilitated through our existing arrangements for managers. The Council stated, in line with question 13, we refer staff to any known training opportunities available.

- 2.57 I then asked for details of all Welsh language awareness training sessions that had been given to contact centre staff in the last 3 years.
- 2.58 The Council stated that language improvement sessions were currently being held with all members of Customer Service staff, including Community Hubs, the Contact Centre and Benefits Services. The Council claimed that basic Welsh language training and common phrases were given at Team Meetings and 1 to 1 sessions to support the delivery of Customer Services to residents.
- 2.59 In question 19 I asked for details of the guidelines and/or training provided to new staff on Welsh language awareness and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. The Council stated that all new staff received a Corporate Induction session when (a) (b) and (c) were included by the Manager under our Corporate Policies i.e. the Well-being of Future Generations Act; Welsh Language Standards etc.

Service Delivery Standards

4 Compliance with standard 8: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

- 4.1 Here is the wording of the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 8

When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must greet the person in Welsh.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

Interpretations

- 4.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 states in paragraph 4.2.2 – 4.2.6:

“Standard 8

- 4.2.2. *A body must greet a person in Welsh when that person contacts the body on one of its relevant telephone numbers.*
- 4.2.3. *The term 'greet' may include phrases which acknowledge and welcome the caller, before the body starts to deal with the call. For example, a body may greet a person by saying 'Bore Da/Prynhawn Da/Noswaith Dda', followed by the body's name in Welsh (if it exists). The term 'greet' does not include dealing with the call itself.*
- 4.2.4. *A body may greet persons in Welsh via a pre-recorded automated message or through a member of staff greeting that person in Welsh when answering the call.*
- 4.2.5. *The requirements of this standard apply to the initial greeting only. The language of the remainder of the call will depend on the person's language choice in accordance with standard 10 or 11 (depending on which standard has been imposed on the body).*
- 4.2.6. *The requirements of standard 20 apply to greetings given to a person who makes contact via a direct line telephone number belonging to a body's department or a member of staff.”*

Requirements of the standard

- 4.3 A body must ensure when a person contacts them on their main telephone number (or on one of their main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, that the caller receives a greeting in Welsh.

Considering compliance with the standard

- 4.4 Evidence was presented of the results of our 'direct checking' of the Council's telephone services, namely accessing services as a real customer, for example by using a telephone or reception service.
- 4.5 Three telephone calls were made to the Council's main telephone number namely 01495 311556. At the beginning of the three calls, our caller chose the Welsh option on the automated system and therefore noted their preference for a Welsh language service. The service received by our caller on all calls is set out below.
- 4.6 During the first call on 13/09/2021 at 10:49am, our caller started the conversation in Welsh and asked whether the Council was distributing dog faeces bags. No greeting was received in Welsh, no Welsh language service, or any acknowledgement that the caller had spoken in Welsh. It was also noted that the caller had felt uncomfortable asking for a Welsh language service especially considering that this option had already been noted.
- 4.7 During the second call on 01/10/2021 at 09:23am, our caller called the telephone line. There was no answer after 6 minutes and the call ended.
- 4.8 During the third call on 05/10/2021 at 09:08am, our caller started the conversation in Welsh but no bilingual greeting was received. Our caller asked in Welsh for the e-mail of the Chief Executive using 'Michelle Morris'. The receptionist's response was "I will see if she is available". Our caller had no choice but to intervene in the call by turning to English to explain that he was asking for the e-mail address of Michelle Morris and not to speak to her. The receptionist provided the e-mail address immediately with no acknowledgement that our caller wanted a service in Welsh.
- 4.9 In response to question 1 within the Evidence Notice, the Council stated that it accepted the evidence submitted and acknowledged its failure to comply with the Welsh Language Standards relating to telephone service.
- 4.10 The evidence of our mystery caller is clear that the caller did not receive a Welsh greeting message from the individual who answered the call on two of the three calls to the main telephone number. The other call was not answered.
- 4.11 However, the mystery caller's record notes that the automated message received at the beginning of the call complies with the standards. Although an automated message does not have to provide a 'greeting' in order to comply with the Standards, it is possible that a Welsh greeting was given in that message.
- 4.12 However, my officers tried the same main telephone number for the Council 01495 311556 again on more than one occasion in May 2022 when preparing this report. My officers received a lengthy message in English only regarding dealing with a high level of calls relating to the £150 'Cost of Living payment'. This message was not in Welsh. This lengthy message appeared to be a message that had been put in place temporarily to provide additional information (in English only) to callers over a busy period.
- 4.13 Furthermore, the message following the 'temporary' message asking a caller to choose the Welsh or English option was also given in English only. At the beginning of that automated message, the name of the Council was given in Welsh before a

greeting in English only and the remainder of the message gave instructions regarding language choice in English only. Therefore, no greeting was given in Welsh. Considering that the date of those calls follows the opening of this investigation and follows the Council's evidence where the Council suggested that improvements had been made to the Welsh language telephone service, this was very disappointing.

4.14 In considering the evidence as a whole, therefore, specifically in considering that there was no Welsh greeting in the message in May 2022 either, the Council was not in compliance with Standard 8 at the time of the calls which resulted in the commencement of this investigation.

Findings

4.15 A body must ensure when a person contacts them on their main telephone number (or on one of their main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, that the caller receives a greeting in Welsh.

4.16 Our mystery caller did not receive a greeting in Welsh on more than one occasion when trying one of the Council's main telephone numbers as part of our direct checking. In weighing up our evidence, it appears that the mystery caller would not have received a greeting in Welsh on the automated message either.

4.17 That is a failure to comply with Standard 8.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 8

4.18 I determine that the Council has failed to comply with Standard 8 on the basis that our mystery caller did not receive a greeting in Welsh on two telephone calls.

Further action

4.19 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.

4.20 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 8, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.

4.21 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 8: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must develop a standard Welsh language telephone greeting.
2. The Council must train all Council staff dealing with telephone calls from the public on how to give the standard Welsh telephone greeting accurately and in compliance with Standard 8.
3. The Council must raise awareness within its staff of the importance of providing a Welsh greeting and of including a Welsh greeting at the beginning of calls.

4. The Council must evaluate any automated greeting messages to check that a greeting in Welsh is placed on the automated message if a greeting is given in English.
5. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 4 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

5 Compliance with standard 11: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

- 5.1 Here is the wording of the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 11

When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must deal with the call in Welsh if the person so wishes -

- (a) until it is necessary to transfer the call to a member of non-Welsh speaking staff who can provide service on a specific subject matter; and
- (b) until no Welsh speaking member of staff is available to provide service on that specific subject matter.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

Interpretations

- 5.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 states in paragraph 4.2.2 – 4.2.6:

5.3 “**Standard 11**

- 4.2.17. *If a person contacts the body on one of its relevant telephone numbers, the body must deal with the call in Welsh once it is aware that the person wishes to receive a Welsh language service over the telephone, transferring the call to a member of staff who is able to deal with the specific subject matter in Welsh if required.*
- 4.2.18. *A person would be likely to wish to receive a service in Welsh over the telephone should they start a conversation with the body in Welsh first. Should a person start a conversation in English first, a body must not interpret that to mean that the person does not wish to receive a telephone service in Welsh.*
- 4.2.19. *If the person's wish to receive a Welsh language service is not already clear (e.g. if they do not start the conversation in Welsh or if they do not ask for a Welsh language service before the body does so), a body is expected to establish that wish more proactively, by asking about the person's wish specifically. A body is expected to establish a person's wish to receive a Welsh language telephone service at the earliest possible opportunity. However, it should be noted that a body must greet persons in Welsh over the telephone in accordance with*

standard 8 before establishing whether the person wishes to have the call dealt with in Welsh.

- 4.2.20. *Unlike standard 10, if there is no member of staff available who can deal with the call in Welsh on the specific subject matter in question, a body may transfer the call to a member of staff who cannot deal with the call in Welsh, but who can provide a service on the specific subject matter.*
- 4.2.21. *It should be emphasised that a body must ensure that there is no member of staff available who can deal with the call in Welsh on the specific subject matter in question, before transferring the call to a member of staff who cannot deal with the call in Welsh. In order to facilitate this, a body may choose to keep a record of those members of staff who are able to deal with calls in Welsh (e.g. a staff directory based on department, service or subject matter).*
- 4.2.22. *It should be noted that the phrase ‘specific subject matter’ does not include general contact or a general enquiry. A body is expected to provide a Welsh language service when dealing with general enquiries, up to a point where a body needs to transfer a call to a non-Welsh speaking member of staff who can deal with a subject which needs a level of expertise or specific knowledge in order to deal with the enquiry. Such examples may include a specific planning application or a specific social services case where only that non-Welsh speaking member of staff has the relevant knowledge needed to deal with the call.”*

Requirements of the standard

- 5.4 A body must ensure that when a person contacts them on their main telephone number (or on one of their main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, the body must deal with the call in Welsh if the person so wishes - (a) until it is necessary to transfer the call to a non-Welsh speaking member of staff who can provide a service on a specific subject matter; and (b) until there is no Welsh speaking member of staff available to provide a service on that specific subject matter.

Considering compliance with the standard

- 5.5 The information presented in 3.4 - 3.9 above is also relevant in the context of this Standard.
- 5.6 No relevant evidence has been submitted by the Council which disproves any evidence submitted about the mystery caller's experience when using the Council's main telephone number. It is clear to me that the Council has failed to comply with this Standard in the context of telephone calls as no telephone service at all was received in Welsh.
- 5.7 Reference must also be made here to one of the cases on which the Welsh Language Tribunal adjudicated (case number TyG/WLT/18/5) which provides further clarity on the correct interpretation of Standard 11. An organisation must ensure that a person who has telephoned their main telephone number (or one of the main

numbers) is able to hold the initial conversation in Welsh. The call must be answered in Welsh in the first instance by a member of staff who is fluent enough to establish, in Welsh, who is calling and the nature of the call; i.e. the subject the caller wishes to discuss. It is not sufficient to have in place a process where a member of staff explains in Welsh, having learnt a few pre-prepared phrases, that they are transferring the call to another person who does speak Welsh to deal with the call, because they themselves are not fluent enough to do so. The purpose of the standard is to ensure that members of the public can conduct an initial conversation and explain the nature of their call in Welsh without having to be transferred to another member of staff.

- 5.8 Although a Welsh language service had not been provided at all by this Council, I asked the Council in the first Evidence Notice regarding what instructions or guidance had been given to Council staff on how to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards when answering telephone calls.
- 5.9 In responding to the first Evidence Notice the Council sent me a copy of the Telephone Answering Flow Chart explaining that this document was provided to all Contact centre Agents. See document as Appendix 1 below. In the Flowchart, after giving a bilingual greeting, the Flow Chart states that if the caller replies in Welsh, then the agent should ask *“Would you like to continue the call in Welsh?”*. If the answer is ‘yes’, the flowchart advises the agent: *‘Advise the caller that they will be transferred to a Welsh speaker, if available. “I’m sorry I don’t speak Welsh. I’ll try and put you through to a colleague who does”*’.
- 5.10 It is clear that this document did not provide guidelines that ensured that those individuals answering the telephone complied with Standard 11. Even if the mystery caller had received a greeting in Welsh and received any Welsh language service on the call, had the agent followed the guideline, the call would still not have complied with the Welsh Language Standards. The guidance given to staff did not comply with Standard 11 although guidance on the interpretation of this Standard was sent to all bodies subject to the Standards in 2019.
- 5.11 In the Second Evidence Notice to the Council I asked the Council if they were of the opinion that the process detailed in the Telephone Answering Process flowchart submitted by the Council complied with Standard 11. The Council replied that it was not of the opinion that the document complied. The Council explained that the telephone procedure introduced in December 2021 was in place before the letter providing guidance on the interpretation of the Standard was sent by the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner in August 2019.
- 5.12 The Council explained that since then a revised Telephone Answering Procedure Flowchart had been developed which complied with Standard 11 and had been shared with all staff. The Council stated that this procedure was promoted and referred to at meetings of the Customer Services team from Face to Face (Community Hubs) and the Corporate Contact Centre. A copy of this revised procedure was attached (Appendix 2 below).
- 5.13 As guidance was issued to all bodies in 2019, it is a matter of concern to me that the Council had not looked at their telephone answering guidelines until this was raised with them as part of this investigation, more than two years later. It is concerning that there are inadequate systems in place to respond to any correspondence or advice from the Welsh Language Commissioner's office. It also suggests that neither

adequate care, consideration nor respect is given to compliance with the Standards, nor to the guidelines and guidance given to them in order to assist them in complying with the Welsh language standards.

Findings

- 5.14 A body must ensure that when a person contacts them on their main telephone number (or on one of their main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, the body must deal with the call in Welsh if the person so wishes - (a) until it is necessary to transfer the call to a non-Welsh speaking member of staff who can provide a service on a specific subject matter; and (b) until there is no Welsh speaking member of staff available to provide a service on that specific subject matter.
- 5.15 Our mystery caller did not receive any Welsh language service on his/her telephone calls to the Council. It is also clear that the telephone answering flowchart guide available to staff answering the telephone during the period of the mystery calls did not comply with Standard 11.
- 5.16 That is a failure to comply with Standard 11.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 11

- 5.17 I determine that the Council has failed to comply with Standard 11 on the basis that the body did not deal with our mystery caller's calls in Welsh until it was necessary to transfer the call to a non-Welsh speaking member of staff who could provide a service on a specific subject; and (b) until there was no member of Welsh speaking staff available to provide a service on that specific subject.

Further action

- 5.18 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.
- 5.19 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 11, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.
- 5.20 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 11: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must put in place guidelines for all staff on how to deal with telephone calls in accordance with Standard 11.
2. The Council must ensure that it has resources to deal with all calls received in accordance with Standard 11. The Council must ensure that there are sufficient Welsh speakers in the call centre to deal with telephone calls from persons who wish to conduct the call in Welsh, in accordance with standard 11.

3. The Council must provide training to all staff dealing with telephone calls on how to provide a Welsh language service in accordance with Standard 11.
4. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

6 Compliance with standard 17: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

6.1 This is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 17

When there is no Welsh language service available on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must inform the caller (whether by means of an automated message or otherwise) when a Welsh language service will be available.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

Interpretations

6.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 states in paragraph 4.2.39 – 4.2.44:

“Standard 17

- 4.2.39. *When there is no Welsh language service available on one of the body's relevant telephone numbers, it must inform the caller when a Welsh language service will be available. A situation where a Welsh language service is not available may include: when the office is closed and therefore there is no telephone service available at all, or when there is no Welsh-speaking member of staff available to deal with the call (in accordance with the requirements of standard 11).*
- 4.2.40. *In such situations, a body must state when the Welsh language service will be available. For example, a body may do so by explaining*

the office's core opening hours or explaining during which times or on which days the Welsh language service will be available next.

- 4.2.41. *A caller may be 'informed' via: an automated message, or a member of staff telling the caller over the phone.*
- 4.2.42. *The relevance of this standard varies from one case to the next, depending on the availability of a Welsh language telephone service (e.g. in accordance with standards 10 or 11) and the nature of the telephone services offered by a body.*
- 4.2.43. *In a situation where a body is not required to provide a telephone service in Welsh in accordance with the requirements of standard 11 (i.e. where there is no Welsh speaking member of staff available to provide a service on a specific subject matter in Welsh), a body must inform when a Welsh language service will be available.*
- 4.2.44. *If there is a Welsh speaking member of staff available to provide a service on a specific subject matter in Welsh, but they do not happen to be available at the time of the call (e.g. they do not work on that day or the member of staff is on another call), the body must inform the caller when that member of staff (or another member of staff who can deal with the call in Welsh) will next be available. The body is expected to do so before transferring the call to a member of staff who does not speak Welsh. By doing so, a body can offer the caller the choice of either being transferred to a member of staff who does not speak Welsh or wait for the next available Welsh speaking member of staff."*

6.3 Regulations state that one or more of the following: Standard 10, Standard 11 and also Standard 16 and Standard 17 are subject to Standard 14.

Requirements of the standard

6.4 A body must ensure when there is no Welsh language service available on their main telephone number (or on one of their main numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, that they inform callers (by way of an automated message or otherwise), when a Welsh language service will be available.

Considering compliance with the standard

6.5 The information presented in 3.4 - 3.9 above is also relevant here.

6.6 In the context of Standard 17, however, the Council stated in response to the first Evidence Notice, that they believe the call came during a period when the contact centre received a large number of calls. The Council stated that this had resulted in longer waiting times for all customers who needed to speak to a contact centre agent. It claimed further that this had led to an inconsistency in service as the caller would have been dealt with as soon as the next agent was available, and so there was no need for him to have given up the call. The Council explained that there was no favourable treatment for Welsh or English calls received. The Council stated that it was not clear (in the context of our mystery caller's second call, which was not answered) whether a Welsh language service would have been offered as the

mystery caller had not waited on the line long enough for this to be assessed. However, if more of those answering telephone calls speak English than speak Welsh and there is no system where calls in Welsh are prioritised, it is very likely that calls where the user chooses an English language service would be answered earlier than a call where the user chooses a Welsh language service.

- 6.7 I accept the Council's evidence that it may be a busy time and that a call where callers chose the English button would not have been answered in the same time in terms of the third call. However, there were two other calls where the mystery caller did not receive a Welsh language service but the mystery caller was not informed when the Welsh language service would be available.

Findings

- 6.8 A body must ensure when there is no Welsh language service available on their main telephone number (or on one of their main numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, that they inform callers (by way of an automated message or otherwise), when a Welsh language service will be available.
- 6.9 On two of the three calls made by the mystery caller, no Welsh language service was received but neither was information given regarding when a Welsh language service would be available.
- 6.10 This is a failure to comply with Standard 17.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 17

- 6.11 I determine that the Council has failed to comply with Standard 17 on the basis that the caller was not informed (whether by means of an automated message or otherwise) when a Welsh language service would be available even though a Welsh language service was not available on the Council's main telephone number.

Further action

- 6.12 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.
- 6.13 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 17, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.

Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 17: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. When no Welsh language telephone service is available, the Council must inform callers when a Welsh language service will be available in accordance with standard 17.
2. The Council must provide guidance to all staff dealing with relevant telephone calls on the new procedure.

3. The Council must provide staff with training on the new procedure.
4. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

7 Compliance with standard 81: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

7.1 This is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 81

You must promote any Welsh language service you provide, and advertise that service in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Interpretations

7.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 states in paragraph 4.18.2:

“Standard 81

4.18.2. *A body must promote and advertise any Welsh language service that it provides, and do so in Welsh*

7.3 The meaning of the terms ‘promote and advertise’ is defined in the Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 in paragraph 4.18.7:

“4.18.7. *[...] ‘Promoting’ and ‘advertising’ include a body actively promoting and raising awareness of the Welsh language service by highlighting the fact that a Welsh language service is available and encouraging use of that service.*”

7.4 Examples of compliance are given in paragraph 4.18.8 of the Code. The examples include publishing and sharing information on some or all of the services offered by the body in Welsh via a leaflet, web page, social media, signs, advertisements etc. The examples also include ensuring that Welsh language services are given prominence, are easily accessible, are actively promoted and are available constantly.

Requirements of the standard

- 7.5 A body must ensure that it promotes any Welsh language service it provides, and advertises that service in Welsh.

Considering compliance with the standard

- 7.6 The Code of Practice notes that promoting and advertising “*include a body actively promoting and raising awareness of the Welsh language service by highlighting the fact that a Welsh language service is available and encouraging use of that service.*”
- 7.7 Therefore, 'promoting and advertising' is more than just that a Welsh language service being available on the website or that there are bilingual messages on social media. There is an expectation upon an organisation under the measure to *raise awareness* of the Welsh language service and to *encourage* more to use that service.
- 7.8 "Promoting or facilitating the use of the Welsh language" is one of the objectives of the Welsh language standards. Increasing the use of Welsh language services is one of the aims of the Welsh Government's strategy, Cymraeg 2050, which identifies the need for “intelligent marketing”, “customer-centred approach”, and understanding what would make more people use Welsh language services.
- 7.9 The Code of Practice provides examples of how to comply with this Standard. Although there is no requirement for an organisation to be doing all of these examples in order to comply with the Standard, it is reasonable to expect the organisation to take some of the actions recommended in the Code of Practice to promote their services.
- 7.10 In their evidence in response to the Second Evidence Notice, the Council stated that they publish and share information about their Welsh language services through social media, their web page, leaflets and advertisements. The Council stated that the staff of Community Hubs promote Welsh language services in the face-to-face customer service setting in the form of advertisements. The Council stated that their website welcome screen offers visitors a clear language choice and gives users the offer of using the Welsh language when accessing the website's services.
- 7.11 In terms of Welsh language telephone services, the Council claimed that an automated message when telephoning the Council's main telephone number provided a greeting in Welsh immediately, with an option to press 1 for Welsh and press 2 for an English language service. The Council also claimed that Contact Centre Agents answered the telephone bilingually - following the Telephone Answering Procedure Flowchart. The Council stated that Contact Centre agents, in greeting the caller inform him/her that a Welsh language service is available if they would like to continue the conversation in Welsh. As noted above, however, the evidence gathered by my officers as a mystery caller and in May 2022 suggests that this Welsh language service does not always operate as the Council claims. Therefore, it must be inquired whether there are systems in place to check and evaluate whether these actions are, in practice, happening as the Council claims.
- 7.12 The Council's evidence claims that they take some of the actions listed in the code of practice as examples of how to comply with Standard 81 such as:

- publishing and sharing information on some or all of the services offered by the body in Welsh via a leaflet, web page, using social media, signs, advertisements etc
- using a splash welcome screen namely a front page published for the purpose of offering a clear language choice, in order to ensure that the body makes an active offer to users to use the Welsh language before they gain access the website's services or self-service mechanism

- 7.13 However, there are some notable examples where no evidence has been presented by the Council that they are being done to promote the services. It is noted that no evidence has been submitted that the Council makes use of Working Welsh materials. Neither is there evidence of the Council using the Welsh language as the default language when providing telephone services in order to promote and highlight the Welsh language service, where there is no requirement for it to do so under another standard, and where the person has not asked for the service in Welsh (e.g. begin every conversation in Welsh over the telephone). There is no evidence of the Council ensuring that the users' journey to using Welsh language telephone services is of the same standard and quality as the service in English. Nor of the ensuring that Welsh language telephone services are given prominence, are easily accessible, are proactively promoted and are available consistently.
- 7.14 As already explained, the Council does not have to be doing all of the examples set out in the Code of Practice in order to comply with the Standard. However, it is reasonable to expect the organisation to take some of the actions recommended in the Code of Practice to promote their services.
- 7.15 Some of the findings of this investigation also suggest that the experiences of Welsh speakers would be mixed in trying to access some of the Council's Welsh language telephone services, such as the service on the Council's main telephone number. This leads to a lack of confidence or trust in Welsh language services which becomes a barrier to using them. Inconsistent Welsh language provision can be a significant barrier to promoting the use of Welsh language provision.
- 7.16 In the report *'English by default: Understanding the use and non-use of Welsh language services'* by Citizens Advice dated 2015, it is noted: *"inconsistency of offer can impact on usage. When people encounter a lack of consistency in terms of quality or continuity in Welsh language services, their confidence and trust in those services are diminished and this acts as a barrier to further use"*.
- 7.17 Promoting the telephone service where users may have had previous negative experience in the Council's Welsh language services is therefore vitally important. It is important to encourage users to turn again to the Welsh language service and to convince them that they will receive a quality Welsh language service.
- 7.18 The Welsh Language Commissioner's Good Practice Council document *'Promoting the use of Welsh language services'* dated September 2020 states that we want organisations to consider which services could be offered in Welsh in the first instance, without users having to make a choice to use the Welsh language. It is also an advice document stating that users have said that they are keen to see Welsh language services celebrated and promoted more prominently.

7.19 The advice document also states that organisations can actively promote all their Welsh language services through a specific campaign. I suggest that, in a body such as the Council where the organisation is not a stronghold of the Welsh language and where questions have been raised regarding the standard or consistency of the Welsh language telephone service and the methods of promotion, a specific promotion campaign about the Welsh language telephone services would be advantageous when the body is confident that its Welsh language service complies with the service delivery Standards.

Findings

7.20 A body must ensure that it promotes any Welsh language service it provides, and advertises that service in Welsh.

7.21 Here the Council has noted that they are taking some steps to promote their Welsh language telephone services but there are some obvious examples where the Council has not taken steps to promote and advertise that service. There are also questions about how the Council evaluates examples submitted by the Council.

7.22 Although the above is not tantamount to a failure to comply with Standard 81 as some steps are being taken by the Council to promote and facilitate the Welsh language services, there is further work that the Council could be doing under Standard 81 especially considering the findings of our investigation that the Welsh language service offered by the Council is inconsistent.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 81

7.23 I determine that the Council has not failed to comply with Standard 81 on the basis that some steps are being taken to promote any Welsh language telephone service they provide, and they do advertise that service in Welsh.

Further action

7.24 Section 76 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been no failure.

7.25 In the case of my determination that the Council has not failed to comply with standard 81, I will be taking further action for the purpose of improving the Council's promotion processes.

7.26 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 81: Recommendation in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. I recommend that a specific promotion campaign about the Welsh language telephone services would be advantageous. Such a campaign should be carried out when the body is confident that its Welsh language telephone services comply with the service delivery Standards.

8 Compliance with standard 82: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

8.1 Here is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to [D]:

Standard 82

If you provide a service in Welsh which corresponds to a service you provide in English, any publicity or document you produce, or website you publish, which refers to the English language service must note that a corresponding service is available in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Interpretations

8.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 4.18.3:

“Standard 82

4.18.3. *A body must ensure that any reference made by the body to a service in English also refers to the corresponding service in Welsh, if it provides such a service.”*

Requirements of the standard

8.3 A body must ensure, if it provides a service in Welsh that corresponds to a service you provide in English, any publicity or document the body produces, or website it publishes, which refers to the English service must also state that a corresponding service is available in Welsh.

Considering compliance with the standard

8.4 In its evidence, the Council stated that its website and all the Council’s publicity material was available in Welsh and in English. The Council claimed that messages on social media, in giving publicity to the Council’s telephone system across all social platforms, were in Welsh and in English.

8.5 The Council claimed that the Council’s Corporate e-mail address, and info@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk, also promoted the Council’s telephone service by providing the choice of Welsh and English.

8.6 As this investigation has not looked specifically at publicity, documents drawn up or website published, and that the Council has provided evidence suggesting that they comply with Standard 82, I have no reason to find a failure to comply with this Standard.

Findings

8.7 A body must ensure, if it provides a service in Welsh that corresponds to a service you provide in English, any publicity or document the body produces, or website it publishes, which refers to the English service must also state that a corresponding service is available in Welsh.

8.8 As this investigation has not looked specifically at publicity, documents drawn up or website published, and that the Council has provided evidence suggesting that they comply with Standard 82, I have no reason to find a failure to comply with this Standard.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 82

8.9 As this investigation has not looked specifically at publicity, documents drawn up or website published, and that the Council has provided evidence suggesting that they comply with Standard 82, I have no reason to find a failure to comply with this Standard.

8.10 I will be taking no further action in respect of this Standard.

Service Delivery Standards: Requirement to prepare an Action Plan in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

Due to failures across several of the Service Delivery Standards, the requirement to prepare an Action Plan below deals with the failures seen across those Standards that have been subject to this investigation.

Any Action Plan is expected to be prepared and completed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Investigation Report, and in accordance with the also contained in the supplementary Advice Document.

1. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council must prepare a draft Action Plan of its arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that the Council complies with the Service Delivery Standards that have been the subject of this investigation;
2. The action plan must set out the actions the Council will take to enable them to comply with the Service Delivery Standards that is the subject of this inquiry.

3. The actions within the Action Plan must include a commitment from the Council to:
- hold a root and branch review of its arrangements for complying with the Service Delivery Standards that have been the subject of this investigation;
 - prepare a plan for how the organisation wants to ensure compliance with the Service Delivery Standards where this investigation is found a failure to comply with them across the organisation;
 - prepare a human resources plan on how the Council is going to ensure adequate resources to comply with the telephone standards.
 - increase its understanding of the requirements of the standards relevant to the investigation here.
4. The action plan must contain the following information:
- who will be responsible and accountable for taking each of the actions in the plan
 - ensuring that members of the Senior Management Team have a role in scrutinising the Council's progress against that scheme.
 - a timetable for the delivery of each of the actions within the plan with each one of the actions to be carried out in no more than 12 months from the date the plan is approved.

Timetable: The Council must submit a draft action plan in accordance with the requirements under Section 80 Welsh Language Measure within 3 months of receipt of the final decision.

Operational Standards

9 Compliance with standard 127: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

9.1 Here is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to [D]:

Standard 127

You must assess the Welsh language skills of your employees.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Interpretations

9.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.8.2:

“Standard 127

6.8.2. *A body must assess the Welsh language skills of its employees.*

6.8.3. *The outcomes of the assessment may enable a body to plan its workforce so that there are sufficient levels of Welsh language skills to respond to any needs by:*

- *identifying the current Welsh language skills of the workforce, and through this identifying who can provide services in Welsh*
- *identifying the body’s needs in terms of Welsh language skills, including assessing the need for Welsh language skills for new or vacant posts, in accordance with standard 136, and*
- *planning to maintain and increase the workforce’s Welsh language skills in order to meet those needs.”*

9.3 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.8.4:

“6.8.4. A body may assess the following Welsh language skills:

- *speaking*
- *listening*
- *reading*

- *writing*
- *understanding.*

6.8.5. *A body is expected to assess the level of Welsh language skills of its employees according to each kind of skill being assessed. This can ensure that a body has a complete picture of employee capabilities.”*

9.4 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.8.9:

“6.8.9. A body must ensure that the assessment allows it to record the number of employees who have Welsh language skills in accordance with standard 151.”

9.5 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 states in paragraph 6.8.12 – 6.8.14:

“6.8.12. In order to comply with the requirements of standard 151 (record keeping), a body must keep a record of the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of each financial year.

6.8.13. Therefore, in order to comply with the requirements of standard 151, as well as keeping updated records, a body must undertake such an assessment at least once a year. However, the Commissioner may ask a body to provide the above information at any time from the imposition day onwards, in accordance with the requirements of standard 172.

6.8.14. The information should be kept up-to-date, ensuring that any changes to Welsh language skills data are updated as required. Such changes may include a situation whereby: an employee's language skills level changes (e.g. following attendance at Welsh lessons in accordance with standards 130 or 131), an employee leaves the body, a new employee joins the body, an employee moves to another location, directorate, department, or team (and those changes affect the body's record).”

Requirements of the standard

9.6 A body must ensure that it assesses the Welsh language skills of its employees.

Considering compliance with the standard

9.7 In response to the question in the Evidence Notice regarding how they assess the Welsh language skills of their employees, the Council stated that the Council's workforce data, including the choice of Welsh language correspondence and Welsh language skills and capabilities, was stored on a system called iTrent. The Council stated that new staff are ‘encouraged’ to provide this information when joining the organisation and that existing staff are ‘encouraged’ to update their information regularly through communication notifications. The Council stated that iTrent was able to analyse all workforce data and produce reports that are used to assess the Welsh language skills of its employees.

- 9.8 However, the requirement of Standard 127 is that a body assesses the level of Welsh language skills its employees have according to each type of skill assessed. This can ensure that a body has a complete picture of the capabilities of employees. Furthermore, In order to comply with the requirements of standard 151 (record keeping standard), a body must keep a record of the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of each financial year.
- 9.9 Therefore, in order to comply with the requirements of this standard, standard 151, as well as keeping updated records, a body must undertake such an assessment at least once a year. The standard therefore requires more than simply 'encouraging' staff to complete that information on a system which, it appears from reading the Council's evidence, occurs here. There is a requirement under the Standards to assess these skills, to record the skills and to re-assess annually in order to ensure that this record is up to date.
- 9.10 Clause 6.8.11 of the Code of Practice notes that it is for the body itself to decide who carries out the assessment. This may include employees self-assessing their Welsh language skills as is the case here.
- 9.11 Assessing the Welsh language skills of staff under the standards is essential in order to take advantage of the skills they already have, to build staff confidence and add to the capacity of the Welsh language through recruitment and training. Without accurate assessment of Welsh language skills, it is difficult for an organisation to consider which staff need further training and what level of language training those members of staff require. It is also difficult for an organisation to assess accurately what additional linguistic skills are needed within the workforce when looking at recruitment issues without a consistent and accurate assessment.

Findings

- 9.12 A body must ensure that it assesses the Welsh language skills of its employees.
- 9.13 Although the Council has submitted evidence that it 'encourages' staff to fill in details of their language skills on their iTrent system, the Council has not submitted any evidence that an assessment of their employees' Welsh language skills takes place annually.
- 9.14 There is a lack of planning and a lack of awareness of how to identify the relationship between the language skills of staff and the Welsh language service that needs to be provided. The main influence on the ability of organisations to provide appropriate Welsh language provision is the number of their staff who have Welsh language skills. In the context of services, the lack of structures in terms of assessing staff language skills have a direct impact on the Welsh language services that the Council can offer. The strategies of providers offering Welsh language services should focus on assessing the Welsh language skills of their staff in order to take advantage of existing skills, build staff confidence and then add to the capacity of the Welsh language through recruitment and training.
- 9.15 In order to comply with the Standard and to go on to provide Welsh language services, it is not enough just to 'encourage' or even 'identify' staff language skills. The Standards require the Council to assess these skills, to record the skills and to re-assess annually in order to ensure that this record is up to date. Assessment is not just about gathering information. The information must be analysed and conclusions

reached regarding the significance of the data and the language skills possessed by staff within the organisation.

- 9.16 No evidence has been submitted showing 'how' an assessment is carried out. Nothing has been submitted showing how the organisation uses that information to determine what language skills they need. No evidence has been submitted showing how and when the Council looks and considers the data and no evidence showing that this is reported upon to senior officers and elected members.
- 9.17 If the Council is unable to comply with this standard, it is very unlikely that it will ever be able to comply with the other standards as if there is insufficient data on staff skills, the Council cannot adequately plan in terms of staff required in the organisation in order to comply with the Standards.
- 9.18 It is very disappointing and concerning that the Council has not realised or respected the importance of the requirement of this Standard. Neither is there any evidence that they understand the long-term consequences of not complying fully with this Standard in the context of the other Standards. It is clear that the Council does not have a strategy to fill its language skills gaps.
- 9.19 That is a failure to comply with Standard 127.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 127

- 9.20 I determine that the Council has failed to comply with Standard 127 on the basis that the Council does not ensure that it assesses the Welsh language skills of its employees.

Further action

- 9.21 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.
- 9.22 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 127, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.
- 9.23 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 127: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must ensure that it has a procedure in place to assess the Welsh language skills of its employees.
2. The Council must ensure that those skills are assessed annually.
3. The Council must record the results of those annual assessments.

4. The Council must provide written evidence to satisfy the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

10 Compliance with standard 130: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

10.1 This is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 130

You must provide opportunities during working hours -
(a) for your employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and
(b) for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Interpretations

10.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.8.30:

“Standard 130

6.8.30. A body must provide opportunities during working hours: for its employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.”

10.3 The term ‘basic Welsh language lessons’ is defined in the Code of Practice as lessons to learn basic Welsh language skills, such as listening, understanding, reading, speaking and writing skills. The aim of these lessons would be to allow an employee to undertake basic functions through the medium of Welsh.

Requirements of the standard

10.4 A body must provide opportunities during working hours for its employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

Considering compliance with the standard

10.5 There are two parts to the requirements of this standard. Firstly, the Council must provide opportunities during working hours for its employees to receive basic Welsh lessons. Secondly, those who manage other people must receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

10.6 In its evidence, the Council claimed it had been promoting the Welsh Government's on-line Welsh at Work language course since 2019. The Council said that its staff from across the entire organisation was allowed to attend training during normal working hours. The Council claimed that a number of basic Welsh resources were also available to members of staff such as on their intranet 'Bilingual greetings and key words' and 'Useful Phrases'.

10.7 The Council stated that they do not know how many Council staff have received basic Welsh lessons in the last three years as this is not something that is currently recorded. The Council went on to claim, however, that all staff dealing with receiving telephone calls to the Council's Contact Centre telephone number had received basic Welsh language skills training during the last three years. The Council stated that this process was currently ongoing and had been extended to staff within the IAA Social Services and Benefits Services teams. The Council stated this would be an ongoing process over the coming years to support refresher training and the training and development needs of staff members.

10.8 It is surprising and concerning that the Council has no record of how many Council staff have received basic Welsh lessons during the last three years. I suggest that it is unusual for staff training courses not to be centrally recorded by an organization such as the Council and I ask whether it is only Welsh language training that is not recorded by the Council and if so, why?

10.9 Neither the Measure nor the Code of Practice define what is required in the context of 'providing opportunities' under this Standard. In the context of the remainder of the evidence submitted by the Council, however, it appears that there is a shortage of staff within those who provide a telephone service, who have basic skills in Welsh. I would therefore have expected the Council to place more emphasis and prioritise giving staff opportunities to receive Welsh language training and offer that proactively, encouraging staff to take those opportunities. Recording the language skills correctly after assessing those skills allows the organisation to identify where more staff with basic Welsh language skills are needed. It enables the Council to then go on to provide opportunities during working hours for those staff to attend basic Welsh language lessons.

10.10 I accept the Council's evidence that a percentage of the information submitted covers the period of dealing with a pandemic and that normal patterns of training may not be in place. However, if robust procedures are in place, an organisation is more likely to succeed. As the Council does not even record who has received basic Welsh language training at present, I suggest that there is no robust procedure within this organisation to ensure compliance with the Standard.

10.11 The second part of the Standard requires those who manage other people must receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers. The Council has not submitted any evidence that it provides opportunities for managers to use the Welsh language in managing. Therefore, I must conclude that relevant training on management through the medium of Welsh is not offered to managers.

Findings

10.12 A body must provide opportunities during working hours for its employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

10.13 As the Council does not have a record of how many staff have received basic Welsh language training over the last three years, it raises suspicions that there is no robust procedure in place in terms of compliance with Standard 130 and in terms of offering opportunities for staff to receive basic Welsh language training.

10.14 No evidence has been submitted that staff who manage other people have the opportunity to receive training on the use of Welsh in their role as managers.

10.15 This is a failure to comply with Standard 130.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 130

10.16 I determine that the Council has failed to comply with standard 130.

Further action

10.17 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.

10.18 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 130, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.

10.19 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 130: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must create a procedure to provide opportunities during working for its employees to have basic Welsh language lessons, and for employees who manage other people to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.
2. The Council must record how many staff are offered this training and how many staff receive this training annually.
3. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

11 Compliance with standard 131: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

11.1 This is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 131

You must provide opportunities for your employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge to develop their language skills.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Interpretations

11.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.8.37 – 6.8.40:

“Standard 131

6.8.37. *A body must provide opportunities for employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge, in order to develop their language skills.*

6.8.38. *This may include training at the following levels:*

- *Entry (A1)*
- *Foundation (A2)*
- *Intermediate (B1)*
- *Advanced (B2)*
- *Proficiency (C1)*
- *or any other level which develops the employee’s Welsh language skills further beyond the level reached following the 'basic Welsh language lessons' provided in accordance with standard 130.*

6.8.39. *The kind of training may also include training to develop the language skills of employees who are already fluent in Welsh, but that want to:*

- *refine their Welsh language skills, or*
- *develop confidence to use their language skills to draft documents and correspondence bilingually.*

6.8.40. *The body may ensure that the training is provided during normal working hours, but that is not required in order to comply with the standard. However, the body is expected to ensure that the hours offered to the employee would not place them at a disadvantage.”*

Requirements of the standard

11.3 A body must provide opportunities for employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge, in order to develop their language skills.

Considering compliance with the standard

11.4 In its evidence, the Council stated that it was not aware how many Council staff had completed further Welsh language training as this was not something they recorded. However, the Council stated that further Welsh language training opportunities were currently being promoted across the organisation.

11.5 The Council stated that within their Customer Services all staff (in the Contact Centre and Community Hubs) were currently receiving basic training in Welsh. The council claimed that all Community Hub staff and 1 Contact Centre member of staff were moving on to more detailed long-term Welsh courses in the future. The Council stated that this would form part of their future training and development plans and would support the delivery of customer services to users.

11.6 The Council has not provided evidence that training opportunities are being provided. I would have expected to see a copy of messages promoting the opportunities, screenshots of messages on the intranet, leaflets, or posters showing how the Council provides opportunities to receive Welsh language training. It appears that if the Council does not assess language skills in accordance with the Standard nor records which staff receive basic Welsh language training, it is then not possible for the Council, in practice, to target further training and provide adequate opportunities for relevant staff to receive further training in order to develop their language skills in accordance with the Standard.

Findings

11.7 A body must provide opportunities for employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge, in order to develop their language skills.

11.8 As the Council does not have a record of how many staff have received further training over the last three years and there is no evidence to show that opportunities have been provided, it raises suspicions that the Council does not comply with Standard 131 in terms of offering opportunities for staff to receive basic Welsh language training.

11.9 This is a failure to comply with Standard 131.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 131

11.10 I determine that the Council has failed to comply with standard 131.

Further action

11.11 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.

11.12 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 131, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.

11.13 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 131: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must create a procedure to provide opportunities for its employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge, to develop their language skills.
2. The Council must record how many staff are offered this training and how many staff receive this training annually.
3. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

12 Compliance with standard 132: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

12.1 This is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 132

You must provide training courses so that your employees develop -

- (a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales);
- (b) an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards;
30/09/2016
- (c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.

Imposition day: 30/09/2016

Interpretations

12.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.8.41 – 6.8.43:

“Standard 132

6.8.41. *A body must provide employees with training in the following areas:*

- *awareness of the Welsh language*
- *an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards, and*
- *an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.*

6.8.42. *The training does not have to be provided in Welsh in accordance with this standard, but a body is expected to consider the requirements on the body in accordance with standard 128, to provide training in Welsh if it provided it in the relevant training areas.*

6.8.43. *Examples of what can be offered as part of the training may include:*

- **awareness of the Welsh language**— *this may include information on the history of the language, the origin of the Welsh language, facts about the Welsh language (such as Census information), the benefits of using the Welsh language or information on the Welsh Language Commissioner*

- ***an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards*** – this may include information on the exact standards with which the body must comply and also information on the Measure and its objectives
- ***an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace*** – this may include information on how the body is promoting and facilitating use of Welsh in the workplace or information on the operational standards in the regulations and the rights resulting from those.”

Requirements of the standard

12.3 An organisation must provide training to its staff on awareness of the Welsh language, an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and an understanding of the way in which the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.

Considering compliance with the standard

12.4 The inclusion of Welsh Language Awareness Training under this Standard as part of staff training ensures that staff (Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers) are able to treat service users who speak Welsh in a sensitive and informed manner. A lack of linguistic awareness or sensitivity by members of staff can have a negative impact on the experience of users and prevent them from using the Welsh language in the future.

12.5 The experience of our mystery caller when using the Council's telephone service suggested that the person answering the telephone did not have sufficient awareness of the Welsh language. Not only was a Welsh language service not received but neither was it acknowledged that our mystery caller had spoken in Welsh.

12.6 I asked the Council in question 17 of the evidence notice to provide details of all training sessions provided to staff on (a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales); (b) an understanding of the duty to act in accordance with Welsh language standards; (c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace in the last 3 years. I also asked the Council to provide details of the posts held by the staff who attended and their areas of work.

12.7 The Council did not answer this question in any detail. The Council stated that the Council's Workforce Development Strategy promoted and encouraged staff to seek out training and development opportunities, including in Welsh, and that this was facilitated through their existing arrangements for managers. The Council stated that it referred staff to any known training opportunities available.

12.8 I then asked for details of all Welsh language awareness training sessions that had been provided to contact centre staff in the last 3 years.

12.9 The Council stated that language improvement sessions were 'in the process' of being held with all members of Customer Service staff, including Community Hubs, the Contact Centre and Benefits Services. The Council claimed that basic Welsh

language training and common phrases were given at Team Meetings and 1 to 1 sessions to support the delivery of Customer Services to residents.

- 12.10 It seems to me that the answers given by the Council to the questions about Welsh language awareness training are deliberately ambiguous. The questions asked for clear answers and details of the training given to staff in this area. I have not received any evidence from the Council that these sessions have been given to staff in accordance with Standard 132.

Findings

- 12.11 A body must provide training to its employees on awareness of the Welsh language, an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and an understanding of the way in which the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.
- 12.12 In the report '*English by default: Understanding the use and non-use of Welsh language services*' by Citizens Advice dated 2015, it is noted:
- "A lack of language awareness or sensitivity on the part of staff members can impact negatively on consumer experience and also deters future use of Welsh on the part of the consumer."*
- 12.13 The body should provide the training to its employees on Welsh language awareness in order to ensure that staff (Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers) are able to treat service users who speak Welsh in a sensitive and informed manner.
- 12.14 Language awareness, namely that staff awareness of the requirements is essential if the organisation is to (i) comply with the standards (ii) provide a good experience for Welsh speakers. It is not possible for the Council to comply with the Standards if staff do not know what the requirements are and how to comply with those Standards.
- 12.15 This is a fundamental failure by the Council and a further example of the Council's indifferent approach to compliance with the standards.
- 12.16 Although the Council claims that language improvement training is provided by the Council, I have not received any evidence from the Council that the Welsh language awareness sessions have been provided to staff in accordance with Standard 132.
- 12.17 This is a failure to comply with Standard 132.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 132

- 12.18 I determine that the Council has not complied with Standard 132 on the basis that no evidence has been submitted of training on Welsh language awareness and understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards, and an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.

Further action

- 12.19 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.

12.20 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 132, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.

12.21 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 132: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must provide training to its employees on awareness of the Welsh language, an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and an understanding of the way in which the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.
2. The Council must have a procedure in place that ensures this training is repeated periodically.
3. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

13 Compliance with standard 133: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

13.1 This is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 133

When providing information to new employees (for example, by means of an induction process), you must provide information for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.

Imposition day: 30/09/2016

Interpretations

13.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.8.44 – 6.8.46:

“Standard 133

6.8.44. *If a body provides information to new employees (e.g. by means of the induction process), it must provide information for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.*

6.8.45. *The information could be provided as part of training or in the form of a document. This information does not have to be provided in Welsh in accordance with this standard, but the body is expected to consider what is required of it under standard 128, to provide the information in Welsh if provided in the relevant training areas.*

6.8.46. *A body may provide information which includes:*

- *information on the language’s history*
- *information on the origin of the Welsh language*
- *facts about the Welsh language (such as Census information)*
- *information on the Welsh language in the area served by the body*
- *the benefits and importance of using the Welsh language*
- *information on the Welsh Language Commissioner, the standards and language duties.”*

Requirements of the standard

13.3 The Standard requires a body, if it provides information to new employees (e.g. by means of the induction process), to provide information for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.

Considering compliance with the standard

13.4 In the Second Evidence Notice, I asked the Council for details of the guidelines and/or training provided to new staff on Welsh language awareness and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. The Council stated that all new staff received the Council's Corporate Induction session when (a) (b) and (c) were included by the Manager under the Council's Corporate Policies i.e. the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Welsh Language Standards etc.

13.5 The Code of Practice explains that providing information for the purpose of raising awareness of the Welsh language may include providing information about the history of the language, the origin of the Welsh language, facts about the Welsh language (such as information from the Census), information about the Welsh language in the area served by the body, the advantages and importance of using the Welsh language and information about the Welsh Language Commissioner, the standards and language duties. Although an organisation does not need to take all of the steps suggested in the Code of Practice in order to comply with the Standard, it is reasonable to consider that an organisation should be taking some of these steps. However, it is arguable that an organisation should be doing more than one of the actions suggested in the Code of Practice in order to comply.

13.6 Although no thorough information has been submitted on the training provided, it appears from the Council's response that they provide information on the Welsh language standards to new employees as part of the induction process. Therefore, it appears likely that if the Council provides full information about the Welsh language standards, the Council would provide information about the Welsh Language Commissioner, the standards and the Council's language duties.

13.7 However, the Council has not submitted evidence suggesting that it provides new employees with any further training on Welsh language awareness. I suggest that this is a missed opportunity by the organisation as it is an invaluable opportunity to immerse staff immediately as they join the organisation in the importance, history and origin of the language.

13.8 I do not believe that providing information about the Standards alone, as is suggested is being done by the Council, amounts to compliance with the requirement to provide information in order to raise awareness of the Welsh language to new employees. Providing information and training about the Standards is fundamental information that many Council staff will need to receive in any event, by virtue of their posts, especially if they deal with the public. The Standards relating to raising awareness go further than that and ask an organisation to raise wider awareness of the Welsh language and its history.

Findings

13.9 The Standard requires a body, if it provides information to new employees (e.g. by means of the induction process), to provide information for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.

- 13.10 The body should provide the training to its employees on Welsh language awareness as part of staff induction training in order to ensure that staff (Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers) are able to treat service users who speak Welsh in a sensitive and informed manner.
- 13.11 The Council could easily comply with these standards by creating a package that could be re-used over and over and over and the fact that they have not done so after 6 years is further evidence of the Council's indifference to the Standards regime.
- 13.12 Although the Council claims that training is provided to new employees in relation to Welsh Language Standards, I have not received any evidence from the Council that information in order to raise their awareness of the Welsh language has been provided in accordance with Standard 133.
- 13.13 This is a failure to comply with Standard 133.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 133

- 13.14 I determine that the Council has not complied with Standard 133 on the basis that no evidence has been presented that information for the purpose of raising new employees' awareness of the Welsh language has been provided in accordance with Standard 133.

Further action

- 13.15 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.
- 13.16 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 133, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.
- 13.17 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 133: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must modify its induction procedures and sessions to include the provision of information to new employees for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.
2. The Council must prepare an information pack on the Welsh language and share this pack with all new members of staff.
3. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that it has carried out enforcement actions 1 and 2.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

14 Compliance with standard 136: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

14.1 This is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 136

When assessing the requirements for a new or vacant post, you must assess the need for Welsh language skills, and categorise it as a post where one or more of the following apply

-

- (a) Welsh language skills are essential;
- (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post;
- (c) Welsh language skills are desirable; or
- (ch) Welsh language skills are not necessary.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Interpretations

14.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.9.2 – 6.9.8:

14.3 “**Standard 136**

6.9.2. *If a body assesses the requirements for a new or vacant post, it must assess the need for Welsh language skills, and categorise it as a post where one or more of the following apply:*

- *Welsh language skills are essential*
- *Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post*
- *Welsh language skills are desirable*
- *Welsh language skills are not necessary.*

6.9.3. *In order to assess the linguistic requirements of a post, a body is expected to consider linguistic needs as a matter of course when a new post is created or when a vacancy arises, looking at the body's ability to meet the requirements of the standards alongside that.*

6.9.4. *It should be noted that a body must keep a record of each assessment held in relation to standard 136 in accordance with standards 153 and 154.*

6.9.5. *The following may be considered as part of the criteria when considering how to determine the need for Welsh language skills for the post:*

- *the function of the role—is there any external contact where a member of staff is expected to be able to communicate in both Welsh and English; does the post holder work in a specific geographical area where there is a high number or percentage of Welsh speakers*
 - *the local considerations of an organisation's language policy e.g. the need for internal administration or more internal administration through the medium of Welsh, or that a minimum level of Welsh language skills is set for specific roles within a policy*
 - *the current numbers of staff available to provide a service in Welsh—a body is expected to refer to its skills assessment in accordance with standard 127, referring to any gaps in language skills to provide services*
 - *the need to deal with other organisations whose internal administration is undertaken through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.*
- 6.9.6. *Welsh language skills are usually 'essential' in a situation where no-one is available to provide a service through the medium of Welsh or if more Welsh-speaking staff are required to provide a service in Welsh.*
- 6.9.7. *If Welsh language skills are not essential, a body may come to the conclusion that Welsh language skills are 'desirable'. This may include a situation where the organisation already has capacity to be able to provide a specific service in Welsh, but that it would be desirable to reinforce that Welsh language provision by recruiting more staff with Welsh language skills to provide the service. Generally, if Welsh language skills are 'desirable' for a post, then a body may assume that an applicant with Welsh language skills has an advantage over another applicant when being considered for a post but it would not be necessary for the successful applicant to possess those skills.*
- 6.9.8. *A body may determine that a post requires learning Welsh language skills when someone is appointed to the role. Usually, those appointed to a role would need to reach a particular level of fluency as a condition of their appointment. That condition is usually noted in the job advertisement. An example of a situation where posts are categorised like this may include: if a body has identified a post where Welsh language skills are essential, but there have been difficulties appointing a candidate with Welsh language skills to that role and it is decided to re-advertise that role; and*
- *if a body knows for certain that there is a significant shortage of persons with Welsh language skills who can undertake the role in question, and that it is likely that a non-Welsh speaker will have to be appointed (e.g. a highly specialised role)."*

14.4 For the purposes of standards 136 and 136A only, it is noted in Schedule 3, Part 3, Paragraph 15 of the regulations: “(a) “post” includes a public appointment (b) “public appointment” means any appointment to a public body or public office.”

14.5 It is noted in 6.9.13 of the Code of Practice that this includes any new post within the body or any vacancy after the imposition day, whether the post is a permanent or temporary post, or a post which is advertised internally only or externally.

Requirements of the standard

14.6 The Standard requires a body when assessing the requirements for a new or vacant post, to assess the need for Welsh language skills, and to categorise it as a post where one or more of the following apply:

- (a) Welsh language skills are essential
- (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post
- (c) Welsh language skills are desirable
- (d) Welsh language skills are not necessary.

Considering compliance with the standard

14.7 In their evidence in response to the second Evidence Notice, the Council stated that in the last three years 2 posts had been advertised within the Contact Centre and that both posts had been advertised as posts where Welsh language skills were desirable.

14.8 Where the Welsh language skills of these posts in were essential, desirable or needed to be learnt, I asked the Council to provide evidence that they had noted this in the job adverts. The Council provided a copy of the '*Recruitment Authorisation* document in relation to recruitment to the team. It is noted in that document (which is dated 08.03.22) however, that 4 posts are being advertised, two full-time posts and two fixed-term posts. It therefore causes me to think that the Council's reply that only two posts had been advertised in the last three years was not correct as it appears that at least 4 posts were advertised within the last 6 months.

14.9 I asked the Council to explain how that assessment was made about the language skill required for these roles. The Council replied that all posts within the Contact Centre had been advertised as posts where Welsh Language skills were desirable but no further explanation was given as to how and why that assessment was determined.

14.10 In order to assess the linguistic requirements of a post, a body is expected to consider linguistic needs as a matter of course when a new post is created or when a vacancy arises, looking at the body's ability to meet the requirements of the standards alongside that. In the Code of Practice, it is usually noted that Welsh language skills are 'essential' in a situation where no-one is available to provide a service through the medium of Welsh or if more Welsh-speaking staff are required in order to provide a service in Welsh.

14.11 It is noted in the Code of Practice, if Welsh language skills are not essential, a body may come to the conclusion that Welsh language skills are 'desirable'. This may include a situation where the organisation already has capacity to be able to provide a specific service in Welsh, but that it would be desirable to reinforce that Welsh language provision by recruiting more staff with Welsh language skills to provide the service.

14.12 Examples are given in the Code of Practice of some matters that may be considered as part of the criteria when considering how to determine the need for Welsh language skills for a post. It is noted, for example, that an organisation may

consider whether there is any external contact where a member of staff is expected to be able to communicate in both Welsh and English and also to consider the current number of staff available to provide a service in Welsh.

- 14.13 A body must keep a record of each assessment held in relation to standard 136 in accordance with standards 153 and 154. The Council has provided a copy of the 'Recruitment Authorisation' document which gives some considerations or questions to consider when assessing the skills required. The document also notes that the management team has decided that all roles within the Council are to be designated as posts where the Welsh language is at least desirable.
- 14.14 In the answers, the Council has confirmed that the role deals with the public, that the role deals with the public 'consistently' (i.e. on a daily basis). However, in the third question which asks how likely it is that the role needs to deal with the public through the medium of Welsh, the person who has completed the assessment has noted 'very unlikely'.
- 14.15 Two further questions within the assessment regarding Welsh language skills required have not been answered at all:

"Please provide any relevant evidence that supports this role frequency and likelihood of involvement with the public through the medium of Welsh Language Standards? Examples being current service user levels, requirements under the Welsh Language Standards, levels of Welsh language usage and fluency in the area and for members of the public."

"Are there any other factors relating to this role that should be considered as part of the Welsh encouragement job assessment? e.g. working with staff that require Welsh language engagement, meeting other relevant standard requirements e.g. dealing with correspondence, holding events, meetings regarding individuals well-being, etc."

- 14.16 Although the document shows considerations in reaching the decision regarding the post's category, it appears from the Council's response, however, that it is a matter of routine that contact centre posts are advertised as posts where Welsh language skills are 'desirable'. It is expected, rather, that there is conscientious consideration at all times of what skills are needed in the role being advertised and within that department. No evidence has been given of a rational process or considerations as to why these posts are assessed as posts where the Welsh language is desirable. No evidence has been submitted in this case as to why it was 'very unlikely' that the person receiving the role needed to deal with the public through the medium of Welsh.
- 14.17 It is clear from the results of the remainder of this investigation that there is a shortage of staff with the skills to offer a Welsh language service within the telephone call taking department. It is also clear that these posts are ones with high external contact where it is expected, in accordance with the Standards, that some members of staff are able to communicate in Welsh. Therefore, although it is up to the organisation to assess the posts, I am surprised that no further consideration is given to the department's capacity to provide a Welsh language service in accordance with the Standards in assessing the need for Welsh language skills when recruiting posts. This is especially so within a department that deals so closely with the public.

14.18 The Council has identified the need for Welsh language skills, and categorised it in terms of the level of skills required. However, I have not received evidence that an 'assessment' has been carried out specifically for the role advertised here. It seems that this is a tick-box, mindless exercise. No rationale has been given in the assessment (two questions that require evidence or rationale have not been answered) as to why it is very unlikely that this member of staff would need to deal with staff in Welsh. It is noted in the Welsh Language Commissioner's Good Practice Advice Document dated September 2020 that it is *'essential that assessments are based on the understanding of the need for Welsh language skills. It's also important to have solid arrangements to ensure assessments are being completed.'* I have not received evidence that this is in place within the Council in recruiting and this is a failure to comply with the Standard.

Findings

14.19 The Standard requires a body when assessing the requirements for a new or vacant post, to assess the need for Welsh language skills, and to categorise it as a post where one or more of the following apply:

- (a) Welsh language skills are essential
- (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post
- (c) Welsh language skills are desirable
- (d) Welsh language skills are not necessary.

14.20 Although the Council has categorised the post I was given as an example in their evidence as one where Welsh language skills were desirable, there is no evidence that considerations have taken place in terms of the department's Welsh language needs and those of the role.

14.21 This is a failure to comply with Standard 136.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 136

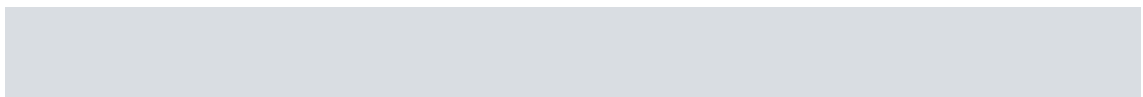
14.22 I determine that the Council has failed to comply with standard 136 on the basis that there is no evidence that there have been conscientious considerations relating to the Welsh language in assessing and categorising the language skills of posts.

Further action

14.23 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.

14.24 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 136, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.

14.25 Details of the further action are set out below.



Standard 136: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must provide training to staff who assess the language skills needs for a new or vacant post on how to carry out assessments that comply with the requirements of Standard 136.
2. The Council must prepare guidelines for staff on how to carry out an assessment of the linguistic skills needs of a post.
3. In carrying out assessments under Standard 136, the Council must, on all occasions, consider capacity within the post's area of work to provide a Welsh language service in accordance with the Standards and consider whether the post should be advertised as a post where Welsh language skills are essential.
4. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

15 Compliance with standard 136A: Assessment, findings and determination

Wording of the standard

15.1 This is the standard as it appears in the compliance notice issued to the Council:

Standard 136A

If you have categorised a post as one in which Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, you must -

- (a) specify that when advertising the post, and
- (b) advertise the post in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

Interpretations

15.2 The Welsh Language Standards Regulations Code of Practice (No. 1) 2015 notes in paragraph 6.9.2 – 6.9.8:

15.3 “**Standard 136A**

6.9.9. *If a body has categorised a post (in accordance with standard 136) as one where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt it must: specify that when advertising the post and advertise the post in Welsh.*

6.9.10. *This may include identifying the category of the post in the job description, the person specification and the advertisement itself (in the press, in adverts or on the body's website).*

6.9.11. *A body may decide to advertise posts where the Welsh language is essential in Welsh only if it wishes. For example, a body may decide to advertise in Welsh only in Welsh language publications or do so with a short explanation in English in advertisements published in English language publications.”*

Requirements of the standard

15.4 If a body has categorised a post as one where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, the body must specify that when advertising the post and advertise the post in Welsh.

Considering compliance with the standard

15.5 In their evidence in response to the second Evidence Notice, the Council stated that in the last three years 2 posts had been advertised within the Contact Centre and that both posts had been advertised as posts where Welsh language skills were desirable. Under Standard 136A, therefore, the Council needed to specify this when advertising the post, and advertise the post in Welsh.

- 15.6 I asked the Council to provide evidence that they had noted this in the job adverts. I also asked the Council to provide evidence that the posts had been advertised in Welsh.
- 15.7 The Council provided a copy of a job description for a post within the Contact Centre. In the job description, the fact that Welsh language skills are desirable for the post has been noted within the job description, in accordance with the Standard. However, I suggest that there is a lack of care in completing this job description in the context of the Welsh language and that the information is unclear to applicants. There is conflicting information about the Welsh language skills in the document. In one place, 'Essential' is noted next to 'Welsh language skills are essential (levels 4 and 5)' but then a cross has been placed next to the need for '0' level in terms of Speaking / Listening, Reading and Understanding and Writing skills. The document goes on to note that the ability to communicate in Welsh is desirable. It does not appear that the document has been completed correctly or at the very least, the information is unclear to applicants.
- 15.8 The Welsh Language Commissioner's 'Recruitment' Advice Document dated September 2020 provides good practice in recruitment stating that it is beneficial for advertisements and job descriptions to be clear when describing the necessary skill or qualification to work through the medium of Welsh. One method of doing this is by using relevant, easy to understand wording when advertising.
- 15.9 Furthermore, no evidence has been provided that this post has been advertised in Welsh. It is possible that this post has been advertised on the Council's website bilingually but I have not received any evidence of that as the Council has provided an English only job description.
- 15.10 The Council stated on the two occasions when Contact Centre posts had been advertised over the last three years and where the posts were advertised as Welsh Language skills desirable, the Council claimed that none of the applicants for those posts could demonstrate Welsh language skills.
- 15.11 The Welsh Language Commissioner's 'Recruitment' Advice Document states how some organisations have proactively ensured that they reach potential applicants. For example, by establishing a relationship with a local further education college, or a local school sixth form to promote opportunities for young people leaving, engaging with local bodies and organisations, and erecting posters in the area, rather than advertising on the organisation's corporate website only. Some organisations had produced a video for the media and the web in order to promote a campaign to recruit more Welsh speakers.

Findings

- 15.12 If a body has categorised a post as one where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, the body must specify that when advertising the post and advertise the post in Welsh.
- 15.13 In the example of a job description that has been submitted, the Council has determined that Welsh language skills are desirable (although there is some confusion about this in the job description) but no evidence has been received that the post has been advertised in Welsh.

15.14 That is a failure to comply with Standard 136A.

Determination of whether there has been a failure to comply with standard 136A

15.15 I determine that the Council has failed to comply with Standard 136A as no evidence has been submitted that the post referred to in the evidence has been advertised in Welsh.

Further action

15.16 Section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure allows me to take further action where there has been a failure.

15.17 In the case of my determination that the Council has failed to comply with standard 136A, I will be taking further action for the purpose of preventing the continuation of the failure to comply.

15.18 Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 136A: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must change its procedures so that when the Council categorises a post as one where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, the body must specify that when advertising the post and advertise the post in Welsh in accordance with standard 136A.
2. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement action 1 has been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Operational Standards: Requirement to prepare an Action Plan in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

Due to failures across several of the Operational Standards, the requirement to prepare an Action Plan below deals with the failures seen across those Standards that have been subject of this investigation.

An Action Plan must be prepared and completed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Investigation Report, and in accordance with the guidance contained in the supplementary Advice Document.

1. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council must prepare a draft Action Plan of its arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that the Council complies with the Operational Standards that have been the subject of this investigation;
2. The action plan must set out the actions the Council will take to enable them to comply with the Operational Standards that is the subject of this inquiry.
3. The actions within the Action Plan must include a commitment from the Council to:
 - hold a root and branch review of its arrangements for complying with the Service Delivery Standards that have been the subject of this investigation;
 - prepare a plan for how the organisation wants to ensure compliance with the Operational Standards across the organisation where this investigation has found a failure to comply with them;
 - increase its understanding of the requirements of the standards relevant to the investigation here and in particular in relation to their as regards language skills assessment, Welsh language training and assessing the language needs of posts.
4. The action plan must contain the following information:
 - who will be responsible and accountable for taking each of the actions in the plan
 - ensuring that members of the Senior Management Team have a role in scrutinising the Council's progress against that scheme.
 - a timetable for the delivery of each of the actions within the plan with each one of the actions to be carried out in no more than 12 months from the date the plan is approved.

Timetable: The Council must submit a draft action plan in accordance with the requirements under Section 80 Welsh Language Measure within **3 months** of receipt of the final decision.



The Welsh Language Commissioner to publicise the failure to comply:

Due to my dissatisfaction with several elements of the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards within the investigation, the Welsh Language Commissioner's office will publicise the results of this investigation and will publish the investigation report produced in relation to the investigation on the Welsh Language Commissioner's website.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's office will publicise the Council's failure to comply with the above standards by issuing a statement regarding the failure to the press no less than 28 days after the date of publication of the Commissioner's final determination.



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Decision notice

To: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Case number: CS092
Date: 31/10/2022

Determination

As a result of a complaint from a member of the public, I conducted an investigation under section 71 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 to determine whether there had been a failure by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to comply with Welsh language standards.

The standards relevant to the investigation are as follows:

Standard 8

When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must greet the person in Welsh.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 8.

The basis of my determination is that the Council has failed to comply with Standard 8 on the basis that our mystery caller did not receive a greeting in Welsh on two telephone calls.

Standard 11

When a person contacts you on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), or on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must deal with the call in Welsh if the person so wishes -

(a) until it is necessary to transfer the call to a member of non-Welsh speaking staff who can provide service on a specific subject matter; and
(b) until no Welsh speaking member of staff is available to provide service on that specific subject matter.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 11.

The basis of my determination is that the Council did not deal with our mystery caller's calls in Welsh until it was necessary to transfer the call to a non-Welsh speaking member of staff who could provide a service on a specific subject; and (b) until there was no member of Welsh speaking staff available to provide a service on that specific subject.

Standard 17

When there is no Welsh language service available on your main telephone number (or on one of your main telephone numbers), on any helpline numbers or call centre numbers, you must inform the caller (whether by means of an automated message or otherwise) when a Welsh language service will be available.

Imposition day: 03/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 17.

The basis of my determination is that the caller was not informed (whether by means of an automated message or otherwise) when a Welsh language service would be available even though a Welsh language service was not available on the Council's main telephone number.

Standard 81

You must promote any Welsh language service you provide, and advertise that service in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has not failed to comply with standard 81.

The basis of my determination is that some steps are being taken to promote any Welsh language telephone service they provide, and they do advertise that service in Welsh.

Standard 82

If you provide a service in Welsh which corresponds to a service you provide in English, any publicity or document you produce, or website you publish, which refers to the English language service must note that a corresponding service is available in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has not failed to comply with standard 82.

The basis of my determination is this investigation has not looked specifically at publicity, documents drawn up or website published, and that the Council has provided evidence suggesting that they comply with Standard 82, I have no reason to find a failure to comply with this Standard.

Standard 127

You must assess the Welsh language skills of your employees.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 127.

The basis of my determination is that the Council does not ensure that it assesses the Welsh language skills of its employees.

Standard 130

You must provide opportunities during working hours -
(a) for your employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and
(b) for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 130.

The basis of my determination is that as the Council does not have a record of how many staff have received basic Welsh language training over the last three years, it raises suspicions that there is no robust procedure in place in terms of compliance with Standard 130 and in terms of offering opportunities for staff to receive basic Welsh language

training. No evidence has been submitted that staff who manage other people have the opportunity to receive training on the use of Welsh in their role as managers.

Standard 131

You must provide opportunities for your employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge to develop their language skills.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 131.

The basis of my determination is as the Council does not have a record of how many staff have received further training over the last three years and there is no evidence to show that opportunities have been provided, it raises suspicions that the Council does not comply with Standard 131 in terms of offering opportunities for staff to receive basic Welsh language training.

Standard 132

You must provide training courses so that your employees develop -

- (a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of the history of the language and its place in the culture of Wales);
- (b) an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards;
- (c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.

Imposition day: 30/09/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 132.

The basis of my determination is that no evidence has been submitted of training on Welsh language awareness and understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards, and an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.

Standard 133

When providing information to new employees (for example, by means of an induction process), you must provide information for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.

Imposition day: 30/09/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 133.

The basis of my determination is that no evidence has been presented that information for the purpose of raising new employees' awareness of the Welsh language has been provided in accordance with Standard 133.

Standard 136

When assessing the requirements for a new or vacant post, you must assess the need for Welsh language skills, and categorise it as a post where one or more of the following apply

-

- (a) Welsh language skills are essential;
- (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post;
- (c) Welsh language skills are desirable; or
- (ch) Welsh language skills are not necessary.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 136.

The basis of my determination is that there is no evidence that there have been conscientious considerations relating to the Welsh language in assessing and categorising the language skills of posts.

Standard 136A

If you have categorised a post as one in which Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, you must -

- (a) specify that when advertising the post, and
- (b) advertise the post in Welsh.

Imposition day: 30/03/2016

I determine that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has failed to comply with standard 136A.

The basis of my determination is that no evidence has been submitted that the post referred to in the evidence has been advertised in Welsh.

Further action

In accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure, I have decided to take further action to prevent the continuation or repetition of the failure.

Details of the further action are set out below.

Standard 8: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must develop a standard Welsh language telephone greeting.
2. The Council must train all Council staff dealing with telephone calls from the public on how to give the standard Welsh telephone greeting accurately and in compliance with Standard 8.
3. The Council must raise awareness within its staff of the importance of providing a Welsh greeting and of including a Welsh greeting at the beginning of calls.
4. The Council must evaluate any automated greeting messages to check that a greeting in Welsh is placed on the automated message if a greeting is given in English.
5. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 4 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Standard 11: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must put in place guidelines for all staff on how to deal with telephone calls in accordance with Standard 11.
2. The Council must ensure that it has resources to deal with all calls received in accordance with Standard 11. The Council must ensure that there are sufficient Welsh speakers in the call centre to deal with telephone calls from persons who wish to conduct the call in Welsh, in accordance with standard 11.
3. The Council must provide training to all staff dealing with telephone calls on how to provide a Welsh language service in accordance with Standard 11.
4. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Standard 17: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. When no Welsh language telephone service is available, the Council must inform callers when a Welsh language service will be available in accordance with standard 17.
2. The Council must provide guidance to all staff dealing with relevant telephone calls on the new procedure.
3. The Council must provide staff with training on the new procedure.

4. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Service Delivery Standards: Requirement to prepare an Action Plan in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

Due to failures across several of the Service Delivery Standards, the requirement to prepare an Action Plan below deals with the failures seen across those Standards that have been subject to this investigation.

Any Action Plan is expected to be prepared and completed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Investigation Report, and in accordance with the also contained in the supplementary Advice Document.

1. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council must prepare a draft Action Plan of its arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that the Council complies with the Service Delivery Standards that have been the subject of this investigation;
2. The action plan must set out the actions the Council will take to enable them to comply with the Service Delivery Standards that is the subject of this inquiry.
3. The actions within the Action Plan must include a commitment from the Council to:
 - hold a root and branch review of its arrangements for complying with the Service Delivery Standards that have been the subject of this investigation;
 - prepare a plan for how the organisation wants to ensure compliance with the Service Delivery Standards where this investigation is found a failure to comply with them across the organisation;
 - prepare a human resources plan on how the Council is going to ensure adequate resources to comply with the telephone standards.
 - increase its understanding of the requirements of the standards relevant to the investigation here.
4. The action plan must contain the following information:
 - who will be responsible and accountable for taking each of the actions in the plan
 - ensuring that members of the Senior Management Team have a role in scrutinising the Council's progress against that scheme.
 - a timetable for the delivery of each of the actions within the plan with each one of the actions to be carried out in no more than 12 months from the date the plan is approved.

Timetable: The Council must submit a draft action plan in accordance with the requirements under Section 80 Welsh Language Measure within 3 months of receipt of the final decision.

Standard 127: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must ensure that it has a procedure in place to assess the Welsh language skills of its employees.
2. The Council must ensure that those skills are assessed annually.
3. The Council must record the results of those annual assessments.
4. The Council must provide written evidence to satisfy the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Standard 130: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must create a procedure to provide opportunities during working for its employees to have basic Welsh language lessons, and for employees who manage other people to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.
2. The Council must record how many staff are offered this training and how many staff receive this training annually.
3. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Standard 131: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must create a procedure to provide opportunities for its employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge, to develop their language skills.
2. The Council must record how many staff are offered this training and how many staff receive this training annually.
3. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Standard 132: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must provide training to its employees on awareness of the Welsh language, an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and an understanding of the way in which the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.
2. The Council must have a procedure in place that ensures this training is repeated periodically.
3. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 2 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Standard 133: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must modify its induction procedures and sessions to include the provision of information to new employees for the purpose of raising their awareness of the Welsh language.
2. The Council must prepare an information pack on the Welsh language and share this pack with all new members of staff.
3. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that it has carried out enforcement actions 1 and 2.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Standard 136: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must provide training to staff who assess the language skills needs for a new or vacant post on how to carry out assessments that comply with the requirements of Standard 136.
2. The Council must prepare guidelines for staff on how to carry out an assessment of the linguistic skills needs of a post.
3. In carrying out assessments under Standard 136, the Council must, on all occasions, consider capacity within the post's area of work to provide a Welsh language service in accordance with the Standards and consider whether the post should be advertised as a post where Welsh language skills are essential.

4. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement actions 1 - 3 have been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Standard 136A: Requirement to take action in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

1. The Council must change its procedures so that when the Council categorises a post as one where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable or need to be learnt, the body must specify that when advertising the post and advertise the post in Welsh in accordance with standard 136A.
2. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement action 1 has been completed.

Timetable: Within 12 months of the date of issuing the final determination.

Operational Standards: Requirement to prepare an Action Plan in accordance with section 77 of the Welsh Language Measure

Due to failures across several of the Operational Standards, the requirement to prepare an Action Plan below deals with the failures seen across those Standards that have been subject of this investigation.

An Action Plan must be prepared and completed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Investigation Report, and in accordance with the guidance contained in the supplementary Advice Document.

1. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council must prepare a draft Action Plan of its arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that the Council complies with the Operational Standards that have been the subject of this investigation;
2. The action plan must set out the actions the Council will take to enable them to comply with the Operational Standards that is the subject of this inquiry.
3. The actions within the Action Plan must include a commitment from the Council to:
 - hold a root and branch review of its arrangements for complying with the Service Delivery Standards that have been the subject of this investigation;

- prepare a plan for how the organisation wants to ensure compliance

with the Operational Standards across the organisation where this investigation has found a failure to comply with them;

- increase its understanding of the requirements of the standards relevant to the investigation here and in particular in relation to their as regards language skills assessment, Welsh language training and assessing the language needs of posts.

4. The action plan must contain the following information:

- who will be responsible and accountable for taking each of the actions in the plan
- ensuring that members of the Senior Management Team have a role in scrutinising the Council's progress against that scheme.
- a timetable for the delivery of each of the actions within the plan with each one of the actions to be carried out in no more than 12 months from the date the plan is approved.

Timetable: The Council must submit a draft action plan in accordance with the requirements under Section 80 Welsh Language Measure within **3 months** of receipt of the final decision.

The Welsh Language Commissioner to publicise the failure to comply:

Due to my dissatisfaction with several elements of the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards within the investigation, the Welsh Language Commissioner's office will publicise the results of this investigation and will publish the investigation report produced in relation to the investigation on the Welsh Language Commissioner's website.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's office will publicise the Council's failure to comply with the above standards by issuing a statement regarding the failure to the press no less than 28 days after the date of publication of the Commissioner's final determination.

Right of appeal to the Welsh Language Tribunal

Where the Commissioner has determined that there has not been a failure to comply with a standard, the complainant may appeal to the Welsh Language Tribunal. Where the

Commissioner determines that a person has failed to comply with a relevant requirement, that person may appeal to the Welsh Language Tribunal. Additionally, when the Commissioner has decided to take enforcement action in relation to a failure in accordance with section 79 of the Welsh Language Measure, the Council may appeal to the Welsh Language Tribunal on the grounds that the enforcement actions are unreasonable or disproportionate. There is more information about the process in the enclosed leaflet, and on the Welsh Language Tribunal's website.

Consequences of failure to comply with a requirement in a decision notice

Should Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council fail to comply with any requirement within this decision notice, the Commissioner may apply for a county court order requiring their compliance.



Sarah King
Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd, Llywodraethau a Partneriaethau
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent

Trwy e-bost: sarah.king@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

28/03/2023

Annwyl Sarah

Yn dilyn ein cyfarfod ar 17/03/2023 ysgrifennaf atoch ymhellach i argymhell camau gweithredu pellach ar gyfer sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth lawn o rhai safonau a drafodwyd gennym yn y cyfarfod.

Monitro, Asesu a Gweithredu

Mae'r Comisiynydd yn monitro cydymffurfiaeth sefydliadau gyda safonau yn unol a'i [fframwaith rheoleiddio](#). Mae hyn yn cynnwys asesu cydymffurfiaeth sefydliadau gyda'r safonau y maent o dan ddyletswydd i gydymffurfio â hwy, ac adnabod unrhyw gamau gweithredu y gall y sefydliad eu cymryd i sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth.

Bu i chi ddarparu tystiolaeth o gydymffurfiaeth i'r Comisiynydd drwy ymateb i gais am dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig a gwnaed arolygon pen desg gan swyddogion y Comisiynydd. Yn dilyn hyn cynhaliwyd cyfarfod casglu tystiolaeth rhyngom.

Yn sgil yr holl waith casglu tystiolaeth anfonwn y llythyr hwn er mwyn argymhell camau gweithredu pellach ar gyfer sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth lawn gyda safonau penodol. Mae'r argymhellion hyn wedi'u gosod allan isod:

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Siambrau'r Farchnad
5-7 Heol Eglwys Fair
Caerdydd CF10 1AT

0345 6033 221
post@comisiynyddygybraeg.cymru
Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

comisiynyddygybraeg.cymru

Welsh Language Commissioner
Market Chambers
5-7 St Mary Street
Cardiff CF10 1AT

0345 6033 221
post@welshlanguagecommissioner.wales
Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

welshlanguagecommissioner.wales



**Camau Gweithredu
Dogfennau
Safon 49**

Os byddwch yn llunio fersiwn Gymraeg a fersiwn Saesneg o ddogfen ar wahân, rhaid ichi sicrhau bod y fersiwn Saesneg yn datgan yn glir bod y ddogfen hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Yn ystod arolygon 2022-2023 nid oedd unrhyw ddogfen yn cydymffurfio â safon 49.

1. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor wrth ymgymryd â'r gwaith o gynllunio gwefan newydd ei fod yn cynnal arolwg o'r dogfennau sydd ar gael ar y wefan er mwyn sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth lawn â safonau 49.
2. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor yn atgoffa pob adran am ofyniad safon 49 a bod y rhai sydd wedi'u nodi gan y Comisiynydd yn ystod yr arolygon yn cael sylw ar gyfer y fersiynau nesaf.

Amserlen: Diweddariad erbyn 28/04/2023

Safon 52

Rhaid ichi sicrhau -

- (a) bod testun pob tudalen ar eich gwefan ar gael yn Gymraeg,*
- (b) bod pob tudalen Gymraeg ar eich gwefan yn gweithredu'n llawn,*
ac
- (c) nad yw'r Gymraeg yn cael ei thrin yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg ar eich gwefan.*

Safon 56

Rhaid ichi ddarparu'r rhyngwyneb a'r dewislenni ar bob tudalen ar eich gwefan yn Gymraeg.

Yn ystod arolygon 2022-2023 canfuwyd nifer o wallau ar y wefan. Nodwyd yn y cyfarfod casglu tystiolaeth bod gwaith eisoes ar y gweill i sefydlu gwefan newydd ond bod y broses yn un araf ar hyn o bryd

1. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor yn sicrhau bod y wefan Gymraeg yn cynnig yr un gwasanaeth â'r fersiwn Saesneg a ddim yn cael ei thrin yn llai ffafriol na'r fersiwn Saesneg.
2. Gofynnwn am amserlen ar gyfer cwblhau'r Rhaglen Trawsnewid Digidol

Amserlen: 28 Ebrill 2023

Safon 58

Pan fyddwch yn defnyddio'r cyfryngau cymdeithasol, rhaid ichi beidio â thrin y Gymraeg yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg.

Yn ystod arolygon 2022-2023 canfuwyd nad oedd 4/10 post ar Facebook ar gael yn Gymraeg.

1. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor yn gwirio ei brosesau er mwyn sicrhau bod pob cyfrif cyfryngau cymdeithasol yn cydymffurfio'n llawn.

Amserlen: 28 Ebrill 2023

Safon 98

Rhaid ichi ddatblygu polisi ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn fewnol, gyda'r bwriad o hybu a hwyluso defnyddio'r Gymraeg, a rhaid ichi gyhoeddi'r polisi hwnnw ar eich mewnruwyd.

Nodwyd yn yr ymateb i'r holiadur hunanasesu nad oedd gan y Cyngor bolisi ffurfiol.

1. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor yn datblygu polisi ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn fewnol.

Amserlen: 29 Medi 2023

Gofynnwn ichi ddarparu tystiolaeth eich bod wedi cyflawni'r argymhellion uchod erbyn 28 Ebrill 2023 a 29 Medi 2023.

Mae'r Comisiynydd yn cadw'r hawl i ymchwilio i'r materion hyn pe bai amheuan am gydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau dan sylw yn parhau.

Gellir ymestyn unrhyw ddyddiad cwblhau pe bai angen drwy gysylltu â mi.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Dylan Jones

Ar ran Comisiynydd y Gymraeg

Copi: Andrew Parker
Emma Scherptong
Katherine Watkins-Hughes

Sarah King
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnership
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Via e-mail: Sarah.King@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

28/03/2023

Dear Sarah

Following our meeting on 17/03/2023, I am writing to recommend further actions to ensure full compliance with some of the standards discussed in the meeting.

Monitoring, Assessment and Action

The Commissioner monitors organisations' compliance with standards in accordance with his regulatory framework. This includes assessing organisations' compliance with the standards with which they have a duty to comply and identifying any actions the organisation can take to ensure compliance.

You provided evidence of compliance to the Commissioner by responding to a request for written evidence and desktop surveys were conducted by the Commissioner's officers. Following this, an evidence gathering meeting was held between us.

As a result of the evidence gathering, we are sending this letter to recommend further actions to ensure full compliance with specific standards. These recommendations are set out below:

Actions

Documents

Standard 49

If you produce a Welsh language version and a separate English language version of a document, you must ensure that the English language version clearly states that the document is also available in Welsh.

During the 2022-2023 surveys no documents complied with standard 49

1. We recommend that the Council when undertaking the work of designing the new website that it undertakes a review of the documents to ensure full compliance with standard 49.
2. We recommend that the Council reminds all departments of the requirement under standard 49 and that the documents noted in the Commissioner's survey are given attention for the next versions.

Timetable: Update by 28 April 2023

Standard 52

You must ensure that –

- (a) the text of each page of your website is available in Welsh,*
- (b) every Welsh language page on your website is fully functional, and*
- (c) the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language on your website.*

Standard 56

You must provide the interface and menus on every page of your website in Welsh.

During the 2021-2022 surveys several mistakes were found on the website. It was noted in the meeting that work was in progress to launch a new website.

During the 2022-2023 survey, numerous errors were found on the website. It was noted during the meeting that work was continuing on a new website but this was progressing slowly.

1. We recommend that the Council ensures that the Welsh version of the website offers the same service as the English version and does not treat the Welsh version less favourably than the English version.
2. We ask the Council for a timetable of completing the Digital Transformation Programme.

Timetable: 28 April 2023

Standard 58

When you use social media, you must not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

During the 2022-2023 survey, it was found that 4/10 posts on Facebook were not available in Welsh.

1. We recommend that the Council reviews its processes to ensure that all social media accounts comply fully.

Timetable: 28 April 2023

Standard 98

You must develop a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language, and you must publish that policy on your intranet.

It was noted in the response to the self-assessment questionnaire that the Council does not have a formal policy.

1. We recommend that the Council develops a policy on using the Welsh internally.

Timetable: 29 September 2023

We ask you to provide evidence that you have actioned the above recommendations by 28 April 2023 and 29 September 2023.

The Commissioner reserves the right to investigate these matters if doubts regarding compliance with the standards in question continue.

The timetable dates can be extended if required by contacting myself.

Yours sincerely,

Dylan Jones

On behalf of the Welsh Language Commissioner

Cc: Andrew Parker
Emma Scherptong
Katherine Watkins-Hughes

Pwyllgor: **Cabinet**

Dyddiad y cyfarfod: **4^{ydd} Hydref 2023**

Pwnc yr Adroddiad: **Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092 Cynllun Gweithredu'r Ymchwiliad a'r Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle**

Deiliad Portffolio: **Cyng. S. Thomas, Arweinydd / Aelod Cabinet Trosolwg Corfforaethol a Pherfformiad**

Adroddiad wedi'i Gyflwyno gan: **Sarah King, Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd, Llywodraethu a Phartneriaethau**

| Llwybr Adrodd | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| Tim Rheoli'r Gyfarwyddiaeth | Tim Arwain Corfforaethol | Deiliad Portffolio / Cadeirydd | Pwyllgor Archwilio Llywodraethu | Pwyllgor Gwasanaethau Democrataidd | Pwyllgor Craffu | Y Cabinet | Y Cyngor | Arall (nodwch) |
| | 10.08.23 | | | | 14.09.23 | 04.10.23 | | |

1. Pwrpas yr Adroddiad

- 1.1 Pwrpas yr Adroddiad yw cyflwyno Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092 Cynllun Gweithredu'r Ymchwiliad a'r Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle.

2. Cwmpas a Chefnidir

Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092 Cynllun Gweithredu'r Ymchwiliad

- 2.1 Agorwyd ymchwiliad CS092 ("yr ymchwiliad") gan Swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg (SCyG) ym mis Tachwedd 2021 yn dilyn pryderon a godwyd yn ystod asesiad dilysu uniongyrchol ynghylch a oedd y Cyngor yn cydymffurfio â Safonau'r Gymraeg o ran darparu gwasanaeth dros y ffôn Cymraeg.
- 2.2 Ym mis Ebrill 2022, rhoddodd y Cyngor ymateb cychwynnol i'r ymchwiliad, a oedd yn ei dro yn codi pryderon pellach o ran cydymffurfio o ran hyrwyddo gwasanaethau, asesu sgiliau iaith staff, darparu cyfleoedd hyfforddi ac asesu anghenion ieithyddol swyddi. Arweiniodd hyn at ehangu cylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad i gynnwys nifer o safonau gweithredu ychwanegol.
- 2.3 Ym mis Medi 2022, darparwyd penderfyniad terfynol ar yr ymchwiliad, yn unol ag Adran 77 o Fesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011, i'r Cyngor. Roedd y penderfyniad yn amlinellu'r camau sydd eu hangen i gyrraedd cydymffurfiaeth a'r amserlenni cyflawni disgwyliedig. Gofynnodd hefyd i'r Cyngor fwrw ymlaen â dull sefydliadol (gan gynnwys fframwaith atebolrwydd a llywodraethu clir) i ddatblygu Cynllun Gweithredu, gyda dyddiad cau o 31 Ionawr 2023. Cyflwynwyd y Cynllun Gweithredu drafft terfynol i'r

Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w ystyried a'i gymeradwyo ar 26ain Ionawr 2022.
Cymeradwyodd SCyG yr adroddiad ym mis Mawrth 2023.

2.4 Mae'r Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092 (Atodiad 1) yn rhoi diweddariad ar weithredu'r camau gweithredu a nodir yn y cynllun ers mis Mawrth 2023 tan ddiwedd mis Gorffennaf 2023.

2.5 *Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle*

Ar 28 Mawrth 2023 derbyniodd y Cyngor Hysbysiad Gweithredu gan Swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg yn egluro bod y Cyngor, yn ystod ei waith monitro cydymffurfiaid â safonau, wedi methu â chydymffurfio â Safon 98. Mae Safon 98 yn gosod y gofyniad i lunio polisi ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn fewnol i'r diben o hybu a hwyluso'r defnydd o'r iaith, y mae'n rhaid ei chyhoeddi ar y fewnwyd hefyd.

2.6 Er mwyn sicrhau bod y Cyngor yn bodloni'r gofyniad hwn mae Polisi drafft Cymraeg yn y Gweithle wedi'i ddatblygu gan ystyried canllawiau gan SCyG yn ogystal ag ystyried arfer da gan gyrrff cyhoeddus eraill o dan yr un ddyletswydd (Atodiad 2).

3. **Opsiynau ar gyfer Argymhelliad**

3.1 Ystyriodd y Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092 (Atodiad 1) a'r Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle (Atodiad 2) ar 10 Awst 2023.

3.2 *Rhoddodd y Pwyllgor Craffu Trosolwg a Pherfformiad Corfforaethol ystyriaeth i'r adroddiad ar 14eg Medi 2023 ac argymhellodd Opsiynau 1a a 2a i'w cymeradwyo*

3.3 *Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092.*

Opsiwn 1a

Ystyried yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092 (Atodiad 1), a chefnogi dull gweithredu i'w gyflwyno i'r Cabinet.

Opsiwn 1b

Ystyried yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092 (Atodiad 1), a gwneud sylwadau/argymhellion ar gynnydd i'w cyflwyno i'r Cabinet

ac argymhell bod y Cabinet yn cymeradwyo'r Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle (Atodiad 2) a darparu unrhyw sylwadau

3.4 **Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle**

Opsiwn 2a

Ystyried yr argymhelliad Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle (Atodiad 2) i'w gymeradwyo gan y Cabinet i'w gyhoeddi.

Opsiwn 2b

Ystyried y Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle (Atodiad 2) a gwneud sylwadau/argymhellion i'r Cabinet cyn ei gymeradwyo.

4. **Tystiolaeth o sut mae'r pwnc hwn yn cefnogi cyflawniad y Cynllun Corfforaethol / Cyfrifoldebau Statudol / Cynllun Llesiant Blaenau Gwent**

Ers 2016 mae gan y Cyngor ofyniad statudol i weithio yn unol â'n Hysbysiad Cydymffurfio â'r Iaith Gymraeg a osodwyd gan Swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg, a ysgrifennwyd yn unol â Mesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011.

Mae'r Cynllun Gweithredu hwn yn sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau y methodd SCyG y Cyngor arnynt fel rhan o'r ymchwiliad diweddar, gan gynnwys y Cyngor yn datblygu polisi ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn fewnol er mwyn hybu a hwyluso'r defnydd o'r iaith (Safon 98).

Mae'r Cynllun Corfforaethol yn cydnabod bod bodloni ein gofynion o ran y Gymraeg yn faes polisi allweddol a fydd yn galluogi'r Cyngor i gyflawni ei uchelgais.

5. **Goblygiadau yn Erbyn Pob Opsiwn**

5.1 ***Effaith ar y Gyllideb (effaith tymor byr a hirdymor)***

Gallai methu â chydymffurfio ag unrhyw safon iaith Gymraeg arwain at gosbau. Y ffigwr a ddyfynnwyd yw £5,000 am bob toriad.

5.2 ***Risg gan gynnwys Camau Lliniaru***

Mae risg i enw da'r Cyngor os na chaiff y cynllun gweithredu ei roi ar waith yn effeithlon, a chanfyddir nad yw'r Cyngor yn cydymffurfio â Safon 98.

5.3 ***Cyfreithiol***

Gall methu â chydymffurfio ag unrhyw ofyniad a nodir yn yr hysbysiad o benderfyniad sy'n gofyn am gynllun gweithredu arwain y Comisiynydd i wneud cais am orchymyn llys sy'n gofyn am gydymffurfiaeth.

5.4 ***Adnoddau Dynol***

Mae staff Datblygu Sefydliadol yn chwarae rhan allweddol yng ngweithrediad y cynllun hwn, gan weithio i gryfhau ystyriaeth y prosesau recriwtio o'r Gymraeg.

6. **Tystiolaeth Ategol**

Mae'r safonau canlynol wedi'u nodi ynghyd â chymau gweithredu i wella cydymffurfiaeth y sefydliad cyfan o fewn y cynllun:

- Safon 8
- Safon 11
- Safon 17
- Safon 81
- Safon 127
- Safon 130
- Safon 131
- Safon 132

- Safon 133
- Safon 136
- Safon 136a

Adroddiad ymchwiliad llawn a hysbysiad o benderfyniad ynghlwm. (Atodiad 3).

Hysbysiad Gweithredu Monitro ynglŷn â'r Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle ynghlwm. (Atodiad 4).

6.1 **Gwybodaeth a Data Perfformiad**

Manylir ar y camau gweithredu a gymerwyd i roi'r cynllun ar waith yn yr adroddiad cynnydd.

6.2 **Canlyniad disgwylidig i'r cyhoedd**

Bydd rhoi'r Cynllun Gweithredu ar waith yn effeithiol, wedi'i ategu gan adroddiadau cynnydd chwarterol, yn gwella ein cydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau darparu gwasanaethau.

6.3 **Cynnwys (ymgyngori, ymgysylltu, cyfranogiad)**

Mae'r grŵp craidd a sefydlwyd i gefnogi gweithrediad y cynllun gweithredu yn cyfarfod bob 6 wythnos i fonitro cynnydd, a derbyniwyd y Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle ganddynt am sylwadau.

6.4 **Meddwl ar gyfer y tymor hir (cynllunio ymlaen llaw)**

Mae gofyniad statudol ar y Cyngor i weithio yn unol â Mesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011, bydd gweithredu a chynhyrchu Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle yn cryfhau ein cydymffurfiaeth wrth symud ymlaen.

At hynny, mae gwella ein hystyriaeth o'r Gymraeg yn cyfrannu at y Strategaeth Hybu'r Gymraeg a nod Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol o ddarparu 'Cymru â diwylliant bywiog lle mae'r Gymraeg yn ffynnu'.

6.5 **Ffocws Atal**

Bydd bodloni'r gofynion a osodwyd gan Safonau'r Gymraeg yn anelu at atal risg i enw da a risg ariannol.

6.6 **Cydweithio/gweithio mewn partneriaeth**

Mae Blaenau Gwent yn parhau i weithio gydag awdurdodau lleol cyfagos a rhanbarthol i gefnogi'r Cyngor i weithio yn unol â Safonau'r Gymraeg, gan gynnwys fforymau a rhwydweithiau partneriaeth rhanbarthol (er enghraifft, Rhwydwaith Cymraeg Blaenau Gwent, Rhwydiaith, Deddf ac ati).

6.7 **Integreiddio (ar draws meysydd gwasanaeth)**

Drwy ystyried ymagwedd gorfforaethol tuag at y Gymraeg mae'r Cyngor yn dangos ei fod yn mabwysiadu ymagwedd integredig.

6.8 **Datgarboneiddio a Lleihau Allyriadau Carbon**

Nid oes gan yr adroddiad hwn unrhyw oblygiadau uniongyrchol o ran datgarboneiddio neu leihau allyriadau carbon.

6.9 ***Aseiad Effaith Integredig (AEI)***

Mae'r adroddiad yn ystyried Cydraddoldeb drwyddo draw ac yn ceisio sicrhau bod y Gymraeg yn cael ei gwerthfawrogi ac nad yw'n cael ei thrin yn llai ffafriol ar draws y Cyngor.

7. ***Trefniadau Monitro***

- 7.1 Mae Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol Ymchwiliad CS092 a'r Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle i'w cyflwyno i'r Pwyllgor Craffu Trosolwg a Pherfformiad Corfforaethol a'r Cabinet.

Dogfennau Cefndir /Cysylltiadau Electronig

Atodiad 1: Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol yr Ymchwiliad CS092

Atodiad 2: Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle

Atodiad 3: Adroddiad Ymchwiliad Llawn SCyG

Atodiad 4: Hysbysiad Gweithredu Monitro SCyG (Polisi'r Gweithle)

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Atodiad 1: Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol CS092 (BGCBC)

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad

Pwrpas yr adroddiad hwn yw rhoi diweddariad ar y camau a gymerwyd i weithredu'r Cynllun Gweithredu a ysgrifennwyd mewn ymateb i'r ymchwiliad a agorwyd i'r Cyngor gan Swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg (SCyG). I gael gwybodaeth gefndir am ganfyddiadau'r ymchwiliad a'n gweithdrefnau monitro, gweler yr adroddiadau ategol yn Atodiad 4.

Camau Gweithredu ar gyfer ein Gwasanaethau Ffôn

Agorwyd yr ymchwiliad oherwydd pryderon a godwyd yn ystod gwaith monitro SCYG o gydymffurfiaeth y Cyngor â Safonau'r Gymraeg. Mae'r wybodaeth ganlynol yn rhoi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf am y gwaith sydd wedi'i wneud i wella ein cydymffurfiaeth â'r Safonau a godwyd yn ystod yr ymchwiliad ynghylch ein gwasanaethau ffôn.

Safonau a godwyd yn ystod yr ymchwiliad:

Safon 8: Pan fydd person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi gyfarch y person yn Gymraeg.

Safon 11: Pan fo person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg os yw'r person yn dymuno hynny—

- a) hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a

Safon 17: Pan na fo gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi roi gwybod i'r personau sy'n galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael.

Er mwyn gwella ein cydymffurfiaeth â'r Safonau a godwyd ynghylch ein gwasanaethau ffôn, dechreuwyd drwy adolygu'r canllawiau i staff ar sut i gyfarch galwyr sy'n defnyddio'r Gymraeg. Diweddarodd Swyddog Cymorth y Gymraeg, gyda chymorth adborth gan reolwyr tîm gwasanaethau cwsmeriaid, y sleidiau i symleiddio'r iaith a chynnwys dau glip sain o bob cymal, un yn adrodd yn araf a'r llall yn sgwrsio'n rheolaidd. Bwriad y diwygiadau hyn yw gwneud y sleidiau'n haws eu defnyddio, hyd yn oed i staff nad oes ganddynt unrhyw sgiliau Cymraeg ar hyn o bryd. Defnyddiwyd y canllawiau hyn wedi'u gwella i gefnogi datblygiad hyfforddiant pellach i staff â lefelau gallu is yn y Gymraeg. (*Cyfrannu at bwytiau gweithredu cyfeirnodau S8.1a, S8.2a, S11.1a, S17.1a*).

Hyrwyddwyd y canllawiau wedi'u diweddarau i'r holl staff fel rhan o Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg i amlygu pwysigrwydd cyfarch galwyr yn Gymraeg a chefnogi staff i gyflawni'r gofyniad hwn (*S8.1d, S11.3b, S17.2a*).

O ystyried y niferoedd isel o staff sy'n rhugl yn y Gymraeg rydym wedi cynnwys canllawiau ar sut i drefnu galwad yn ôl yn Gymraeg pan fydd siaradwr Cymraeg ar gael. Ar ôl nodi'r llinellau ffôn â blaenoriaeth, rydym wedi dechrau gweithio gyda nhw i ddatblygu eu negeseuon llais a'u gosodiadau IVR i wella ansawdd ein gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid yn Gymraeg **(S8.1c)**.

Mae'r Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol wrthi'n cynnal adolygiad teleffoni ar draws y sefydliad ac o'r herwydd roedd yn gallu nodi mai Canolfan Gyswllt C2BG, y Dreth Gyngor/Refeniw a Thai yw'r meysydd gwasanaeth mwyaf o ran galwadau gyda negeseuon awtomataidd **(S8.1b, S17.1b)** Mae gwaith wedi dechrau i wella ansawdd y negeseuon awtomataidd a swyddogaethau IVR ar y llinellau hyn, ar hyn o bryd mae tri siaradwr Cymraeg rhugl ar draws y llinellau hyn gyda staff eraill dan hyfforddiant. Ymhellach, wrth adolygu gwybodaeth y staff Cymraeg ar y fewnrwyd, darganfuwyd problem wrth brosesu'r ceisiadau am ddiweddariad. Mae'r mater technegol hwn wedi'i ddatrys ers hynny ac rydym wedi cynllunio hyrwyddo pwysigrwydd sicrhau bod staff yn diweddar eu gwybodaeth yng nghynllun cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg **(S11.1b, S11.1c)**. Am y tro mae'r llinellau galwadau uchel â blaenoriaeth wedi enwebu Hyrwyddwyr Iaith Gymraeg ar draws y timau sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg **(S11.1d)**.

Mae'r meysydd gwasanaeth nifer uchel o alwadau a nodwyd yn yr adolygiad teleffoni, ynghyd â nifer o staff o'r timau IAA Plant ac Oedolion, ar hyn o bryd yn mynychu hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg rhithwir wythnosol dan arweiniad tiwtor. (S11.2a, S11.2b, S11.3a) Mae'r cwrs hwn yn rhan o'r Cynllun Cymraeg Gwaith a ddarperir gan Dysgu Cymraeg / Learn Welsh, ac felly wedi'i ariannu'n llawn. Bydd y cwrs yn rhedeg am 35 wythnos, gan gyfarfod am ddwy awr yr wythnos gan gronni 70 awr o hyfforddiant, mae'r rhai sy'n mynychu'r sesiynau hefyd wedi ffurfio cymuned ymarfer i fyfyrion ar yr hyn y maent wedi'i ddysgu rhwng sesiynau. (S11.1d)

Eithriadau / Edrych Ymlaen

S11.2d: Gwella'r broses recriwtio ar gyfer siaradwyr Cymraeg yn unol â Safon y Gymraeg 136 (S136.1, S136.2, S136.3, S136.4 & S136A.1, S136A.2)

Mae gwaith yn ymwneud â gwella'r broses recriwtio wedi dechrau, er cyn symud ymlaen â'n gwelliannau arfaethedig i'r trefniadau asesu sgiliau gwahoddwyd Cyngor Blaenau Gwent i seminar SCyG ynghylch recriwtio. Cynhaliodd SCyG adolygiad manwl o drefniadau recriwtio 24 o sefydliadau ac asesiad o'r angen am sgiliau iaith Gymraeg, cyflwynwyd y canfyddiadau yn y seminar ym mis Gorffennaf 2023. Er mwyn sicrhau ein bod yn gwella ein proses recriwtio'n effeithiol, gwnaethom ohirio'r gweithredu o'r newidiadau arfaethedig i'r asesiad sgiliau i wirio bod ein newidiadau yn adlewyrchu'r arfer gorau a nodir yng nghanllawiau SCyG.

Safon 8: Pan fydd person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi gyfarch y person yn Gymraeg.

| S8.1 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddatblygu cyfarchiad ffôn Cymraeg safonol. | | | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------|--------------|--|--|---|--|
| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaid staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol * | BRAG |
| S8.1A | Adolygu'r canllawiau cyfredol ar gyfer gwasanaethau cyfarch cwsmeriaid dros y ffôn a gwneud y newidiadau angenrheidiol. | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Sarah King Bernadette Elias | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) Leanne Roberts (Profiad y Cwsmer) | Cyllidebau meysydd gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau / Profiad y Cwsmer | Gan weithio gyda rheolwyr gwasanaethau cwsmeriaid, rydym wedi diweddarau'r canllawiau cyfarch dros y ffôn. |
| S8.1B | Nodi meysydd gwasanaeth gyda gwasanaeth negeseuon awtomataidd a niferoedd uchel o alwadau trwy Brosiect Adolygu Teleffoni Cyngor BG (S8.4A) ac adolygu cydymffurfiaeth. | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol | Mae'r meysydd gwasanaeth nifer uchel o alwadau gyda negeseuon awtomataidd wedi'u nodi, mae gwaith ar y gweill i gryfhau cydymffurfiaeth. |
| S8.1C | Datblygu neges awtomataidd cyson wedi'i recordio ymlaen llaw yn Gymraeg i'w defnyddio gan wasanaethau sy'n delio â chwsmeriaid, lle bo'n briodol, gan gynnwys negeseuon Neges Llais dwyieithog wedi'u recordio ymlaen llaw (S8.4B). | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol | Fel y nodwyd uchod, mae'r gwaith hwn yn mynd rhagddo ar hyn o bryd. |

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|-------|--|-------------|--------------|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| S8.1D | Hyrwyddo canllawiau cyfarchion ffôn Cymraeg diwygiedig i bob aelod o staff trwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg (S8.3A) | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllidebau maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Mae canllawiau wedi'u hyrwyddo i'r holl staff drwy boster e-bost ac mae wedi'i amserlennu i gael ei ail-hyrwyddo yng Nghynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg gyda hyrwyddo ategol wedi'i gynnwys ym mriff y rheolwyr. |
|-------|--|-------------|--------------|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--|----------------|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| S8.2 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor hyfforddi holl staff y Cyngor sy'n delio â galwadau ffôn gan y cyhoedd ar sut i roi cyfarchiad ffôn Cymraeg safonol yn gywir ac yn unol â Safon 8. | | | | | | |
| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaidau staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol * | BRAG |
| S8.2A | Defnyddio canllawiau wedi'u gwella (S8.1A) i ddatblygu sleidiau hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg gorfodol ar gyfarch yn gywir ar gyfer yr holl staff. | Mawrth 2023 | Mehafin 2023 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae'r canllawiau wedi'u diweddarau wedi'u defnyddio i ategu'r sleidiau hyfforddi sydd ar gael i staff ar y fewnwyd. |
| S8.2B | Hyrwyddo sleidiau hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg ar gyfarch yn gywir trwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg (S8.3A) | Mawrth 2023 | Mehafin 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Gweler cam gweithredu S8.1d. |
| S8.3 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor godi ymwybyddiaeth ymhlith ei staff o bwysigrwydd darparu cyfarchiad Cymraeg a chynnwys cyfarchiad Cymraeg ar ddechrau galwad. | | | | | | |
| S8.3A | Datblygu a gweithredu Cynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Mae cyfathrebiadau wedi'u hamserlennu ar waith yn dilyn y rhai sydd eisoes wedi'u hanfon. |
| S8.3B | Timau rheoli i godi ymwybyddiaeth yn rhagweithiol o bwysigrwydd darparu cyfarchiad Cymraeg ac ar ddechrau galwadau trwy Gyfarfodydd Tîm / Un i un. Hyrwyddo trwy Friff Rheolwyr wedi'i gynnwys gyda Chynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Gweler cam gweithredu S8.1d. |

| | | | | | | | |
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| S8.4 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor werthuso unrhyw negeseuon cyfarch awtomataidd i wirio bod cyfarchiad Cymraeg yn cael ei roi ar y neges awtomataidd os rhoddir cyfarchiad yn Saesneg. | | | | | | |
| S8.4A | Nodi meysydd gwasanaeth gyda gwasanaeth negeseuon awtomataidd a nifer uchel o alwadau trwy Brosiect Adolygu Teleffoni Cyngor BG (S8.4A) ac adolygu cydymffurfiaeth | Mawrth 2023 | Ebrill 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol | Gweler S8.1C |
| S8.4B | Datblygu neges awtomataidd gyson wedi'i recordio ymlaen llaw yn Gymraeg i'w defnyddio gan wasanaethau sy'n delio â chwsmeriaid, lle bo'n briodol, gan gynnwys negeseuon llais dwyieithog wedi'u recordio ymlaen llaw. | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol | Gweler S8.1C |
| S8.5 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod camau gorfodi 1 - 4 wedi'u cwblhau. | | | | | | |
| S8.5A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu CS092 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 24 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |

* Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried.

Safon 11: Pan fo person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg os yw'r person yn dymuno hynny—

(a) hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a

| S11.1 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi canllawiau ar waith i'r holl staff ar sut i ddelio â galwadau ffôn yn unol â Safon 11. | | | | | | |
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| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaidau staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol * | |
| S11.1A | Adolygu'r canllawiau presennol ar gyfer y weithdrefn ateb y ffôn yn Gymraeg a gwneud y newidiadau angenrheidiol (gan gynnwys datblygu map proses). | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Leanne Roberts (Profiad y Cwsmer) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Profiad Cwsmer | Mae'r weithdrefn ffôn a oedd yn cynnwys y map proses a chlipiau sain wedi'u diweddarau a'u cyhoeddi ar y fewnwyd. |
| S11.1B | Adolygu a diweddarau Cyfeiriadur Mewnwyd Corfforaethol Siaradwyr Cymraeg ar gyfer delio â galwadau ar 'faterion pwnc penodol'. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae SRS wedi nodi'r problemau technegol gyda phrosesu ceisiadau diweddarau |

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| | | | | | | | llyfr ffôn ac maent wedi'u datrys gyda chais ar draws y sefydliad wedi'i amserlennu o fewn Cynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092. |
| S11.1C | Hyrwyddo Cyfeiriadur Mewnwyd Corfforaethol Siaradwyr Cymraeg trwy'r Cynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A) | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Yn dilyn cais gan y staff cyfan i adolygu a diweddarau manylion os oes angen, bydd hyrwyddo pellach yn cael ei gwblhau fel rhan o Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092. |
| S11.1D | Datblygu Cymuned Ymarfer yr Iaith Gymraeg a nodi Hyrwyddwyr y Gymraeg ar draws meysydd gwasanaeth. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae staff sy'n ymwneud yn uniongyrchol |

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| | | | | | | | <p>â chwsmeriaid wedi nodi eu siaradwyr Cymraeg rhugl a enwebwyd i ddelio â galwadau Cymraeg, ac mae gwaith adnabod parhaus ar draws meysydd gwasanaeth ar y gweill. At hynny, mae staff sy'n ymwneud yn uniongyrchol â chwsmeriaid sy'n mynychu hyfforddiant wedi ffurfio cymuned ymarfer i fyfyrion ar wersi.</p> |
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| S11.2 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod ganddo adnoddau i ymdrin â phob galwad a dderbynnir yn unol â Safon 11. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod digon o siaradwyr Cymraeg yn y ganolfan alwadau i ddelio â galwadau ffôn gan bersonau sy'n dymuno cynnal yr alwad yn Gymraeg, yn unol â Safon 11. | | | | | | |
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| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymadau staffio | Ymrwymadau Cyllidebol * | |
| S11.2A | Sefydlu cyllidebau hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg sydd ar gael ar draws meysydd gwasanaeth sy'n ymwneud yn uniongyrchol â chwsmeriaid allweddol a nodwyd trwy'r Prosiect Ffonau (S8.4A). | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Rydym wedi dewis defnyddio'r Cynllun Cymraeg Gwaith ar gyfer meysydd allweddol sy'n ymwneud yn uniongyrchol â chwsmeriaid sydd wedi'u hariannu'n llawn. |
| S11.2B | Darparu rhaglen hyfforddiant hirdymor ar gyfer staff gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid presennol (canolfan alwadau) gan eu huwchgilio i ddelio â galwadau yn unol â Safon 11. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae nifer o staff gwasanaethau cwsmeriaid wedi cofrestru ar gynllun Cymraeg Gwaith sydd wedi'i deilwra i'w hardaloedd. Bydd y dosbarth rhithwir unwaith yr wythnos gyda thiwtor a bydd staff wedi cwblhau 70 awr o hyfforddiant erbyn diwedd Chwefror. |

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| S11.2C | Cynnal sesiynau ymarfer rheolaidd gyda staff gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid (canolfan alwadau) i asesu ymarferoldeb y weithdrefn yn barhaus gan amlygu a mynd i'r afael â meysydd i'w gwella. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 24 | Sarah King/ Bernadette Elias / Tanya Evans | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Nawr bod staff gwasanaethau cwsmeriaid wedi gwella eu sgiliau trwy hyfforddiant Cymraeg Gwaith, cynhelir sesiynau ymarfer gyda Swyddog Cymorth y Gymraeg dros yr wythnosau nesaf, i'w cynnal yn rheolaidd wrth i ni symud ymlaen drwy'r cynllun gweithredu. |
| S11.2D | Gwella'r broses recriwtio ar gyfer siaradwyr Cymraeg yn unol â Safon y Gymraeg 136 (S136.1, S136.2, S136.3, S136.4 a S136A.1, S136A.2). | Mawrth 2023 | Mehafin-2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Mae adolygiad o'r broses recriwtio ar y gweill. Mae'r newidiadau hyn yn sylweddol a byddant yn effeithio ar bob tîm. Fel y cyfryw, roeddem wedi gohirio'r gweithrediad i ganiatáu ystyried seminar recriwtio SCyG a'r adroddiad adolygu ategol a gyflwynwyd ym mis Gorffennaf. |

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| S11.3 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu hyfforddiant i'r holl staff sy'n ymdrin â galwadau ffôn ar sut i ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn unol â Safon 11. | | | | | | |
| S11.3A | Cyflwyno rhaglen hyfforddi hirdymor ar gyfer staff sy'n delio â galwadau ffôn gan eu huwchsgilio i ymdrin â galwadau yn unol â Safon 11 (S11.2B). | Mawrth 2023 | Ebrill 2024 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Gweler S11.2b. |
| S11.3B | Hyrwyddo hyfforddiant i'r holl staff sy'n delio â galwadau ffôn ar sut i ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn unol â Safon 11 drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Ebrill 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth cyfathrebu | Gweler S8.1d a S8.2b. |
| S11.3C | Cynnal sesiynau ymarfer gyda staff i asesu ymarferoldeb y weithdrefn yn barhaus gan amlygu a mynd i'r afael â meysydd i'w gwella. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King/ Bernadette Elias / Tanya Evans | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Gweler S11.2c. |

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| S11.4 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod camau gorfodi 1 - 4 wedi'u cwblhau. | | | | | | |
| S11.4A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu CS092 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym |

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** Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried*

Safon 17: Pan na fo gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi roi gwybod i'r personau sy'n galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael.

S17.1 Pan na fo gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg ar gael, rhaid i'r Cyngor hysbysu galwyr pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael yn unol â Safon 17.

| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymadau staffio | Ymrwymadau Cyllidebol * | BRAG |
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| S17.1A | Adolygu'r canllawiau presennol ar gyfer y weithdrefn ateb y ffôn yn Gymraeg a gwneud y newidiadau angenrheidiol (gan gynnwys datblygu map proses) (S11.1A). | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Leanne Roberts (Profiad y Cwsmer) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllidebau meysydd gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau / Profiad y Cwsmer | Gweler S11.1a. |
| S17.1B | Nodi meysydd gwasanaeth gyda gwasanaeth negeseuon awtomataidd a niferoedd uchel o alwadau trwy Brosiect Adolygu Teleffoni Cyngor BG (S8.4A) ac adolygu cydymffurfiaeth. | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Rebecca Morales-Reeves (Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth y Tîm Trawsnewid Strategol | Gweler S8.1b. |

S17.2 Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi arweiniad i'r holl staff sy'n delio â galwadau ffôn perthnasol ar y drefn newydd.

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| S17.2A | Hyrwyddo canllawiau ffôn Cymraeg diwygiedig i'r holl staff drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg (S8.3A). | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Gweler S8.1d. |
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| S17.3 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu hyfforddiant i staff ar y drefn newydd. | | | | | | |
| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaidau staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol * | BRAG |
| S17.3A | Cyflwyno rhaglen hyfforddi hirdymor ar gyfer staff sy'n delio â galwadau ffôn gan eu huwchsgilio i ymdrin â galwadau yn unol â Safon 11 (S11.2B). | Mawrth 2023 | Ebrill 2024 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Gweler S11.2b. |
| S17.4 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod Camau Gorfodi 1 - 3 wedi'u cwblhau. | | | | | | |
| S17.4A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu CS092. | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |

* Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried.

Hyfforddiant

Safon 130: Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith.

- a) i'ch cyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, a
- b) i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

Safon 131: Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd i'ch cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.

Safon 132: Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyrsiau hyfforddi er mwyn i'ch cyflogeion ddatblygu—

- (a) ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys ymwybyddiaeth am hanes yr iaith a'i lle yn niwylliant Cymru);
- (b) dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg;
- (c) dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

Safon 133: Pan fyddwch yn darparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd (er enghraifft, fel rhan o broses sefydlu), rhaid ichi ddarparu gwybodaeth er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.

Mae Safon 130 wedi ei sefydlu i sicrhau bod ein sefydliad yn darparu cyfleoedd hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol i'r holl staff. Er bod y Cyngor wedi darparu cyfleoedd hyfforddi i staff ers cyflwyno Safonau'r Gymraeg, mae'r diweddariad canlynol yn amlinellu'r camau yr ydym wedi'u cymryd i fod yn fwy rhagweithiol wrth annog staff i ddefnyddio ein darpariaethau hyfforddi.

Mae'r 'Polisi Hyfforddiant Ôl-fynediad' yn rhoi arweiniad i staff a'u rheolwyr ynghylch logisteg hyfforddiant yn ystod oriau gwaith. Mae'r polisi hwn yn ymwneud â chysiau sy'n arwain at gymhwyster a gydnabyddir yn ffurfiol; er gwaethaf hyn teimlem ei bod yn hanfodol bod staff sy'n edrych ar y ddogfen hon am gyngor yn cael gwybod am gyrsiau Cymraeg ar bob lefel o ystyried y manteision y mae sgiliau Cymraeg yn eu cynnig i bob rôl. O ganlyniad, rydym wedi cynnwys adran o fewn y polisi sy'n cyfeirio staff at y weithdrefn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg a ddatblygwyd yn unol â'r camau gweithredu sy'n ymwneud â hyfforddiant o fewn Cynllun Gweithredu CS092 (**S130.1a**).

Nodwyd y newid hwn ym mrieff y rheolwyr ynghyd â'r canllawiau gweithdrefn hyfforddi sydd hefyd yn nodi bod rhaid i reolwyr hysbysu Swyddog Cymorth y Gymraeg pan fydd staff yn derbyn hyfforddiant (**S130.1b**, **S130.2b**). Mae'r wybodaeth hon, ynghyd â'r data a gasglwyd gan ddarparwyr hyfforddiant megis Dysgu Cymraeg, wedi'u cyhoeddi yn Adroddiad Blynyddol yr Iaith Gymraeg (**S130.2a**, **S131.2a**, **S131.2b**). Mae'r weithdrefn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg yn archwilio'r adnoddau hyfforddi sydd ar gael drwy'r fewnwyd, y porth e-ddysgu a lefel mynediad a dewisiadau cyrsiau hyfforddiant pellach Dysgu Cymraeg, a'r broses o drefnu amser hyfforddi (**S131.1a**). Hyrwyddwyd y diweddariad hwn o fewn briff y

rheolwyr fel rhan o Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 a bwriedir ei hyrwyddo ledled y sefydliad yn ystod yr wythnosau nesaf (**S131.1b**).

Mae ein pecyn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg yn amlinellu'r cyrsiau sydd ar gael yn ymwneud ag ymwybyddiaeth o hanes a diwylliant yr iaith Gymraeg, gofyniad deddfwriaethol awdurdodau lleol i weithio yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg; a sut i gynyddu'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle (**S132.1a, S132.1c**). Fel y nodwyd uchod, mae hyrwyddo hyfforddiant wedi'i gynnwys yng Nghynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (**S132.1d, S132.2b**). Mae'r canllawiau cyffredinol ar gyfer sicrhau ymwybyddiaeth o sut i weithredu yn unol â Safonau'r Gymraeg wedi'u hadolygu a'u diweddarau i adlewyrchu ein model gweithio hybrid presennol. Roedd hyn yn cynnwys Sway sy'n darparu cyfarwyddiadau ar gyfer sefydlu cyfieithu ar y pryd ar gyfer galwadau Microsoft Teams.

Mae diwygiadau wedi'u gwneud i'r rhaglen sefydlu i sefydlu ystyriaeth fwy rhagweithiol o sut i weithio yn unol â gofynion iaith Gymraeg y Cyngor. Datblygiad allweddol yw cyfeirio gweithwyr at y canllawiau iaith Gymraeg a'r elfennau hyfforddi sy'n ymwneud â'r weithdrefn ffôn (**S.133.1Ai, S.133.1Aii, S133.2a**). Er mwyn gwarantu bod rheolwyr yn gweithredu'r newidiadau hyn, anfonwyd y diweddariadau i'n gweithdrefn sefydlu mewn briff rheolwr (**S133.1b, S133.2b**).

Eithriadau / Edrych Ymlaen

Cam gweithredu S132.1b yn y cynllun yw sicrhau bod pecyn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg ar gael drwy'r porth e-ddysgu newydd sy'n cael ei gomisiynu ar hyn o bryd, erbyn mis Hydref 2023. Er, ni fydd y porth newydd ar gael i staff tan ddechrau 2024. Felly, tra bod hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg yn cael ei gynnwys yn natblygiad y porth, bydd oedi cyn cwblhau'r camau gweithredu hyn. O ganlyniad, bydd y gwaith o ddatblygu trefn fonitro sy'n sicrhau bod hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg yn cael ei ailadrodd o bryd i'w gilydd drwy'r porth e-ddysgu yn dechrau unwaith y bydd y porth ar gael i staff (**S132.2b**).

Safon 130: Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith—

(a) i'ch cyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, a

(b) i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

S130.1 Rhaid i'r Cyngor greu trefn i ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod amser gwaith i'w weithwyr gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, ac i weithwyr sy'n rheoli pobl eraill dderbyn hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaidau staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
|---------------|---|-------------|--------------|--|--|---|--|
| S130.1A | Adolygu a datblygu Polisi Hyfforddiant Ôl-fynediad i gynnwys gweithdrefn i ddarparu cyfleoedd i bob aelod o staff dderbyn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg sylfaenol yn ystod amser gwaith. | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Mae cynnwys adran yn ymwneud â hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg bellach wedi'i gynnwys yn y Polisi Hyfforddiant Ôl-fynediad. |
| S130.1B | Polisi Hyfforddiant Ôl-fynediad diwygiedig yn cael ei hyrwyddo i'r holl staff drwy'r Cynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Mai 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Mae rheolwyr wedi cael eu briffio ar y newid hwn er mwyn trefnu hyfforddiant effeithiol i'w timau. |
| S130.2 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor gofnodi faint o staff sy'n cael cynnig yr hyfforddiant hwn a faint o staff sy'n cael yr hyfforddiant hwn yn flynyddol. | | | | | | |
| S130.2A | Gwybodaeth perfformiad chwarterol i'w chasglu gan Lywodraeth Cymru, Dysgu Cymraeg a darparwyr hyfforddiant ynghylch nifer y staff sy'n derbyn hyfforddiant. | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae ffigurau hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg yn cael eu coladu a'u cyhoeddi yn |

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| | | | | | | | Adroddiad Blynyddol yr Iaith Gymraeg. |
| S130.2B | Anogir rheolwyr a staff i hysbysu Swyddog Cymorth y Gymraeg pan fydd staff yn derbyn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg drwy'r Cynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 24 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu / Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae'r drefn hyfforddi newydd yn nodi'r angen i reolwyr a staff hysbysu Swyddog Cymorth y Gymraeg. |

| S130.3 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod camau gorfodi 1 - 2 wedi'u cwblhau. | | | | | | |
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| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymadau staffio | Ymrwymadau Cyllidebol | BRSAG |
| S130.4A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu CS092 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |

* Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried.

Safon 131: Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd i'ch cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.

| S131.1 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor greu trefn i ddarparu cyfleoedd i'w weithwyr sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg sylfaenol dderbyn hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim, i ddatblygu eu sgiliau iaith. | | | | | | |
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| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiadau staffio | Ymrwymiadau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
| S131.1A | Datblygu Hyfforddiant Iaith Gymraeg - Canllaw i Reolwyr a Staff i gynnwys gweithdrefn i ddarparu cyfleoedd i bob aelod o staff dderbyn hyfforddiant Cymraeg pellach yn rhad ac am ddim, i ddatblygu eu sgiliau iaith. | Mawrth 2023 | Mai 2023 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae'r Weithdrefn Hyfforddiant Iaith Gymraeg yn cynnwys canllawiau ar gyfleoedd hyfforddi pellach sydd ar gael i staff. |
| S131.1B | Hyfforddiant Iaith Gymraeg Diwygiedig – Hyrwyddo'r Canllaw i Reolwyr a Staff i'r holl staff drwy'r Cynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Mehefin 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Mae'r canllawiau hyn wedi'u cynnwys ym mriiff y rheolwyr ac mae hyrwyddo pellach i'r holl staff yn cael ei ddatblygu fel rhan o Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092. |

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| S131.2 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor gofnodi faint o staff sy'n cael cynnig yr hyfforddiant hwn a faint o staff sy'n cael yr hyfforddiant hwn yn flynyddol. | | | | | | |
| S131.2A | Gwybodaeth perfformiad chwarterol i'w chasglu gan ddarparwyr hyfforddiant ynglŷn â nifer y staff sy'n derbyn hyfforddiant pellach yn y Gymraeg. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Gweler S130.2a. |
| S131.2B | Rhaid i holl reolwyr y Cyngor gadw cofnod o staff sy'n derbyn Hyfforddiant Iaith Gymraeg a rhaid iddynt ddarparu crynodeb blynyddol i'r Tîm Polisi a Phartneriaethau. | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Gweler S130.2b. |

| S131.3 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod Camau Gorfodi 1 - 2 wedi'u cwblhau. | | | | | | |
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| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymadau staffio | Ymrwymadau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
| S131.3A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu CS092 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |

* Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried

Safon 132: Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyrsiau hyfforddi er mwyn i'ch cyflogeion ddatblygu—

- (a)**ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys ymwybyddiaeth am hanes yr iaith a'i lle yn niwylliant Cymru);
(b)dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg;
(c)dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

S132.1 Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu hyfforddiant i'w weithwyr ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg, dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â Safonau'r Gymraeg a dealltwriaeth o'r modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaidau staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
|---------|---|-------------|--------------|--|---|---|--|
| S132.1A | Pecyn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg i'w ddatblygu yn unol â Safon 132 (S132.1D). | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae'r Weithdrefn Hyfforddiant Iaith Gymraeg yn cynnig arweiniad ar yr adnoddau sydd ar gael i staff ynghylch ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg, gan gynnwys ei hanes a'i heffeithiau diwylliannol, canllawiau ar sut i weithredu yn unol â Safonau'r Gymraeg a sut y gellir defnyddio'r iaith yn y gweithle. |
| S132.1B | Pecyn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg i fod ar gael i'r | Hydref 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Bydd y porth e-ddysgu ar gael i |

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| | holl staff trwy borth e-ddysgu newydd y Cyngor (yn cael ei gomisiynu ar hyn o bryd). | | | | Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | | staff ar ddechrau 2024. |
| S132.1C | Adolygu a datblygu canllawiau ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg sydd ar gael i'r holl staff drwy'r fewnwyd gan sicrhau eu bod yn cynnwys yr elfennau dysgu gofynnol yn unol â Safon 131. | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae canllawiau ar weithdrefnau hyfforddi wedi'u diweddarau, gyda hyfforddiant ymwybyddiaeth iaith Gymraeg ychwanegol yn cael ei ddatblygu. |
| S132.1D | Hyrwyddo pecyn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg a chanllawiau ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Mae hyn wedi'i gynnwys o fewn briff rheolwyr, mae opsiynau hyfforddi wedi'u hanfon at yr holl staff gyda hyrwyddo pellach wedi'i drefnu fel rhan o'r Cynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092. |

| S132.2 Rhaid i'r Cyngor fod â gweithdrefn yn ei lle sy'n sicrhau bod yr hyfforddiant hwn yn cael ei ailadrodd o bryd i'w gilydd. | | | | | | | |
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| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiadau staffio | Ymrwymiadau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
| S132.2A | Datblygu gweithdrefn ar gyfer sicrhau bod hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg yn cael ei ailadrodd o bryd i'w gilydd drwy'r porth e-ddysgu (gan gynnwys hyfforddiant gloymi). | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Gweler cam gweithredu S132.1b. |

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| S132.2B | Hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg cyfnodol (e.e., sesiynau gloywi) i'w hyrwyddo drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 . | Hydref 2023 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Hyrwyddwyd cyfleoedd hyfforddi i'r holl staff a bydd hyrwyddo pellach wedi'i amserlennu yn y Cynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092. |
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| S132.2 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod Camau Gorfodi 1 - 2 wedi'u cwblhau. | | | | | | |
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| S131.3A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu CS092 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |
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* Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried

Safon 133: Pan fyddwch yn darparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd (er enghraifft, fel rhan o broses ymsefydlu), rhaid ichi ddarparu gwybodaeth er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.

| S133.1 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor addasu ei weithdrefnau a'i sesiynau sefydlu i gynnwys darparu gwybodaeth i weithwyr newydd er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg. | | | | | | |
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| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaid staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
| S133.1Ai | Datblygu a darparu gwybodaeth i gefnogi'r rhaglen sefydlu. | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae'r Llyfryn Sefydlu Corfforaethol a Rhestr Wirio Rheolwyr wedi'u diweddarau i sicrhau bod staff yn ymwybodol o ble i geisio arweiniad/adnoddau Cymraeg. |
| S133.1Aii | Adolygu a datblygu'r rhaglen sefydlu ar-lein / PDF bresennol i sicrhau ei bod yn cynnwys yr elfennau dysgu gofynnol yn unol â Safon 131. | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Gweler S133.1ai. |
| S133.1B | Hyrwyddo rhaglen sefydlu ddiwygiedig ar-lein / PDF drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Mae'r holl reolwyr wedi cael eu briffio ar y diwygiadau a wnaed i'r rhaglen sefydlu. |

| S133.2 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor baratoi pecyn gwybodaeth ar yr iaith Gymraeg a rhannu'r pecyn hwn gyda phob aelod newydd o staff. | | | | | | |
|---------|---|-------------|--------------|------------------|---|---|---|
| S133.2A | Datblygu pecyn gwybodaeth ar y Gymraeg i'w gynnwys o fewn gwybodaeth sefydlu ar gyfer staff newydd a'i gynnwys yn y Canllawiau Iaith Gymraeg i staff (S133.1A). | Mawrth 2023 | Mehefin 2023 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Mae'r adnoddau sydd ar gael i'r holl staff wedi'u diweddarau ar adran Canllawiau Iaith Gymraeg y fewnwyd a byddant yn cael eu monitro'n barhaus i adlewyrchu'r canllawiau a'r cyfleoedd hyfforddi mwyaf diweddar. |
| S133.2B | Hyrwyddo gweithdrefnau a sesiynau sefydlu diwygiedig drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A) (S133.1B). | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Gweler S133.1b. |

| S133.3 Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cymryd Camau Gorfodi 1 a 2. | | | | | | | |
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| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymadau staffio | Ymrwymadau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
| S133.3A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu CS092 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |

* Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried

Recriwtio

Safon 127: Rhaid ichi asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eich cyflogeion.

Safon 136: Pan fyddwch yn asesu'r anghenion ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag, rhaid ichi asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a'i chategoreiddio fel swydd pan fo un neu ragor o'r canlynol yn gymwys

(a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol;

(b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd;

(c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol; neu

(ch) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.

Safon 136A: Os byddwch wedi categoreiddio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid ichi—

(a) pennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a

(b) hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.

Mae'r Cyngor ar hyn o bryd yn defnyddio fframwaith Cymdeithas Profwyr Ieithoedd Ewrop i asesu sgiliau staff, wedi'i fesur drwy hunanasesiadau staff ar iTrent. Ar hyn o bryd rydym yn gweithio gyda'r Tîm Datblygu Sefydliadol i ystyried y fframwaith presennol a manteision newid i'r Fframwaith Cyfeirio Ewropeaidd Cyffredin. Cefnogir y broses benderfynu hon gan adborth gan ein haelodau rhwydwaith iaith Gymraeg sydd yn y broses o drosglwyddo i weithdrefnau asesu eu Cyngor.

Nid yw'r system iTrent bresennol yn hwyluso atodi hyperddolenni i'r fframwaith asesu na'r dogfennau eu hunain, felly rhaid i staff weld yr asesiad ar y fewnrwyd neu ofyn am gopi gan eu rheolwyr. Yn dilyn y datblygiadau a drefnwyd i'r system gan Datblygu Sefydliadol, rydym yn bwriadu darparu copi o'r fframwaith ar iTrent ei hun, (**S127.1a**) ynghyd â hyrwyddiadau i staff yn egluro'r lefelau sgiliau (**S127.1c**). Bwriad y trefniadau hyn yw gwneud cwblhau'r asesiad hwn yn gyflymach ac yn haws i staff ddiwygio eu gwybodaeth, gan arwain at gydymffurfiaeth gryfach wrth i'r wybodaeth hon gael ei hadolygu a'i diweddarau'n fwy rheolaidd.

Er gwaethaf y datblygiadau sydd i ddod i system iTrent, rydym yn cydnabod pwysigrwydd parhau i asesu sgiliau staff yn y cyfamser. Mae hyn wedi'i amlygu gan nodiadau atgoffa sy'n cael eu hanfon at staff i gadw'r wybodaeth hon yn gyfredol fel rhan o Gynllun Cyfathrebu Iaith Gymraeg CS092 (**S127.2b**) Cyhoeddir y wybodaeth hon yn ein Hadroddiad Blyneddol ar yr Iaith Gymraeg, a'i defnyddio i sicrhau bod gennym wydnwch staffio digonol ar gyfer gwasanaeth Cymraeg (**S127.3a**).

Rydym wedi dechrau gweithio ar sut mae ein sefydliad yn asesu'r sgiliau sydd eu hangen ar gyfer rolau, a'u trefniadau hysbysebu dilynol. Ymgwymerwyd ag ymchwil i lwyfannau recriwtio Cymraeg, gyda'r potensial i geisio buddsoddiad corfforaethol i ddefnyddio cynulleidfaf'r safleoedd hyn ar gyfer rolau sydd wedi'u categoreiddio fel 'Cymraeg yn hanfodol'. (Mae prisiau'n amrywio o £100 - £150 fesul hysbyseb) (**S127.1b**). Mae'r Ffurflen

Awdurdodi Recriwtio a ddefnyddir gan reolwyr i sefydlu'r sgiliau Cymraeg sydd eu hangen ar gyfer unrhyw rôl benodol yn cael ei hadolygu. Un o'n prif ffocws yn yr adolygiad hwn yw ystyried capasiti o fewn y maes gwaith swyddi i ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg. (**S136.3a**). Unwaith y bydd y ffurflen wedi'i diweddarau, bydd rheolwyr yn cael eu gwneud yn ymwybodol o hynny ac yn cael canllawiau ar ddefnydd effeithiol ohonynt fel rhan o Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (**S136.1, S136.2a, S136a.1a**). Ymhellach, mae diwygiadau i dempled yr hysbyseb swydd i gryfhau cydymffurfiaeth â Safon 136a yn aros i gael eu cymeradwyo. Mae'r diwygiadau arfaethedig yn gweld bod ymgeiswyr yn cael gwybod am y categori sgiliau rolau heb orfod mynd i'r swydd-ddisgrifiad llawn.

Gan ddefnyddio adborth gan ein Tîm Datblygu Sefydliadol ein hunain, Swyddogion Iaith Gymraeg yr awdurdodau cyfagos a'r holl waith ymchwil sydd ar gael i ni, rydym yn parhau i archwilio'r rhwystrau i gyflogi siaradwyr Cymraeg (**S136a.1b**). Bydd y wybodaeth hon, ac yn bwysicach fyth, yr atebion i oresgyn y rhwystrau a nodwyd yn cefnogi datblygiad yr ymgyrch gyfathrebu sydd ar ddod sy'n hyrwyddo'r gwerth y mae'r Cyngor, o safbwynt cyflogwr, yn ei roi ar sgiliau Cymraeg (**S136a.1c**).

Safon 127: Rhaid ichi asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eich cyflogaion.

S127.1 Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod ganddo weithdrefn mewn lle i asesu sgiliau Cymraeg ei weithwyr.

| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaidau staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol * | BRAG |
|---------|--|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| S127.1A | Adolygu a datblygu'r Weithdrefn Asesu Sgiliau Cymraeg presennol, gan gynnwys system iTrent, a'i diweddarau yn unol â Safon 127. | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Jane Thomas (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Ar y gweill ar hyn o bryd. |
| S127.1B | Cwmpasu a phrofi'r defnydd o lwyfannau recriwtio ar-lein ar gyfer siaradwyr Cymraeg, yn enwedig ar gyfer swyddi newydd neu swyddi presennol sy'n gofyn am y Gymraeg fel sgil hanfodol. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Byddai angen buddsoddiad corfforaethol i ymestyn ein hysbysebu i'r safleoedd hyn. |
| S127.1C | Hyrwyddo canllawiau diwygiedig Gweithdrefn Asesu Sgiliau Cymraeg i Reolwyr a Staff drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg (S8.3A). | Medi 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Bydd yn dechrau ar ôl cwblhau cam gweithredu S127.1a. |

| S127.2 Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod y sgiliau hynny'n cael eu hasesu'n flynyddol. | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiadau staffio | Ymrwymiadau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
| S127.2A | Asesiad blynyddol o sgiliau Cymraeg staff drwy system iTrent, adrodd a dadansoddi er mwyn llywio'r cynllun Adnoddau Dynol i sicrhau adnoddau digonol ar gyfer gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg. | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Jane Thomas (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Cyhoeddwyd yr asesiad diweddaraf ar 30 Mehefin 2023 yn Adroddiad Blynyddol yr Iaith Gymraeg . |
| S127.2B | Nodiadau atgoffa chwarterol i staff ddiweddarau eu gwybodaeth bersonol ar iTrent trwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Iaith Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol | Mae nodiadau atgoffa wedi'u hanfon at yr holl staff ac mae mwy wedi'u hamserlennu fel rhan o Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092. |
| S127.2C | Hyrwyddiad i staff yn egluro lefelau sgiliau Cymraeg (e.e., 'ychydig' yn erbyn 'cymedrol') drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth cyfathrebu | Ar y gweill wrth i ni gwblhau cam gweithredu S127.1a. |

* Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried

Safon 136: Pan fyddwch yn asesu'r anghenion ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag, rhaid ichi asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a'i chategoreiddio fel swydd pan fo un neu ragor o'r canlynol yn gymwys—

- (a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol;**
- (b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd;**
- (c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol; neu**
- (ch) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.**

S136.1 Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu hyfforddiant i staff sy'n asesu anghenion sgiliau iaith swydd newydd neu swydd wag ar sut i gynnal asesiadau sy'n cydymffurfio â gofynion Safon 136.

| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaid staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
|---|---|----------------|----------------|---|--|--|---|
| S136.1A | Cymorth, gwybodaeth a hyfforddiant a ddarperir i staff sy'n asesu sgiliau iaith yn unol â'r weithdrefn Asesu Sgiliau Iaith Gymraeg ddiwygiedig i'w hyrwyddo drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A) (S127.1A) (S127.1C). | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol /Cyfathrebu / Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Ar y gweill wrth i ni gwblhau cam gweithredu S127.1a. |
| S136.2 Rhaid i'r Cyngor baratoi canllawiau i staff ar sut i gynnal asesiad o anghenion sgiliau ieithyddol swydd. | | | | | | | |
| S136.2A | Canllawiau ar asesu anghenion ieithyddol swydd, wedi'u hymgorffori o fewn y dogfennau perthnasol, i'w hyrwyddo drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A) (S127.1A) (S127.1C). | Mawrth 2023 | Hydref 2023 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol /Cyfathrebu / Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Ar y gweill wrth i ni gwblhau cam gweithredu S127.1a. |

| S136.3 | Wrth gynnal asesiadau o dan Safon 136, rhaid i'r Cyngor, ar bob achlysur, ystyried y gallu o fewn maes gwaith y swydd i ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn unol â'r Safonau ac ystyried a ddylid hysbysebu'r swydd fel swydd lle mae sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol. | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|----------------|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiaidau staffio | Ymrwymiaidau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
| S136.3A | Diwygio'r weithdrefn asesu sgiliau iaith Gymraeg i gynnwys ystyried darparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg a hysbysebu sgiliau Cymraeg yn hanfodol (S127.1) (S127.2A), a monitro gweithrediad. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Lee McDonald (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Jane Thomas (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol / Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Ar y gweill wrth i ni gwblhau cam gweithredu S127.1a. |
| S136.4 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod Camau Gorfodi 1 - 3 wedi'u cwblhau. | | | | | | |
| S136.4A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu'r Gymraeg CS092 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |

* Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried

Safon 136A: Os byddwch wedi categorio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid ichi—

(a) pennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a

(b) hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.

S136A.1 Rhaid i'r Cyngor newid ei weithdrefnau fel bod y corff, pan fo'r Cyngor yn categorio swydd fel un lle mae sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, yn pennu hynny, wrth hysbysebu'r swydd a hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg yn unol â safon 136A. .

| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiadau staffio | Ymrwymiadau Cyllidebol | BRAG |
|---------------|--|----------------|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| S136A.1A | Diwygio'r weithdrefn Asesu Sgiliau Iaith Gymraeg i ystyried ôl-gategoreiddio sgiliau iaith Gymraeg (S127.1) (S127.2) | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 24 | Bernadette Elias | Ceri Gay, Lee McDonald, Jane Thomas (Datblygu Sefydliadol) Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol / Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Ar y gweill wrth i ni gwblhau cam gweithredu S127.1a. |
| S136A.1B | Cynnal ymchwil i ddeall y rhwystrau o gyflogi siaradwyr Cymraeg i swyddi. | Mawrth 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Ar y gweill. |
| S136A.1C | Datblygu ymgyrch ymgysylltu a chyfathrebu rhagweithiol sy'n hyrwyddo gwerth sgiliau Cymraeg i gyflogwyr a defnydd o fewn y gweithle. | Medi 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Katherine Watkins-Hughes (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau/ Cyfathrebu | Ar y gweill. |
| S136.4 | Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod Camau Gorfodi 1 - 3 wedi'u cwblhau. | | | | | | |
| S136.4A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu'r Gymraeg CS092 | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i gwblhau |

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| | | | | | | | | adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |
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Hyrwyddo gwell gwasanaeth Cymraeg

Safon 81: Rhaid ichi hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg a ddarperir gennych, a hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg

Bydd gwaith yn dechrau ar ddatblygu a chyhoeddi ymgyrch allanol sy'n hyrwyddo mynediad i wasanaethau'r Cyngor drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg unwaith y byddwn wedi cwblhau'r camau gweithredu yn y cynllun gweithredu i wella ein darpariaeth o'r gwasanaethau dywededig. Unwaith y byddwn wedi cryfhau ein gwasanaethau Cymraeg bwriadwn ddefnyddio [‘Pa bynnag ffordd... / Whichever way...’](#) Cyngor Sir Caerfyrddin fel enghraifft o arfer da.

Safon 81: Rhaid ichi hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg a ddarperir gennych, a hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg

S81.1 Byddai ymgyrch hyrwyddo benodol am y gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg yn fanteisiol. Dylid cynnal ymgyrch o'r fath pan fo'r corff yn hyderus bod ei wasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg yn cydymffurfio â'r Safonau cyflenwi gwasanaethau.

| Cyf. | Cam Gweithredu | Dechrau | Gorffen | Arweinydd Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol | Arweinydd(ion) Gweithredu / ymrwymiadau staffio | Ymrwymiadau Cyllidebol * | BRAG |
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|--------|---|---------------|-------------|------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| S81.1A | Cyflwyno ymgyrch hyrwyddo benodol drwy Gynllun Cyfathrebu'r Gymraeg CS092 (S8.3A). | Chwefror 2024 | Mawrth 2024 | Bernadette Elias | Carolyn Jenkins (Cyfathrebu) Louise Bishop (Cyfathrebu) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Cyfathrebu | Bydd gwaith ar ddatblygu a chyflawni'r ymgyrch hon yn dechrau ar ôl cwblhau'r holl gamau gweithredu yn y cynllun hwn wrth i ni wella ein cydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau cyflenwi gwasanaethau. |
|--------|---|---------------|-------------|------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|

S81.2 Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg bod Cam Gorfodi 1 wedi'i gwblhau.

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| S81.2A | Adroddiad Cynnydd Cynllun Gweithredu'r Gymraeg CS092. | Rhagfyr 2023 | Mawrth 2024 | Sarah King | Andrew Parker (Polisi a Phartneriaethau) | Cyllideb maes gwasanaeth Polisi a Phartneriaethau | Bydd yr Adroddiad Cynnydd Chwarterol hwn yn helpu i |
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| | | | | | | | gwblhau adroddiad terfynol SCyG ym mis Mawrth 2024. |
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** Bydd costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â phwysau cyllidebol yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol i'w hystyried.*

Atodiad 2: Polisi Cymraeg yn y Gweithle

*Defnydd Mewnol o'r
Iaith Gymraeg*



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council



**Paratowyd yn unol â gofynion Mesur y Gymraeg
(Cymru) 2011**

| Fersiwn | Newidiadau Allweddol | Cymeradwywyd gan |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Gorffennaf 2023 | | |

Mae'r polisi'n berthnasol i holl weithwyr Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent a bydd yn cefnogi'r Cyngor i gyflawni ei ddyletswyddau statudol fel y nodir yn Hysbysiad Cydymffurfio Safonau'r Gymraeg.

Mae'r iaith Gymraeg yn rhan annatod o hunaniaeth ddiwylliannol Blaenau Gwent, mae'n helpu i lunio ein treftadaeth a'n dyfodol. Mae'r Gymraeg hefyd yn cael ei chydabod yng Nghynllun Corfforaethol 2022/27 y Cyngor fel mesur perfformiad allweddol sy'n ceisio cefnogi'r weledigaeth 'Blaenau Gwent – lle sy'n deg, yn agored ac yn groesawgar i bawb drwy weithio gyda'n cymunedau ac ar eu cyfer'.

Felly, mae darparu cyfleoedd i'n staff ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle yn hynod o bwysig i'r Cyngor. Mae cynyddu'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle ymhellach yn cryfhau ansawdd y gwasanaeth a ddarparwn i'n trigolion trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

Yn fewnol mae'r Cyngor wedi ymrwymo i ystyried Safonau'r Gymraeg ym mhob maes gwaith ein hawdurdod. Rydym yn ffynnu i gyfrannu at strategaeth y Llywodraeth i gyrraedd 1 miliwn o siaradwyr erbyn 2050, gan ddefnyddio ein Strategaeth Hybu'r Gymraeg 5 Mlynedd 2022/27 fel fframwaith.

Mae pwrpas y polisi hwn fel a ganlyn:

- a) Annog agwedd gadarnhaol tuag at yr iaith Gymraeg sy'n cofleidio diwylliant Cymreig gyda balchder a pharch.
- b) Cynyddu nifer y staff sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg drwy ddarparu cyfleoedd i weithwyr ddysgu neu wella eu gallu ieithyddol.
- c) Sicrhau bod Mesur y Gymraeg 2011 yn cael ei gynnal ar lefel sefydliad cyfan.

Mae'r polisi'n berthnasol i weithwyr, gwirfoddolwyr ac Aelodau etholedig.

Byddwn yn hyrwyddo agweddau cadarnhaol sy'n annog ein gweithlu i ymfalchïo yn y Gymraeg a'i diwylliant

- Mae canllawiau iaith Gymraeg, mewn perthynas â bodloni ein Safonau Iaith Gymraeg, ar gael i staff drwy'r Fewnrwyd. Mae'r wybodaeth a ddarperir yn cael ei monitro a'i diweddarau'n rheolaidd.
- Bydd Dydd Gŵyl Dewi a Diwrnod Hawliau'r Gymraeg, gan gynnwys digwyddiadau eraill yn y calendr Cymraeg, yn cael eu dathlu yn y gwaith a'u hyrwyddo yn y gymuned.
- Byddwn yn dathlu llwyddiannau ein dysgwyr Cymraeg gyda gwaith cyfathrebu mewnol a chyhoeddus.
- Gan weithio gyda Rhwydwaith Cymraeg Blaenau Gwent byddwn yn nodi ac yn hyrwyddo cyfleoedd, gyda'n staff a'r gymuned ehangach, lle gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn lleol.
- Bydd arfer da ynghylch safonau'r Gymraeg yn cael ei nodi yn ein Hadroddiad Monitro Blynyddol ar yr Iaith Gymraeg.
- Bydd derbynfeydd y Cyngor yn arddangos arwyddion Iaith Gwaith yn annog y defnydd o'r Gymraeg.

Ein nod yw cynyddu nifer y staff sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg drwy ddarparu cyfleoedd i weithwyr ddysgu neu wella eu gallu ieithyddol.

Recriwtio

- Bydd gofynion y Gymraeg ar gyfer pob rôl newydd neu bresennol yn cael eu hasesu yn unol â'n polisiâu Recriwtio a Dethol. Bydd yr asesiad hwn yn siapio'r disgrifiad o'r hysbyseb swydd a'r broses gyfweld ddilynol.
- Polisi'r Cyngor yw bod yn rhaid i bob swydd a hysbyseb yn fewnol ac yn allanol nodi'r Gymraeg fel sgil 'dymunol' fel gofyniad sylfaenol.
- Bydd pob swydd wag yn cael ei hysbysebu'n ddwyieithog.
- Bydd ymgeiswyr yn gallu gwneud cais trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a chael eu cyfweld yn Gymraeg os dymunant hefyd.
- Pennir dewis iaith ar gyfer gohebiaeth ynghylch cais unigolion yn y ffurflen gais gychwynnol a'i chofnodi'n briodol.

Gweithwyr Newydd

- Mae ein proses sefydlu gorfforaethol, ar gyfer dechreuwyr newydd, yn ystyried pwysigrwydd defnyddio'r Gymraeg a Safonau'r Gymraeg fel rhan o Fesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011, ochr yn ochr â'r 9 nodwedd warchoddedig a nodir gan Ddeddf Cydraddoldeb (2010).
- Bydd gweithwyr newydd yn cael Llyfryn Sefydlu Corfforaethol Blaenau Gwent sy'n sefydlu ethos y Cyngor o barch a chydaddoldeb o amgylch y Gymraeg.

- Rhaid i reolwyr gyfeirio gweithwyr newydd i'r adran canllawiau iaith Gymraeg ar y Fewnrwyd.
- Anogir pob gweithiwr i adrodd ar ei sgiliau Cymraeg mewn darllen, ysgrifennu, siarad a deall trwy system iTrent a reolir gan Datblygu Sefydliadol. Bydd y wybodaeth hon yn cael ei defnyddio i ddeall yn well yr anghenion sgiliau Cymraeg ar draws ein gwahanol gyfarwyddiaethau.

Cynyddu gallu ieithyddol y staff presennol

- Bydd cyfleoedd a gwasanaethau hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg yn cael eu cyfathrebu'n rheolaidd i staff.
- Mae sleidiau hyfforddiant mewnol ar gyfer dechreuwyr i ddysgu Cymraeg sgysiol yn y gweithle ar gael i'r holl staff trwy'r fewnrwyd, mae'r sleidiau hyn yn cynnig arweiniad ar sut i gael hyfforddiant pellach.
- Mae sleidiau sy'n ymwneud â'r canlynol ar gael i'r holl staff drwy [Fewnrwyd](#) y Cyngor:
 - Cyfarchion Dwyieithog a Geiriau Allweddol
 - Ymadroddion defnyddiol
 - Templedi allan o'r swyddfa
- Mae cefndiroedd Microsoft Teams sy'n arddangos logo Cymraeg Gwaith ar gyfer siaradwyr Cymraeg a dysgwyr ar gael a byddant yn cael eu hyrwyddo i annog staff i'w ddefnyddio mewn cyfarfodydd ar-lein. Felly'n hyrwyddo ac yn annog busnes i gael ei gynnal drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.
- Mae laniardau a bathodynau Cymraeg Gwaith ar gael i'r holl staff (gan gynnwys cortynnau gwddf ar gyfer dysgwyr Cymraeg).
- Bydd y canllaw gweithdrefn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg yn cael ei fonitro a'i ddiweddarau'n unol â hynny i adlewyrchu'r ddarpariaeth bresennol sydd mewn lle.
- Bydd arwyddion Cymraeg yn y gweithle yn cael eu harddangos o fewn adeiladau'r Cyngor i hyrwyddo'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg ac ymarfer y Gymraeg.

Sicrhau bod Mesur y Gymraeg 2011 yn cael ei gynnal ar lefel y sefydliad cyfan

- Fel rhan o'r broses sefydlu, rhaid i reolwyr gyfeirio staff at y canllawiau iaith Gymraeg ar y fewnwyd i sicrhau bod yr holl staff yn ymwybodol o'n hymrwymadau ac yn gweithio yn unol â Mesur y Gymraeg 2011.
- Bydd y canllawiau canlynol ar gael i'r holl staff ar y [Fewnwyd](#):
 - Trosolwg o Safonau'r Gymraeg
 - Trefn Cyfieithu
 - Trefn Ffonau
 - Canllawiau Hyfforddiant
- Bydd yr holl staff yn cael mynediad i hyfforddiant ar sut i weithio yn unol â Mesur y Gymraeg 2011 drwy'r porth e-ddysgu. Bydd canllawiau ar ddod o hyd i'r adnoddau hyn yn cael eu hamlinellu yn y Weithdrefn Hyfforddiant Iaith Gymraeg sydd ar gael ar y fewnwyd.
- Gall gweithwyr ddiweddarau eu hasesiad sgiliau iaith Gymraeg trwy gyfrifon iTrent. Mae rheolwyr i annog staff i ddiweddarau eu hasesiad a'u hatgoffa o bwysigrwydd gwneud hynny. Bydd staff yn cael eu hatgoffa ymhellach drwy gydol y flwyddyn.
- Bydd data gweithlu sgiliau iaith Gymraeg a gofnodir ar system iTrent yn cael ei ddadansoddi a'i adrodd fel rhan o Adroddiad Monitro Blynyddol y Cyngor ar y Gymraeg.
- Mae amcanion Strategaethau Hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg i'w cynnwys o fewn trefniadau cynllunio busnes y Cyngor. Mae hyn er mwyn sicrhau bod ein cynnydd ar draws y sefydliad yn cael ei gofnodi'n effeithiol (gweler Atodiad A ar gyfer amcanion Strategaeth Hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg yn y Gweithle).
- Mae Rhwydwaith Gymraeg Blaenau Gwent yn cyfarfod bob 6 wythnos i rannu arfer gorau a monitro cynnydd y Strategaeth Hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg gyfredol ymhlith ein sefydliadau partner a staff mewnol perthnasol.

Gweithredu

Mae gweithrediad llwyddiannus y polisi yn gyfrifoldeb yr holl staff, gyda rheolwyr yn chwarae rhan allweddol wrth gefnogi a goruchwyllo gweithrediad ymarferol y polisi hwn.

Mae rhagor o wybodaeth am fodloni Safonau'r Gymraeg mewn perthynas â recriwtio a dethol a darparu gwasanaethau ar gael ar y Fewnrwyd.

Monitro ac Adolygu

Bydd y Polisi'n cael ei adolygu o bryd i'w gilydd i sicrhau ei fod yn gyson â Safonau'r Gymraeg a deddfwriaeth gyfredol.

Bydd ein hymrwymiaadau Cydymffurfio â'r Gymraeg yn cael eu hadrodd yn chwarterol i'r Tîm Arwain Corfforaethol ac yn cael eu hystyried fel rhan o'r Rhaglen Gwaith i'r Dyfodol.

Bydd sut rydym yn bodloni ein Safonau Iaith Gymraeg hefyd yn cael ei gyhoeddi drwy ein Hadroddiad Monitro Blynyddol y Gymraeg. Bydd hyn yn cynnwys:

- Nifer y swyddi newydd a gwag a gafodd eu categoreiddio fel swyddi lle:
 - Roedd sgiliau Cymraeg yn Hanfodol
 - Roedd sgiliau Cymraeg yn Ddymunol
 - Rhaid dysgu sgiliau Cymraeg os penodir
- Data sgiliau iaith Gymraeg yr holl staff fel y'i cyflwynir ar system iTrent.
- Nifer y gweithwyr sy'n mynychu hyfforddiant sgiliau iaith Gymraeg yn ôl lefel yr hyfforddiant.
- Nifer a chanran y gweithwyr sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant e-ddysgu ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.
- Nifer y gweithwyr sy'n mynychu cyrsiau trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

- Adolygu a diweddarau canllawiau/gweithdrefnau sy'n ymwneud â gweithredu safonau cyflenwi gwasanaeth, gweithredol, llunio polisi a chadw cofnodion a wnaed trwy gydol y flwyddyn.

Atodiad A: Amcanion Strategaeth Hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg yn y Gweithle

| | |
|--|---|
| Cymraeg yn y Gweithle | |
| Amcan 3: Cynyddu cyfleoedd i bobl ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle | |
| Dangosydd(ion): | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nifer y staff a gyflogir gan sefydliadau partner sy'n defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle. Nifer y staff sy'n dysgu Cymraeg. Nifer y swyddi a hysbysebwyd yn annog sgiliau Cymraeg 'Hanfodol', 'Dymunol' a 'Parod i ddysgu'. | |
| Canlyniadau: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mwy o bobl yn ymgysylltu â'r Gymraeg. Mwy o bobl yn dod yn rhugl yn y Gymraeg. Mwy o weithwyr y Cyngor yn gallu defnyddio'r Gymraeg. | |
| Cyfeirnod Cam Gweithredu | Cam Gweithredu |
| Cam Gweithredu 3.1 | Cynyddu nifer y gweithwyr sy'n gallu defnyddio'r Gymraeg drwy hyfforddiant a'u hannog i wisgo'r bathodynau 'Dysgu' i helpu dysgwyr Cymraeg yn gymdeithasol a gwella eu hyder. |
| Cam Gweithredu 3.2 | Annog gweithwyr sy'n siarad Cymraeg i wella eu rhuglder yn y Gymraeg drwy hyfforddiant a'u hannog i wisgo'r bathodynau 'Cymraeg' i helpu i hyrwyddo gwasanaethau dwyieithog. |
| Cam Gweithredu 3.3 | Hyrwyddo ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg a chyrsgiau hyfforddiant iaith ac annog mwy o weithwyr i fynychu'r rhain. |
| Cam Gweithredu 3.4 | Darparu ystod o ganllawiau a deunyddiau cymorth i gynyddu ymgysylltiad a hyder yn y defnydd o'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle. |
| Cam Gweithredu 3.5 | Cefnogi pob adran i weithredu safonau'r Gymraeg yn effeithiol yn unol â Hysbysiad Cydymffurfio'r Cyngor. |
| Cam Gweithredu 3.6 | Monitro'n effeithiol y swyddi o fewn y Cyngor a hysbysebwr sy'n mynd drwy'r broses asesu'r Gymraeg. |
| Cam Gweithredu 3.7 | Darparu cyfleoedd anffurfiol i gydweithwyr ymgysylltu â'i gilydd drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Cam Gweithredu 3.8</p> | <p>Cynyddu sgiliau Cymraeg staff y Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol yn unol â strategaeth Mwy na Geiriau 2022/27.</p> |
| <p>Partneriaid: Byddwn yn gweithio gyda'r partneriaid canlynol i gyflawni'r amcan hwn:</p> <p>Gweithwyr Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau, Menter Iaith, Coleg Gwent, Parth Dysgu Blaenau Gwent, Dysgu Cymraeg Gwent, Ymddiriedolaeth Hamdden Aneurin, Grŵp Deddf, Rhwydwaith Cydraddoldeb Corfforaethol, Holl staff ysgolion, Swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg.</p> | |

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Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Ymchwiliad gorfodi safonau: Adroddiad a hysbysiad penderfynu

Lluniwyd yr adroddiad hwn yn unol ag adran 73 ac adran 74 Mesur y
Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011

Cynhaliwyd yr ymchwiliad i amheuaeth o fethiant i gydymffurfio â safonau a
bennir gan Weinidogion Cymru yn unol ag adran 71 ac Atodlen 10 Mesur y
Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011.

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent

Rhif achos: CS092



Cefndir

Prif nod Comisiynydd y Gymraeg, sefydliad annibynnol a grëwyd gan Fesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011, yw hybu a hwyluso defnyddio'r Gymraeg. Gwneir hyn trwy ddwyn sylw at y ffaith fod statws swyddogol i'r Gymraeg yng Nghymru, trwy osod safonau ar sefydliadau, a thrwy reoleiddio cydymffurfiaeth â Mesur y Gymraeg. Bydd hyn, yn ei dro, yn arwain at sefydlu hawliau i siaradwyr Cymraeg.

Bydd dwy egwyddor yn sail i waith y Comisiynydd:

- ni ddylid trin y Gymraeg yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg yng Nghymru;
- dylai personau yng Nghymru allu byw eu bywydau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg os ydynt yn dymuno gwneud hynny.

Manylion cyswllt

- Ffôn: 0345 6033 221
- E-bost: post@comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru
- Gwefan: comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru
- Post: Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Siambrau'r Farchnad
5–7 Heol Eglwys Fair
Caerdydd
CF10 1AT



Cyd-destun deddfwriaethol

Rhan 4 Mesur y Gymraeg

- i. Mae Rhan 4 Mesur y Gymraeg yn gosod fframwaith cyfreithiol er mwyn gosod dyletswydd ar rai sefydliadau i gydymffurfio ag un neu fwy o safonau mewn perthynas â'r Gymraeg. Gelwir sefydliadau sy'n ddarostyngedig i safonau yn 'bersonau perthnasol'. Ceir safonau yn y meysydd canlynol:
 - cyflenwi gwasanaethau;
 - llunio polisi;
 - gweithredu;
 - hybu;
 - cadw cofnodion.
- ii. Mae'r dyletswyddau sy'n deillio o'r safonau'n golygu bod rhaid i bersonau perthnasol beidio â thrin y Gymraeg yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg, ac y dylent hybu a hwyluso defnyddio'r Gymraeg.
- iii. Mae hysbysiadau cydymffurfio a roddir i bersonau perthnasol gan y Comisiynydd dan Ran 4 Mesur y Gymraeg yn pennu'r safonau penodol y mae'n ofynnol cydymffurfio â hwy, ynghyd â'r diwrnodau oddi ar bryd y mae'n ofynnol cydymffurfio â'r safonau hynny neu gydymffurfio â'r safonau hynny mewn modd penodol ('diwrnodau gosod'). Bydd copïau ar wefan y Comisiynydd o'r hysbysiadau cydymffurfio sydd mewn grym.
- iv. Tra bydd hysbysiad cydymffurfio sy'n benodol i berson perthnasol mewn grym, bydd yn ofynnol iddo gydymffurfio â'r safonau a bennwyd ynddo.

Rhan 5 Mesur y Gymraeg

- v. Mae Rhan 5 Mesur y Gymraeg yn rhoi swyddogaethau rheoleiddiol statudol i'r Comisiynydd er mwyn sicrhau bod personau perthnasol yn cydymffurfio â'u dyletswyddau. Gall dyletswyddau gynnwys cydymffurfio â safonau'r Gymraeg (fel y nodir uchod), ac hefyd ofyniadau a osodir ar bersonau gan y Comisiynydd yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn sgil methiant i gydymffurfio â gofyniad perthnasol. Mae Polisi Gorfodi'r Comisiynydd yn rhoi cyngor a gwybodaeth ynghylch sut y bydd y Comisiynydd yn arfer y swyddogaethau rheoleiddiol hynny.
- vi. Y swyddogaethau rheoleiddiol sy'n deillio o Ran 5 Mesur y Gymraeg yw:
- ystyried ai i ymchwilio ai peidio os gwneir cwynion ynghylch ymddygiad personau perthnasol;
 - ymchwilio i amheuon o fethiant gan bersonau perthnasol i gydymffurfio â dyletswyddau, dyfarnu ar ymchwiliadau a llunio adroddiadau ar ymchwiliadau;
 - ystyried ai i weithredu ymhellach (drwy roi argymhellion neu gyngor) ai peidio os yw ymchwiliad yn canfod na fu methiant i gydymffurfio;
 - cymryd un o'r tri cham isod os yw ymchwiliad yn canfod y bu methiant i gydymffurfio:
 - peidio â gweithredu ymhellach;
 - gwneud un neu fwy o'r pethau a ganlyn:
 - ei gwneud yn ofynnol i'r person perthnasol baratoi cynllun gweithredu at y diben o atal y methiant rhag parhau neu gael ei ailadrodd;
 - ei gwneud yn ofynnol i'r person perthnasol gymryd camau at y diben o atal y methiant rhag parhau neu gael ei ailadrodd;
 - rhoi cyhoeddusrwydd i fethiant y person perthnasol i gydymffurfio â'r gofyniad perthnasol;
 - ei gwneud yn ofynnol i'r person perthnasol roi cyhoeddusrwydd i'r methiant i gydymffurfio â'r gofyniad perthnasol;
 - gosod cosb sifil ar y person perthnasol.
 - gwneud un neu fwy o'r pethau a ganlyn:
 - rhoi argymhellion i'r person perthnasol neu i unrhyw berson arall;
 - rhoi cyngor i'r person perthnasol neu i unrhyw berson arall;
 - ceisio ymrwymo mewn cytundeb setlo gyda'r person perthnasol.
 - gwneud ceisiadau i lys sirol am orchmynion llys i orfodi cydymffurfiaeth;
 - cydymffurfio â dyletswyddau sy'n deillio o apelau i Dribiwnlys y Gymraeg a cheisiadau am adolygiadau gan y Tribiwnlys;
 - llunio dogfen polisi gorfodi;
 - creu a chynnal cofrestr camau gorfodi.
- vii. Bydd y Comisiynydd yn dilyn y prosesau statudol gofynnol wrth arfer ei swyddogaethau rheoleiddiol.
- viii. Mae Polisi Gorfodi'r Comisiynydd yn cynnwys gwybodaeth lawn ynghylch y ffordd y bydd y Comisiynydd yn arfer ei swyddogaethau rheoleiddiol dan Ran 5 Mesur y Gymraeg.

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1 Crynodeb

- 1.1 Mae'r adran hon yn crynhoi cefndir yr ymchwiliad a fy nghanfyddiadau ynghylch cydymffurfiaeth Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent (Cyngor) gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg sydd yn cael eu nodi yng Nghylch Gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad.

Cefndir yr Ymchwiliad

- 1.2 Mae Fframwaith Rheoleiddio Comisiynydd y Gymraeg 2021 yn amlinellu'r dulliau rydwyf yn ei ddefnyddio i fonitro cydymffurfiaeth sefydliadau gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg. Mae'r dulliau hynny'n cynnwys gwaith gwirio uniongyrchol, sef cyrchu gwasanaethau fel cwsmer go iawn er mwyn canfod beth yw'r profiad gwirioneddol i'r rhai sy'n dymuno defnyddio'r Gymraeg wrth dderbyn gwasanaethau gan gyrff sy'n ddarostyngedig i safonau'r Gymraeg. Cynhelir ymarferion gwirio uniongyrchol ar gyfer gwasanaethau megis gwasanaeth ffôn, derbynfa, gwefannau a gohebiaeth.
- 1.3 Cododd canlyniadau monitro ac asesu gwasanaeth y Cyngor amheuaeth o fethiant i gydymffurfio â'r Safonau cyflenwi gwasanaethau 8, 11 ac 17 sy'n ymwneud â gwasanaethau ffôn y Cyngor. Ar sail yr amheuaeth yma, penderfynais gynnal ymchwiliad ar sail y diffyg yn y gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg oedd wedi bod ar gael i'n galwr dirgel ar dri achlysur. Agorwyd ymchwiliad CS092 felly i ystyried yr amheuaeth o fethiant gan y Cyngor i gydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau ffôn.
- 1.4 Yn nhystiolaeth wreiddiol y Cyngor yn ymateb i'r ymchwiliad fodd bynnag, daeth i'r amlwg fod diffyg staff oedd yn gallu siarad Cymraeg ac yn gallu rhoi gwasanaeth ffôn oedd yn cydymffurfio gyda gofynion y safonau yn gweithio fel rhan o'r tîm derbyn galwadau ffôn. Roedd y Cyngor yn dibynnu ar staff o adrannau eraill oedd yn gwirfoddoli i gefnogi'r gwasanaeth, er nad dyna ddigwyddodd i'n galwr dirgel yn ystod ei alwadau i'r Cyngor. Yn un o'r galwadau gwnaethpwyd gan ein galwr dirgel, ni ddangosodd yr asiant unrhyw ymwybyddiaeth fod ein galwr dirgel wedi siarad yn y Gymraeg. Dangoswyd y dystiolaeth wreiddiol gan y Cyngor hefyd fod diffyg yn nealltwriaeth y Cyngor o ofynion y Safonau gwasanaeth ffôn.
- 1.5 Gan fod dim o aelodau'r ganolfan oedd yn delio gyda galwadau ffôn yn gallu siarad Cymraeg, cododd hyn amheuaeth fod problemau ehangach o ran recriwtio, hyfforddi ac ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg o fewn y sefydliad. Diwygiwyd Cylch Gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad felly i gynnwys safonau ychwanegol i geisio dod i wraidd os oedd problemau strwythurol oedd yn atal y Cyngor rhag gallu cynnig gwasanaeth Cymraeg o safon i ddefnyddwyr.

Canfyddiadau'r Comisiynydd wedi cynnal ymchwiliad CS092

- 1.6 Wedi ymchwilio, gwelais yma restr o fethiannau i gydymffurfio gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg yn y meysydd gwasanaethau ffôn, hybu gwasanaethau, asesu sgiliau iaith staff, darparu cyfleoedd hyfforddi ac asesu anghenion iaith swyddi. Mae'r ymchwiliad yma yn un o'r enghreifftiau mwyaf o fethiant i gydymffurfio i mi ddod ar ei draws ac yn dangos difaterwch ac amharch ar ran y Cyngor tuag at y gyfundrefn Safonau. Rwy'n galw ar y Cyngor i ymateb a newid eu hagwedd tuag at gydymffurfiaeth gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg ar frys.
- 1.7 Er mwyn llwyddo i gynnig gwasanaethau Cymraeg o safon, mae'n rhaid i sefydliad ystyried y Gymraeg o frig y sefydliad i lawr. Yma, gwelais ddiffyg arweinyddiaeth i

sicrhau bod trefniadau digonol wedi eu rhoi mewn lle i gydymffurfio gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg, i graffu ar y gydymffurfiaeth honno ac i ddarparu adnoddau digonol i allu cynnig gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg. Mae'r ymchwiliad hwn wedi dangos diffyg strwythurau, cynllunio a gweledigaeth hir dymor o ran y Gymraeg yn yr ardaloedd gwaith sydd yn dod o dan y Safonau Gweithredu (megis hyfforddiant a recriwtio). Rwyf o'r farn fod y diffyg cynllunio hir dymor yn y meysydd yma wedi arwain yn uniongyrchol at wasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg oedd yn methu i gydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau.

- 1.8 Mae staff yn rhan allweddol o wyneb cyhoeddus sefydliad, yn enwedig felly staff 'rheng-flaen' sefydliad sydd yn delio â galwadau ffôn a gwasanaeth cwsmer. Gall staff ddylanwadu ar yr iaith y bydd pobl yn ei ddefnyddio wrth gyrchu gwasanaeth gyda sefydliad. Mae'n bwysig fod staff yn cael eu hyfforddi a'u cyfarwyddo i ymddwyn mewn ffordd sy'n annog defnyddwyr i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg. Mae cyfarch pobl yn Gymraeg a chynnig gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn ddiodyn neu'n rhagweithiol yn allweddol i sicrhau fod defnyddwyr yn dewis gwasanaeth Cymraeg. Mae cael strwythurau asesu sgiliau iaith, recriwtio a hyfforddiant iaith gref mewn lle ynghyd â magu hyder staff yn y Gymraeg felly yn holl bwysig er mwyn cynyddu'r rhai sy'n gallu rhoi gwasanaeth Cymraeg o fewn sefydliad.
- 1.9 Un o'r prif ddylanwadau ar allu sefydliadau i gael darpariaeth Gymraeg addas yw'r nifer o'u staff sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg. Dylai strategaethau darparwyr sy'n cynnig gwasanaethau Cymraeg ganolbwyntio ar asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eu staff er mwyn manteisio ar y sgiliau sydd ganddynt yn barod, magu hyder y staff ac ychwanegu at gapasiti'r Gymraeg drwy recriwtio a hyfforddi.
- 1.10 Fodd bynnag, yn y dystiolaeth gyflwynwyd fel rhan o'r ymchwiliad, gwelais yma fethiant i asesu sgiliau iaith staff, i gynnig a chofnodi hyfforddiant Gymraeg i staff ac i asesu anghenion iaith swyddi yn ddigonol. Cododd y dystiolaeth gyflwynwyd gan y Cyngor gwestiynau ynghylch trefniadau'r Cyngor i gynllunio hyfforddiant ac olrhain cynnydd, a'u gallu i gynllunio ac i adnabod y staff hynny sydd angen hyfforddiant i gyflawni gofynion rolau. Os oes diffyg cofnodi hyfforddiant Gymraeg, mae'n rhaid hefyd fod diffyg gwerthuso'r cyrsiau yma er mwyn sicrhau gwella parhaus. Os nad ydi'r cyrsiau yn cael eu cofnodi mae hefyd yn awgrymu nad ydi'r Cyngor yn gosod unrhyw dargedau o ran staff yn dysgu neu yn gwella eu Cymraeg. Mae hyn er bod yna, wrth edrych ar y dystiolaeth gyflwynwyd a'r dystiolaeth gasglwyd gan y galwr dirgel a fy swyddogion, brinder staff sydd yn gallu neu yn ddigon hyderus i gynnig gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg yn unol â'r Safonau. Yr argraff yr ydwyf wedi ei gael o'r dystiolaeth sydd wedi ei gyflwyno i mi yw bod diffyg ystyried y Gymraeg mewn cynllunio staffio a hyfforddiant.
- 1.11 Mae'r diffyg yma i gynllunio, hyfforddi ac asesu anghenion iaith yn golygu ei fod yn anorfod bod y Cyngor yn mynd i fethu i ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg sydd yn cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau. Rwyf o'r farn y bydd y Cyngor yn parhau i wneud hynny os na fydd newid mewn agwedd y sefydliad tuag at y Gymraeg.
- 1.12 Yng nghyd-destun gwasanaethau, mae diffyg strwythurau o ran cynllunio, hyfforddi a recriwtio staff yn cael effaith uniongyrchol ar y gwasanaethau Cymraeg gall y Cyngor ei gynnig.
- 1.13 Ymhellach, mae'r dystiolaeth yn awgrymu bod ymwybyddiaeth staff o'r Gymraeg hefyd yn isel o fewn y sefydliad. Wrth ffonio'r Cyngor, nid oedd y galwr dirgel wedi derbyn unrhyw gydnabyddiaeth ei fod wedi defnyddio'r Gymraeg ar ei alwadau.

Roedd tystiolaeth y Cyngor ar hyfforddiant oedd yn cael ei roi i staff ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg hefyd yn brin iawn. Yn yr adroddiad '*Hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg: deall y defnydd a'r diffyg defnydd o wasanaethau Cymraeg*' gan Gyngor ar Bopeth dyddiedig 2015, nodir:

"Gall diffyg ymwybyddiaeth neu sensitifrwydd ieithyddol gan aelodau staff gael effaith negyddol ar brofiad defnyddwyr a'u hatal rhag defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y dyfodol."

- 1.14 Mae cwsmeriaid yn disgwyl eu bod yn gallu defnyddio gwasanaethau yn gyflym ac yn hawdd, a bod llwybrau clir i'r gwasanaeth. Mae angen i'r Cyngor wella eu darpariaeth os ydynt am i siaradwyr Cymraeg ddefnyddio'r gwasanaethau Cymraeg a chynnig gwasanaeth cynhwysol, croesawgar. Gall gwasanaeth Cymraeg o safon isel arwain at ddiffyg hyder neu ymddiriedaeth mewn gwasanaethau Cymraeg sy'n dod yn rhwystr i'w defnyddio.
- 1.15 Mae'n hollbwysig fod y Cyngor yn cymryd agwedd fwy rhagweithiol a chadarnhaol o ran y Gymraeg o fewn y sefydliad. Mae'n angenrheidiol fod y Cyngor yn creu diwylliant ble mae yna ymwybyddiaeth a pharch tuag at y Gymraeg a tuag at ddefnyddwyr y Gymraeg. Mae'n rhaid i'r Cyngor ystyried y prosesau a'r gweithdrefnau sydd mewn lle o safbwynt y Gymraeg ymysg eu staff i sicrhau bod gwasanaethau Cymraeg ar gael i ddefnyddwyr yn hygyrch a bod y gwasanaeth yna o safon.
- 1.16 Mae'n allweddol fod y Cyngor cynyddu'r lefelau o'u staff sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg er mwyn cydymffurfio â gofynion safonau'r Gymraeg. Bydd cynyddu'r lefelau'n arwain at wella gwasanaethau Cymraeg a chreu cyfleoedd i ddefnyddwyr siarad Cymraeg. Mae Camau Gorfodi'r ymchwiliad yn ei wneud yn ofynnol i'r Cyngor greu Cynllun Gweithredu sy'n sicrhau fod y Cyngor yn cynnal adolygiad bôn i'r brig o'i drefniadau ar gyfer cydymffurfio gyda safonau'r Gymraeg ac i gynllunio yn fwy hir dymor am y Gymraeg yng nghyd-destun asesu sgiliau Cymraeg staff ac i hyfforddi ac asesu sgiliau swyddi newydd. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gymryd y camau yma fel bod digon o siaradwyr Cymraeg i sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg ar draws y sefydliad a darparu gwasanaeth ffôn Gymraeg safonol i ddefnyddwyr. Mae'r Camau Gorfodi hefyd yn rhoi rôl benodol i uwch reolwyr y sefydliad i graffu ar gynnydd yn erbyn y strategaeth hynny.
- 1.17 Oherwydd fy anfodlonrwydd gyda sawl elfen o gydymffurfiaeth y Cyngor gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg o fewn yr ymchwiliad, byddaf yn rhoi cyhoeddusrwydd i ganlyniadau'r ymchwiliad yma. Credaf fod y diffyg cynllunio strategol o safbwynt y Gymraeg o ddiddordeb cyhoeddus yng Nghymru.

2 Cylch gorchwyl

Amheuaeth o fethiant i gydymffurfio â safonau'r Gymraeg

- 1.18 Mae Fframwaith Rheoleiddio Comisiynydd y Gymraeg 2021 yn amlinellu'r dulliau rydym yn eu defnyddio i fonitro cydymffurfiaeth sefydliadau gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg. Mae'r dulliau hynny'n cynnwys gwaith gwirio uniongyrchol, sef cyrchu gwasanaethau fel cwsmer go iawn, er mwyn canfod beth yw'r profiad gwirioneddol i'r rhai sy'n dymuno defnyddio'r Gymraeg wrth dderbyn gwasanaethau gan gyrrff sy'n ddarostyngedig i safonau'r Gymraeg. Cynhelir ymarferion gwirio uniongyrchol ar gyfer gwasanaethau megis gwasanaeth ffôn, derbynfa, gwefannau a gohebiaeth ayb.
- 1.19 Mae canlyniadau monitro ac asesu gwasanaeth Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent (Cyngor) wedi codi amheuaeth o fethiant i gydymffurfio â'r safonau cyflenwi gwasanaethau 8, 11 ac 17 sy'n ymwneud â galwadau ffôn.
- 1.20 Gwnaed tair galwad ffôn i brif rif ffôn y Cyngor sef 01495 311556. Ar ddechrau'r tair galwad, roedd ein galwr wedi dewis yr opsiwn Gymraeg ar y system awtomatig ac felly wedi nodi ei ddewis i gael gwasanaeth Cymraeg. Nodir isod y gwasanaeth a dderbyniwyd gan ein galwr ar bob galwad.
- 1.21 Yn ystod yr alwad gyntaf ar 13/09/2021 am 10:49yb:
- Cychwynnodd ein galwr y sgwrs yn y Gymraeg gan ofyn a oedd y Cyngor yn dosbarthu bagiau baw cŵn. Ni dderbyniwyd cyfarchiad Cymraeg, gwasanaeth Cymraeg, nac unrhyw gydnabyddiaeth bod y galwr wedi siarad Cymraeg. Nodwyd hefyd bod y galwr wedi teimlo'n annifyr i ofyn am wasanaeth Cymraeg yn enwedig wrth ystyried fod y dewis hwnnw eisoes wedi ei nodi.
- 1.22 Yn ystod yr ail alwad ar 01/10/2021 am 09:23yb:
- Galwodd ein galwr y llinell ffôn. Doedd dim ateb ar ôl 6 munud a daethpwyd â'r alwad i ben.
- 1.23 Yn ystod y drydedd alwad ar 05/10/2021 am 09:08yb:
- Cychwynnodd ein galwr y sgwrs yn y Gymraeg ond ni dderbyniwyd cyfarchiad dwyieithog. Gofynnodd ein galwr yn Gymraeg am e-bost y Prif Weithredwr 'Michelle Morris'. Ymateb y derbynnydd oedd "I will see if she is available". Doedd gan ein galwr ddim dewis ond ymyrryd yn yr alwad drwy droi i'r Saesneg i egluro mai e-bost Michelle Morris oedd yn gofyn amdano ac nid i gael siarad â hi. Mewn ymateb, rhoddodd y derbynnydd gyfeiriad e-bost y Prif Weithredwr yn syth heb unrhyw gydnabyddiaeth bod ein galwr eisiau gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg.
- 1.24 Ni wnaeth y dystiolaeth gasglwyd fel rhan o'n cynllun monitro roi sicrwydd uchel o gydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau. Cododd y dystiolaeth amheuaeth nad yw gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg yn unol â'r Safonau yn cael ei ddarparu i ddefnyddwyr gan y Cyngor. Mae hwn yn fater sy'n debygol o effeithio nifer o drigolion y fwrdeistref. Er mwyn

sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth y Cyngor gyda'r Safonau, penderfynais agor ymchwiliad statudol i'r amheuaeth o fethiant.

Safonau perthnasol

- 1.25 Mae'r Cyngor dan ddyletswydd i gydymffurfio â'r safonau isod, ac roedd dan ddyletswydd i wneud hynny ar y dyddiad sy'n berthnasol i'r gŵyn:

Safon 8

Pan fydd person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi gyfarch y person yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Safon 11

Pan fo person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg os yw'r person yn dymuno hynny -

(a) hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a

(b) hyd nes nad oes aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol hwnnw.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Safon 17

Pan na fo gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi roi gwybod i'r personau sy'n galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Penderfyniad i ymchwilio

- 1.26 Ar sail yr uchod, penderfynais gynnal ymchwiliad dan adran 71 Mesur y Gymraeg er mwyn penderfynu a fu methiant gan y Cyngor i gydymffurfio â'r safonau a nodwyd. Rhoddais hysbysiad o'r penderfyniad i ymchwilio, ac o'r cylch gorchwyl arfaethedig, i'r Cyngor ar 11/11/2021.

- 1.27 Rhoddais hysbysiad o gylch gorchwyl terfynol yr ymchwiliad i'r Cyngor ar 15/11/2021. Gellir gweld y cylch gorchwyl terfynol fel atodiad i'r adroddiad hwn.

Safonau ychwanegol yr ymchwiliad

- 1.28 Wedi derbyn tystiolaeth gyntaf y Cyngor mewn ymateb i'r Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth fodd bynnag, penderfynais ymestyn Cylch Gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad.
- 1.29 Nododd y Cyngor yn eu tystiolaeth yn ymateb i'r Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth wreiddiol bod dim un o aelodau canolfannau cyswllt y Cyngor sydd yn delio â galwadau gan y cyhoedd yn siarad Cymraeg yn rhugl. Deallwn fod y Cyngor yn ddibynnol ar staff sydd mewn rolau eraill gyda'r Cyngor, ac sy'n siaradwyr Cymraeg, i wirfoddoli i ateb galwadau ffôn Cymraeg ond bod dim staff o fewn yr adran berthnasol oedd yn meddu ar sgiliau Cymraeg . Roedd hyn yn creu amheuaeth o fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda safonau pellach ac felly yn dilyn derbyn y dystiolaeth, penderfynais newid Cylch Gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad i gynnwys ystyriaeth o gydymffurfiaeth â safonau ychwanegol.
- 1.30 Mae'r Cyngor dan ddyletswydd i gydymffurfio â'r safonau isod, ac roedd dan ddyletswydd i wneud hynny ar y dyddiadau gwnaethpwyd y galwadau dirgel:

Safon 81

Rhaid ichi hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg a ddarperir gennych, a hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Safon 82

Os byddwch yn darparu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg sy'n cyfateb i wasanaeth yr ydych yn ei ddarparu yn Saesneg, rhaid i unrhyw gyhoeddusrwydd neu ddogfen yr ydych yn ei llunio, neu wefan yr ydych yn ei chyhoeddi, sy'n cyfeirio at y gwasanaeth Saesneg nodi bod gwasanaeth cyfatebol ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Safon 127

Rhaid ichi asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eich cyflogeion.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Safon 130

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith -

(a) i'ch cyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, a

(b) i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Safon 131

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd i'ch cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Safon 132

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyrsiau hyfforddi er mwyn i'ch cyflogeion

ddatblygu -

(a) ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys ymwybyddiaeth am hanes yr iaith a'i lle yn niwylliant Cymru);

(b) dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg;

30/09/2016

(c) dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/09/2016

Safon 133

Pan fyddwch yn darparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd (er enghraifft, fel rhan o broses ymsefydlu), rhaid ichi ddarparu gwybodaeth er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/09/2016

Safon 136

Pan fyddwch yn asesu'r anghenion ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag, rhaid ichi asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a'i chategoreiddio fel swydd pan fo un neu ragor o'r canlynol yn gymwys

-

(a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol;

(b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd;

(c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol; neu

(ch) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Safon 136A

Os byddwch wedi categoreiddio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid ichi -

(a) pennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a

(b) hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

- 1.31 Penderfynais ymestyn yr ymchwiliad dan adran 71 Mesur y Gymraeg er mwyn penderfynu a fu methiant gan y Cyngor i gydymffurfio â'r safonau ychwanegol a nodwyd uchod. Rhoddais hysbysiad o'r penderfyniad i ymestyn Cylch Gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad gan roi copi o'r cylch gorchwyl diwygiedig arfaethedig, i'r Cyngor ar 02/02/2022.
- 1.32 Rhoddais hysbysiad o gylch gorchwyl terfynol yr ymchwiliad i'r Cyngor ar 02/03/2022. Gellir gweld y cylch gorchwyl terfynol diwygiedig fel atodiad i'r adroddiad hwn.

3 Y dystiolaeth a gymerwyd yn ystod yr ymchwiliad

Hysbysiad tystiolaeth

- 2.1 Ar 15/11/2021, rhoddais hysbysiad tystiolaeth i'r Cyngor. Roedd yr hysbysiad tystiolaeth yn ei wneud yn ofynnol i'r Cyngor ddarparu'r dystiolaeth ganlynol:

Gwybodaeth a dogfennau

1. Yn y llythyr gan Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg i'r Cyngor dyddiedig 11/11/2021 cyflwynwyd tystiolaeth bod y gwasanaeth derbyniwyd gan ein galwr dirgel ar 13/09/21, 1/10/21 a 5/10/21 yn codi amheuaeth nad yw gwasanaeth Cymraeg ffôn yn unol â'r Safonau yn cael ei ddarparu gan y Cyngor. A yw'r Cyngor yn derbyn y dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd gan Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg? Os ydi'r dystiolaeth yn cael ei dderbyn ac os yw'r Cyngor yn derbyn nad ydi gwasanaeth Cymraeg ffôn yn unol â'r Safonau yn cael ei ddarparu, esboniwch pam fod methiant i gydymffurfio.
2. Pa drefniadaeth sydd mewn lle er mwyn sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth y Cyngor gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg sydd yn ymwneud â gwasanaethau ffôn? Darparwch gopi o unrhyw bolisiau neu ddogfennau berthnasol.
3. Pa gyfarwyddiadau neu ganllawiau sydd wedi eu rhoi i staff y Cyngor ar sut i sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth â Safonau'r Gymraeg wrth ateb galwadau ffôn? Darparwch dystiolaeth a chopiau o'r cyfarwyddiadau neu ganllawiau yma i staff.
4. Pryd mae staff yn derbyn y wybodaeth y trafodwyd yng nghwestiwn 3 a pha mor aml mae staff yn cael eu hatgoffa o'r cyfarwyddiadau neu ganllawiau yma?
5. Pa hyfforddiant sydd wedi eu rhoi i staff y Cyngor ar sut i sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth â Safonau'r Gymraeg wrth ateb galwadau ffôn? Pa bryd a pha mor aml mae staff yn derbyn yr hyfforddiant yma?
6. Beth yw proses fonitro neu archwilio'r Cyngor i sicrhau bod galwadau defnyddwyr sydd eisiau gwasanaeth Gymraeg yn derbyn gwasanaeth ffôn Gymraeg yn unol â'r Safonau? Darparwch dystiolaeth.
7. Sawl aelod staff sy'n medru siarad Cymraeg o fewn Swyddfeydd y Cyngor ac sydd yn delio â galwadau Cymraeg y cyhoedd dros y ffôn?
8. Sut mae'r gweithlu o fewn y Cyngor yn cael ei drefnu fel bod aelod o staff sydd yn medru siarad Cymraeg ar gael ar unrhyw adeg ar gyfer delio â galwadau Cymraeg gan y cyhoedd?
9. Os yw'r Cyngor yn derbyn bod galwr ffôn y Comisiynydd wedi derbyn gwasanaeth sydd yn codi amheuaeth o fethiant i gydymffurfio a Safonau'r

Gymraeg, pa gamau sydd wedi ei gymryd neu bydd yn eu cymryd yn y dyfodol i sicrhau na fydd yr un ymddygiad yn digwydd eto?

10. Darparwch unrhyw wybodaeth neu dystiolaeth ychwanegol yr ydych am i ni ei ystyried wrth ddyfarnu ar eich cydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau a nodir yng nghylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad.
11. Darparwch gopi o unrhyw bolisi, gweithdrefn, canllaw neu ddogfen arall yr ydych am i ni ei ystyried wrth ddyfarnu ar eich cydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau a nodir yng nghylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad.

2.2 Mewn ymateb, derbyniais dystiolaeth gan y Cyngor ar 20/12/2021. Yn ogystal, darparwyd copïau o'r dogfennau canlynol:

- Atodiad A – Cod Ymddygiad;
- Atodiad B – Siart Llif Ateb y Ffôn;
- Atodiad C – Cyfarchion dwyieithog;
- Atodiad D – Ymadroddion defnyddiol;
- Atodiad E – Hysbysiad Cydymffurfio Mesur y Gymraeg;
- Atodiad F – Canllaw Staff ar Safonau'r Gymraeg.

2.3 Ystyriais yr holl wybodaeth a gyflwynwyd mewn ymateb i'r hysbysiad tystiolaeth.

Y dystiolaeth a dderbyniwyd

- 2.4 Wrth ymateb i gwestiwn 1 o fewn yr Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor eu bod yn derbyn y dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd ac yn cydnabod eu methiant i gydymffurfio â Safonau'r Gymraeg.
- 2.5 Dywedodd y Cyngor mewn perthynas â Safon 17 fodd bynnag, credant fod yr alwad wedi dod yn ystod cyfnod pan dderbyniodd y ganolfan gyswllt nifer fawr o alwadau a arweiniodd at amseroedd aros hwy i bob cwsmer oedd angen siarad ag asiant canolfan gyswllt. Honnodd y Cyngor fod hyn wedi arwain at anghysondeb yn y gwasanaeth gan y byddai'r alwad wedi cael ei hateb cyn gynted ag yr oedd yr asiant nesaf ar gael. Esboniodd y Cyngor y caiff pob galwad ei phrosesu gan brosesau ymdrin â galwadau cyffredinol y Ganolfan Gyswllt lle nad oes triniaeth ffafriol i alwadau Cymraeg na Saesneg a dderbynnir. Dywedodd y Cyngor nad yw hi'n glir a fyddai gwasanaeth Cymraeg wedi cael ei gynnig gan nad oedd y siopwr dirgel wedi aros ar y llinell ddigon hir i hyn gael ei asesu.
- 2.6 Wrth ymateb i gwestiwn 2 a 3 o fewn yr Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor bod eu Cod Ymddygiad staff yn amlinellu polisiau statudol y Cyngor ac yn gosod y canllawiau y mae'n rhaid cadw atynt. Fodd bynnag, dywedodd y Cyngor ar ôl ystyried, gallai fod mwy o bwyslais ar gadw at eu Hysbysiad Cydymffurfio â Safonau'r Gymraeg.
- 2.7 Dywedodd y Cyngor fod Canllawiau'r Iaith Gymraeg hefyd yn cael eu hyrwyddo ar dudalen flaen y fewnwyd sy'n hygyrch i staff ac sy'n darparu gwybodaeth am weithdrefnau'r gwasanaethau ffôn a Safonau'r Gymraeg.

- 2.8 Esboniodd y Cyngor y darperir Siart Llif Ateb y Ffôn a dogfen Cyfarchion dwyieithog i holl Asiantau'r ganolfan gyswllt a'u bod i gyd yn ymwybodol o ofynion y Gymraeg.
- 2.9 Gofynnais yng nghwestiwn 4 pryd oedd staff yn derbyn y wybodaeth a pha mor aml mae staff yn cael eu hatgoffa o'r cyfarwyddiadau neu ganllawiau yma. Esboniodd y Cyngor bod y wybodaeth ar gael i staff drwy'r fewnrwyd. Dywedodd y Cyngor ei bod yn orfodol sicrhau bod staff newydd yn ymwybodol o Safonau a pholisïau'r Gymraeg yn ystod eu cyfnod sefydlu. Esboniodd y Cyngor mai cyfrifoldeb Penaethiaid Gwasanaethau yw sicrhau bod gwasanaethau'n cydymffurfio'n llawn â Safonau'r Gymraeg ond ni roddwyd esboniad o'r trefniadau a wnaed gan y Pennaeth Gwasanaeth perthnasol yn yr achos yma. Esboniodd y Cyngor fod Asiantau'r canolfannau cyswllt yn cael gwybod am y ddogfen uchod ar ffurf e-byst a chyfarfodydd tîm neu ar-lein. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod ymgyrch gyfathrebu fewnol, bob dau fis wrthi'n cael ei datblygu ar hyn o bryd i hyrwyddo Safonau'r Gymraeg, ochr yn ochr â'r cyfarwyddiadau a'r canllawiau sydd ar gael yn y flwyddyn newydd.
- 2.10 Wrth ymateb i gwestiwn 5 ynglŷn â pha hyfforddiant sydd wedi eu rhoi i staff ar sut i sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth â Safonau'r Gymraeg wrth ateb galwadau ffôn a pha bryd a pha mor aml mae staff yn derbyn yr hyfforddiant yma, dywedodd y Cyngor bod hyfforddiant cyfyngedig wedi'i ddarparu i staff y Cyngor yn ysbeidiol. Esboniodd bod cyfleoedd drwy wefan Cymraeg Dysgu Llywodraeth Cymru hefyd yn cael eu hyrwyddo i annog staff i ddysgu Cymraeg. Mae cwrs hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg sylfaenol i staff wrthi'n cael ei ddatblygu ar hyn o bryd sy'n cael ei deilwra i gefnogi staff i allu ateb galwadau Cymraeg yn hyderus ac yn gymwys.
- 2.11 Dywedodd y Cyngor bydd yr hyfforddiant yn cael ei ddarparu wyneb yn wyneb ar-lein, ond bydd sleidiau PowerPoint ar gael i gyfeirio atynt a fydd hefyd yn cynnwys ffeiliau sain wedi'u gwreiddio o sgysiau ffôn cyffredinol. Honnodd y Cyngor bod sesiynau pwrpasol pellach hefyd yn cael eu datblygu i fynd i'r afael ag anghenion maes gwasanaeth penodol. Mae hyfforddiant ychwanegol ar gael ar gyfer staff sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg canolradd ac uwch ar hyn o bryd, yn enwedig ar gyfer staff sy'n gwirfoddoli i gefnogi'r Rhestr Siaradwyr Cymraeg Corfforaethol a bydd y rhain yn cael eu hyrwyddo yn y flwyddyn newydd.
- 2.12 Esboniodd y Cyngor cyn covid-19 a cyn symud i weithio yn fwy hyblyg, roedd rhai Asiantau canolfannau cyswllt a derbynyddion wyneb yn wyneb yn dilyn cyrsiau hyfforddiant siarad Cymraeg sylfaenol. Mae un o'r Asiantau hyn wedi symud ar draws i wasanaethau Hybiau Cymunedol newydd y Cyngor yn ddiweddar gan gefnogi'r gwaith o ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn y maes yma.
- 2.13 Wrth ymateb i gwestiwn 6 ynglŷn â phrosesau monitro neu archwilio galwadau ffôn y Cyngor, esboniodd y Cyngor bod yr Arweinydd Proffesiynol ar gyfer Ymgysylltu, Cydraddoldeb a'r Gymraeg yn cefnogi'r ganolfan gyswllt i ystyried gofynion gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn ystod prosiect adolygu gwasanaethau cwsmeriaid er mwyn hwyluso rhagoriaeth yn y gwasanaeth. Roedd y cymorth hynny yn ymwneud â sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth gyda'r newidiadau i'r system ymatebion Cymraeg ac yn cynnwys ystyried y gwasanaethau ffôn a oedd yn cael eu darparu a'u cynorthwyo i wella'r gwasanaeth.
- 2.14 Fel rhan o'n Hunanasesiad iaith Gymraeg blynyddol ym mis Awst 2021, cynhaliodd yr Arweinydd Proffesiynol ar gyfer Ymgysylltu, Cydraddoldeb a'r Gymraeg 'wiriad uniongyrchol' o'r gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg. Roedd yr archwiliad mewnol hwn yn tynnu sylw at bryderon ynghylch bodloni safonau 8 ac 11 gydag un asiant penodol.

Adroddwyd am hyn i Uwch Staff lle darparwyd canllawiau ar sut i fynd i'r afael â'r pryderon. Esboniodd y Cyngor o ganlyniad, atgoffwyd pob Asiant o bwysigrwydd cyfarch a glynu wrth Safonau'r Gymraeg yn ddwyieithog. Mae cyrsiau hyfforddi pwrpasol wrthi'n cael eu datblygu ac fe'u cynhwysir yn y Dadansoddiad o Anghenion Hyfforddi Asiantau. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod hwn wedi'i gynnwys yn yr adolygiad o Wasanaethau Cwsmeriaid er mwyn parhau i wella Profiad y Cwsmer.

- 2.15 Wrth ymateb i gwestiwn 7 ac 8 esboniodd y Cyngor nad oes unrhyw aelod neu asiant o ganolfan gyswllt Blaenau Gwent sy'n delio â galwadau gan y cyhoedd yn siarad Cymraeg yn rhugl. Roedd 1 aelod o staff yn arfer dilyn hyfforddiant sgiliau iaith Gymraeg sylfaenol, fel y soniwyd eu bod bellach yn rhan o wasanaeth Hybiau Cymunedol y Cyngor. Fodd bynnag, esboniodd y Cyngor fod 12 aelod o staff yn gwirfoddoli i gynorthwyo'r Cyngor i ddarparu gwasanaethau Cymraeg fel rhan o'u Rhestr Siaradwyr Cymraeg Corfforaethol. O'r rheini, mae cyfran uchel ohonynt yn delio â galwadau gan y cyhoedd. Dywedodd y Cyngor bod y rhestr yn ceisio sicrhau bod aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael ar unrhyw adeg i ymdrin â galwadau Cymraeg gan y cyhoedd.
- 2.16 Yng nghwestiwn 9 gofynnais, os oedd y Cyngor yn derbyn bod y galwr dirgel wedi derbyn gwasanaeth sydd yn codi amheuaeth o fethiant i gydymffurfio â Safonau'r Gymraeg, pa gamau sydd wedi ei gymryd neu bydd yn eu cymryd yn y dyfodol i sicrhau na fydd yr un ymddygiad yn digwydd eto. Dywedodd y Cyngor bydd Adolygiad o God Ymddygiad y Cyngor i gynnwys gwybodaeth yn benodol am fodloni'r hysbysiad Safonau a Chydymffurfiaeth y Gymraeg. Bydd hyfforddiant mewnol rheolaidd ar gael i staff ar ofynion Safon y Gymraeg a hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg (dechreuwr, canolradd ac uwch) i'w darparu.
- 2.17 Ymhellach, dywedodd y Cyngor y bydd adolygiad o'r broses lawn o'r dechrau i'r diwedd ar gyfer darparu gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg yn unol â safonau 8, 11 a 17. Dywedodd y Cyngor os na fyddent yn gallu darparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg, oherwydd amgylchiadau tu hwnt i'w rheolaeth, yna bydd neges awtomataidd yn egluro nad yw'r gwasanaeth ar gael a phryd y bydd ar gael.
- 2.18 Dywedodd y Cyngor y bydd ymgyrch gyfathrebu fewnol bob deufis yn cael ei ddatblygu i hyrwyddo ac atgyfnerthu Safonau'r Gymraeg, canllawiau ynghylch y weithdrefn ar gyfer darparu gwasanaeth ffôn, gwybodaeth a chyfluoedd hyfforddi Cymraeg. Bydd hefyd archwiliad mewnol drwy 'wirio uniongyrchol' rheolaidd gan Arweinydd Proffesiynol ar gyfer Ymgysylltu, Cydraddoldeb a'r Gymraeg i sicrhau bod y Cyngor yn bodloni ei ofynion o ran y Gymraeg mewn perthynas â darparu gwasanaethau ffôn.
- 2.19 Darparwyd 'Siart Llif Ateb Ffôn', 'Cyfarchion Dwyieithog', ac 'Ymadroddion Defnyddiol' i Asiantau'r canolfannau cyswllt yn syth ar ôl gwybod am ein hymchwiliad. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod hefyd trafodaethau rheolaidd mewn cyfarfodydd 1 i 1 gydag Asiantau'r canolfannau cyswllt i sicrhau eu bod yn deall pwysigrwydd cydymffurfio â safonau'r Gymraeg yn rheolaidd ac y glynir wrthynt.
- 2.20 Ni chyflwynwyd unrhyw dystiolaeth bellach fel atebion i gwestiynau 10 ac 11.
- 2.21 Oherwydd rhai o'r dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd (fel sydd wedi ei fanylu uchod), rhoddais ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth i'r Cyngor ar 02/03/2022. Roedd yr Ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth yn ei wneud yn ofynnol i'r Cyngor ddarparu'r dystiolaeth ganlynol:

Gwybodaeth a dogfennau

1. A ydi'r Cyngor o'r farn fod y broses sydd wedi ei fanylu yn y siart Ilif Proses Ateb Galwadau Ffôn a gyflwynwyd fel rhan o dystiolaeth y Cyngor dyddiedig 20/12/21 yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 11?
2. Rhowch fanylion am sut mae'r Cyngor yn hybu ac yn hyrwyddo ei wasanaethau Cymraeg.
3. Rhowch fanylion am sut mae'r Cyngor yn hybu ac yn hyrwyddo ei wasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg.
4. Darparwch dystiolaeth bod unrhyw gyhoeddusrwydd neu ddogfen mae'r Cyngor yn ei lunio, neu wefan sydd yn cael ei gyhoeddi, sy'n cyfeirio at wasanaeth ffôn Saesneg hefyd yn nodi bod gwasanaeth cyfatebol ar gael yn Gymraeg.
5. Yn nhystiolaeth y Cyngor dyddiedig 20/12/21, nodwyd nad oedd unrhyw asiant yn y ganolfan gyswllt sydd yn delio gyda galwadau'r cyhoedd yn rhugl yn y Gymraeg. Esboniwyd bod 12 staff yn gwirfoddoli i gynorthwyo'r Cyngor i ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg fel rhan o'ch Rhestr Siaradwyr Cymraeg Corfforaethol. Rhowch wybodaeth lawn o sut mae'r broses wirfoddoli yma yn gweithio gan ystyried dyletswyddau eraill y staff hynny a'u hargaeledd i wirfoddoli.
6. Gan mai gwirfoddolwyr sydd yn darparu gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg y Cyngor, sut mae'r Cyngor yn sicrhau ansawdd y gwasanaeth ffôn hwnnw a'i gydymffurfiaeth â gofynion y Safonau.
7. Rhowch fanylion pa drefniadaeth sydd gan y Cyngor mewn lle i asesu sgiliau Cymraeg ei gyflogeion.
8. Sawl swydd o fewn y ganolfan gyswllt sydd wedi eu hysbysebu yn y tair blynedd diwethaf? O'r swyddi a hysbysebwyd, sawl un sydd wedi ei hysbysebu fel swyddi ble (a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol; (b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd; (c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol; (ch) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.
9. Darparwch gopi o'ch asesiadau o anghenion ieithyddol pob swydd sydd wedi ei hysbysebu ar gyfer y ganolfan gyswllt yn y tair blynedd diwethaf.
10. Wrth hysbysebu swyddi ar gyfer y ganolfan gyswllt lle'r oedd sgiliau iaith y swyddi yn Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, darparwch dystiolaeth bod y Cyngor wedi nodi hynny yn yr hysbysebion swydd. Darparwch dystiolaeth hefyd bod y swyddi wedi cael eu hysbysebu yn y Gymraeg. Darparwch y dystiolaeth yma am y swyddi sydd wedi eu hysbysebu ar gyfer y ganolfan gyswllt dros y tair blynedd diwethaf.

11. Yn y tair blynedd diwethaf, pan hysbysebwyd swydd ar gyfer y ganolfan gyswllt fel swydd ble roedd cael sgiliau Cymraeg yn hanfodol, sawl cais a dderbyniwyd gan ymgeiswyr oedd gyda'r sgiliau Cymraeg angenrheidiol?
12. Yn y tair blynedd diwethaf, pan hysbysebwyd swydd ar gyfer y ganolfan gyswllt fel swyddi ble nad oedd sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol, esboniwch sut y gwnaethoch yr asesiad hynny am sgiliau iaith.
13. Faint o staff y Cyngor sydd wedi derbyn gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol yn y tair blynedd diwethaf? Nodwch ym mha adrannau oedd y staff yma yn gweithio.
14. Faint o staff y Cyngor sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg pellach er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith yn y tair blynedd diwethaf? Nodwch ym mha adrannau oedd y staff yma yn gweithio.
15. Faint o'r staff sydd yn delio gyda derbyn galwadau ffôn i rifau cyffredinol y Cyngor sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant sgiliau iaith Gymraeg yn y tair blynedd diwethaf? O'r staff hynny sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant, nodwch lefel y cyrsiau dysgu Cymraeg.
16. I ba raddau mae datblygu sgiliau iaith wedi ei ymgorffori i ofynion y swyddi a'r swydd ddisgrifiadau o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt.
17. Rhowch fanylion pob sesiwn hyfforddiant sydd wedi ei ddarparu i staff ar (a) ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys ymwybyddiaeth am hanes yr iaith a'i lle yn niwylliant Cymru); (b) dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg; (c) dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle yn y 3 mlynedd diwethaf. Rhowch fanylion swyddi'r staff a maes gwaith y staff a fynychodd.
18. Rhowch fanylion pob sesiwn hyfforddiant ymwybyddiaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg sydd wedi cael ei roi i staff y ganolfan gyswllt yn y 3 mlynedd diwethaf.
19. Rhowch fanylion llawn o'r canllawiau a/neu hyfforddiant sydd yn cael ei roi i staff newydd ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg ac o gydymffurfiaeth gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg.
20. Darparwch unrhyw wybodaeth neu dystiolaeth ychwanegol yr ydych am i ni ei ystyried wrth ddyfarnu ar eich cydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau a nodir yng nghylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad.
21. Darparwch gopi o unrhyw bolisi, gweithdrefn, canllaw neu ddogfen arall yr ydych am i ni ei ystyried wrth ddyfarnu ar eich cydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau a nodir yng nghylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad.

2.22 Mewn ymateb, derbyniais dystiolaeth gan y Cyngor ar 27/04/2022. Yn ogystal, darparwyd copïau o'r dogfennau canlynol:

- Atodiad A – Cyflwyniad i'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys y weithdrefn ateb y ffôn)

- Atodiad B – Fframwaith Cymhwysedd y Gweithlu (heb fod yn rheolaethol)
- Atodiad C – Cyfarchion Dwyieithog a Geiriau Allweddol;
- Atodiad D – Ymadroddion Defnyddiol
- Atodiad 1 – Awdurdodiad Recriwtio;
- Atodiad 2 – Disgrifiad Swydd.

2.23 Ystyriais yr holl wybodaeth a gyflwynwyd mewn ymateb i'r ddau hysbysiad tystiolaeth.

Y dystiolaeth a dderbyniwyd mewn ymateb i'r Ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth

- 2.24 Mae'r Cyngor wedi gofyn i mi nodi yn eu hymateb bod y dystiolaeth y gofynnwyd amdano dros y tair blynedd diwethaf yn wybodaeth yn ystod blynyddoedd pandemig Covid-19 pan oedd y Cyngor yn delio gydag argyfwng.
- 2.25 Gofynnais yn gyntaf os oedd y Cyngor o'r farn fod y broses sydd wedi ei fanylu yn y siart llif Proses Ateb Galwadau Ffôn a gyflwynwyd fel rhan o dystiolaeth gyntaf y Cyngor dyddiedig 20/12/21 yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 11. Atebodd y Cyngor nad oedden nhw o'r farn fod y Siart Llif yn cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau. Esboniodd y Cyngor fod y weithdrefn ffôn a gyflwynwyd ym mis Rhagfyr 2021 ar waith cyn i'r llythyr gan Swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ar 27 Awst 2019 a oedd yn rhoi eglurhad ar sut i ddehongli Safon 11 ddod i law.
- 2.26 Esboniodd y Cyngor ers hynny, fod Siart Llif Gweithdrefn Ateb Ffôn diwygiedig wedi ei ddatblygu sy'n cydymffurfio â Safon 11 ac sydd wedi'i rannu â'r holl staff. Dywedodd y Cyngor y caiff y weithdrefn hon ei hyrwyddo a chyfeirir ati mewn cyfarfodydd tîm. Atodwyd copi o'r weithdrefn ddiwygiedig hon gydag ymateb y Cyngor.
- 2.27 Wrth ymateb i'r ail gwestiwn, dywedodd y Cyngor eu bod yn cyhoeddi ac yn rhannu gwybodaeth am eu gwasanaethau Cymraeg drwy'r cyfryngau cymdeithasol, eu tudalen gwe, taflenni a thrwy hysbysebion. Ni roddwyd tystiolaeth o hyn ac nid oes cyfeiriadau i'r gwybodaeth berthnasol yma ar eu gwefannau wedi ei gyflwyno gan y Cyngor. Esboniodd y Cyngor fod y model darparu Canolfannau Cymunedol wedi bod ar waith ers mis Gorffennaf 2021 ac yn gweithredu yn y cymunedau ar draws Blaenau Gwent o 6 Llyfrgell ac o Sefydliad. Mae staff yr Hybiau Cymunedol yn hyrwyddo gwasanaethau Cymraeg yn y lleoliad gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid wyneb yn wyneb, drwy hysbysebion sy'n arddangos amseroedd agor a drwy faneri a ddefnyddir yn y Llyfrgelloedd.
- 2.28 Esboniodd y Cyngor fod y Ganolfan sy'n delio gyda gwasanaeth ffôn y Cyngor yn hyrwyddo gwasanaethau Cymraeg drwy neges awtomataidd. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod yr holl alwyr yn cael eu cyfarch yn Gymraeg cyn cael cynnig y dewis i ymgymryd â'r alwad gydag asiant Gwasanaeth Cwsmeriaid yn y Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg.
- 2.29 Dywedodd y Cyngor nad yw hyrwyddo a hysbysebu gwasanaethau Cymraeg yn cael eu trin yn llai ffafriol na gwasanaethau Saesneg ac fe'u hyrwyddir yn gyson gyda'r un amlygrwydd a hygyrchedd. Er enghraifft, dywedodd y Cyngor bod eu

gwefan sgrin groeso yn cynnig dewis iaith glir i ymwelwyr ac yn rhoi'r cynnig i ddefnyddwyr ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg wrth gyrchu gwasanaethau'r wefan.

- 2.30 Wrth ymateb i gwestiwn 3 oedd yn gofyn sut oedd y Cyngor yn hybu ac yn hyrwyddo ei wasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg, atebodd y Cyngor:
- Neges awtomataidd y Ganolfan Gyswllt Gorfforaethol – wrth ffonio 01495 311556, prif fanylion cyswllt y Cyngor cewch eich cyfarch yn Gymraeg ar unwaith gydag opsiwn i bwysu 1 am y Gymraeg a phwysu 2 am Saesneg.
 - Asiantau'r Ganolfan Gyswllt yn ateb y ffôn yn ddwyieithog – gan ddilyn Siart Llif y Weithdrefn Ateb Dros y Ffôn
 - Mae asiantau'r Ganolfan Gyswllt yn rhoi gwybod wrth gyfarch y galwr bod gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael os hoffent barhau â'r sgwrs yn Gymraeg
 - Mae'r Ganolfan Gyswllt yn hybu'r Gymraeg ac yn croesawu cyfatebiaeth gan ddefnyddwyr yn y Gymraeg
 - Mae manylion cyswllt ar Wefan y Cyngor ar gael yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg
- 2.31 Wrth ymateb i gwestiwn 4 o fewn yr Ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor fod eu gwefan a holl ddeunydd cyhoeddusrwydd y Cyngor yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg.
- 2.32 Dywedodd y Cyngor fod negeseuon ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol gan y timau Cyfathrebu Corfforaethol wrth roi cyhoeddusrwydd i system ffôn y Cyngor ar draws yr holl blatfformau cymdeithasol yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg ond nid oes tystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno i ddangos y negeseuon yma.
- 2.33 Honnodd y Cyngor fod cyfeiriad e-bost Corfforaethol y Cyngor, info@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk hefyd yn hyrwyddo gwasanaeth ffôn y Cyngor drwy roi'r dewis o Gymraeg a Saesneg. Dywedodd y Cyngor eu bod yn hyrwyddo gwasanaeth ffôn y Ganolfan Gyswllt Gorfforaethol i breswylwyr ar brosiectau penodol, gan gynnwys yr opsiwn i sgwrsio ag asiant yn eu dewis iaith. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod y system Rheoli Cysylltiadau Cwsmeriaid sy'n cael eu gweithredu o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt hefyd yn hyrwyddo'r dewis o Gymraeg neu Saesneg a gall gofnodi'r dewis iaith preswylwyr ar gyfer sgwrsiau ffôn.
- 2.34 Yng nghwestiwn 5, gofynnais i'r Cyngor am y 12 staff sydd yn gwirfoddoli i gynorthwyo'r Cyngor i ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg fel rhan o'u Rhestr Siaradwyr Cymraeg Corfforaethol. Gofynnais i'r Cyngor roi gwybodaeth lawn o sut mae'r broses wirfoddoli yma yn gweithio gan ystyried dyletswyddau eraill y staff hynny a'u hargaeledd i wirfoddoli.
- 2.35 Esboniodd y Cyngor fod Rhestr Siaradwyr Cymraeg Corfforaethol o'r staff sydd yn gwirfoddoli i gefnogi'r Ganolfan Gyswllt. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod y Rhestr yn cynnwys staff sydd yn rhugl yn y Gymraeg o bob rhan o'r sefydliad ac sy'n gweithio mewn amrywiaeth o wahanol feysydd gwasanaeth. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod gan bob gwirfoddolwr rolau clerigol ac fel arfer maent yn trin galwadau fel rhan o'u dyletswyddau o ddydd i ddydd. Honnodd y Cyngor bod modd cysylltu â nhw drwy Microsoft Teams. Mae'r rhestr ar gael ar fewnwyd y Cyngor drwy'r Cyfeiriadur Ffôn.

- 2.36 Honnodd y Cyngor, wrth ffonio'r Ganolfan Gyswllt darperir neges awtomataidd sy'n rhoi gwybod yn benodol i'r cwsmer bod gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael neu y bydd yn parhau i fod ar gael yn Gymraeg. Os bydd cwsmer yn dewis derbyn y gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg, bydd yn cael ei drosglwyddo i asiant canolfan alwadau. Esboniodd y Cyngor fod asiant y ganolfan alwadau yn cyfarch y cwsmer yn ddwyieithog ac yn sefydlu natur yr alwad. Ar y pwynt hwnnw, mae'r cwsmer yn aros tra bod yr asiant yn gwneud pob ymdrech i drosglwyddo'r cwsmer i wirfoddolwr ar Restr Siaradwyr Cymraeg Corfforaethol o'r adran berthnasol, a all barhau i ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg. Fodd bynnag, yn dibynnu ar natur yr alwad, efallai y bydd angen trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol. Cyfeiriodd y Cyngor yn benodol at Atodiad A.
- 2.37 Dywedodd y Cyngor caiff y Rhestr Siaradwyr Cymraeg Corfforaethol ei hadolygu a'i diweddarau ddwywaith y flwyddyn, ond anogir gwirfoddolwyr i hysbysu'r Tîm Polisi a Phartneriaethau os ydynt yn newid rolau neu os ydynt yn gadael y sefydliad. Hefyd, hyrwyddir ymgyrchoedd cyfathrebu i annog staff presennol neu staff newydd i wirfoddoli. Anogir pob gwirfoddolwr hefyd i fynychu cyfleoedd hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg uwch i ddatblygu sgiliau a hyder ymhellach a chaniatáu iddynt wneud hynny o fewn amser gwaith sydd hefyd yn anelu at gynyddu'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle. Esboniodd y Cyngor, ers hynny, mae un aelod o staff yng ngwasanaeth y Ganolfan Gyswllt wedi gofyn am gael cymryd rhan mewn hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod pob un o'r 6 Swyddog Hybiau Cymunedol hefyd wedi mynegi'r un cais ac mae hyn yn cael ei gefnogi ar hyn o bryd i sefydlu hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg ar eu cyfer. Bydd hyn yn gwella ac yn cefnogi'r gwaith o ddarparu Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid ar draws y Cyngor yn y lleoliad Wyneb yn Wyneb a dros y ffôn.
- 2.38 Yng nghwestiwn 6 gofynnais i'r Cyngor gan mai gwirfoddolwyr sydd yn darparu gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg y Cyngor, sut mae'r Cyngor yn sicrhau ansawdd y gwasanaeth ffôn hwnnw a'i gydymffurfiaeth â gofynion y Safonau. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod yr holl wirfoddolwyr yn rhugl yn y Gymraeg a bod gan bob aelod o staff ddyletswydd i ddarparu gwasanaeth o ansawdd i'w holl gwsmeriaid, yn unol â'u Fframwaith Cymhwysedd y Gweithlu (nid rheolaethol).
- 2.39 Honnodd y Cyngor ymhellach, gwneir gwiriadau dilysu mewnol yn flynyddol gan y Tîm Polisi a Phartneriaethau lle bydd galwadau cudd yn cael eu gwneud i'r Ganolfan Gyswllt yn Gymraeg i fonitro ac asesu ansawdd y gwasanaeth ffôn a ddarperir. Caiff unrhyw feysydd y nodwyd eu bod i'w datblygu neu eu gwella eu hystyried a'u trafod gan y Rheolwr Gwasanaeth Profiad Cwsmeriaid a Thrawsnewid. Dywedodd y Cyngor y sefydlwyd y trefniadau hyn ar ôl derbyn '*Goruchwylio Cydymffurfiaeth – Dogfen gyngor arfer da*' gan Swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg sy'n eu galluogi i gydymffurfio â'n gofynion statudol.
- 2.40 Yng nghwestiwn 7 gofynnais i'r Cyngor roi manylion pa drefniadaeth sydd ganddynt mewn lle i asesu sgiliau Cymraeg ei gyflogaion.
- 2.41 Dywedodd y Cyngor fod data gweithlu'r Cyngor, gan gynnwys dewis gohebiaeth Gymraeg a sgiliau a gallu yn y Gymraeg, yn cael ei storio ar system o'r enw iTrent. Anogir staff newydd i ddarparu'r wybodaeth hon wrth ymuno â'r sefydliad ac anogir y staff presennol i ddiweddarau eu gwybodaeth yn rheolaidd drwy hysbysiadau cyfathrebu. Dywedodd y Cyngor bod iTrent yn gallu dadansoddi holl ddata'r gweithlu a chynhyrchu adroddiadau a ddefnyddir i asesu sgiliau Cymraeg ei weithwyr.

- 2.42 Yng nghwestiwn 8, gofynnais sawl swydd o fewn y ganolfan gyswllt sydd wedi eu hysbysebu yn y tair blynedd diwethaf? O'r swyddi a hysbysebwyd, sawl un sydd wedi ei hysbysebu fel swyddi ble (a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol; (b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd; (c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol; (ch) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.
- 2.43 Dywedodd y Cyngor fod y Ganolfan Gyswllt wedi hysbysebu ar ddau achlysur dros y 3 blynedd a bod y ddwy swydd wedi ei chategoreiddio fel swyddi ble roedd sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol.
- 2.44 Yng nghwestiwn 9 gofynnais i'r Cyngor ddarparu copi o'u hasesiadau o anghenion ieithyddol pob swydd sydd wedi ei hysbysebu ar gyfer y ganolfan gyswllt yn y tair blynedd diwethaf. Atodwyd y Cyngor gopi o'i dogfen 'Recruitment Authorisation form and report' mewn perthynas â'r recriwtio i'r tîm.
- 2.45 Gofynnais am dystiolaeth yng nghwestiwn 10 lle'r oedd sgiliau iaith y swyddi yn Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, bod y Cyngor wedi nodi hynny yn yr hysbysebion swydd. Gofynnais hefyd i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth hefyd bod y swyddi wedi cael eu hysbysebu yn y Gymraeg. Mae'r Cyngor wedi darparu copi o ddogfen 'Job Description' am 4 swydd o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt cafodd ei hysbysebu yn 2022.
- 2.46 Yng nghwestiwn 11 gofynnais, pan hysbysebwyd swydd ar gyfer y ganolfan gyswllt yn y tair blynedd diwethaf fel swydd ble roedd cael sgiliau Cymraeg yn hanfodol, sawl cais a dderbyniwyd gan ymgeiswyr oedd gyda'r sgiliau Cymraeg angenrheidiol? Dywedodd y Cyngor ar y ddau achlysur lle mae swyddi Canolfannau Cyswllt wedi cael eu hysbysebu dros y tair blynedd diwethaf nid oedd gan un o'r ymgeiswyr sgiliau Cymraeg.
- 2.47 Yng nghwestiwn 12 gofynnais i'r Cyngor, pan hysbysebwyd swydd ar gyfer y ganolfan gyswllt yn y tair blynedd diwethaf fel swyddi ble nad oedd sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol, esbonio sut y gwnaethpwyd yr asesiad hynny am sgiliau iaith. Atebodd y Cyngor fod pob swydd o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt wedi cael ei hysbysebu gyda sgiliau iaith Gymraeg yn ddymunol.
- 2.48 Gofynnais i'r Cyngor yng nghwestiwn 13 faint o staff y Cyngor sydd wedi derbyn gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol yn y tair blynedd diwethaf gan ofyn iddynt nodi ym mha adrannau oedd y staff yma yn gweithio. Dywedodd y Cyngor eu bod ers 2019 wedi hyrwyddo cwrs Cymraeg Llywodraeth Cymru yn y Gwaith ar-lein. Caniateir i staff o bob rhan o'r sefydliad cyfan fynychu hyfforddiant yn ystod oriau gwaith arferol. Honnodd y Cyngor fod nifer o adnoddau Cymraeg sylfaenol hefyd ar gael i aelodau staff megis ar eu mewnwyd 'Cyfarchion Dwyieithog a geiriau allweddol' ac 'Ymadroddion Defnyddiol'.
- 2.49 Dywedodd y Cyngor nad ydyn nhw yn gwybod faint o staff y Cyngor sydd wedi cael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol yn ystod y tair blynedd diwethaf gan nad yw hyn yn rhywbeth a gofnodir ar hyn o bryd. O fewn Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid, dywedodd y Cyngor fod yr holl staff (y Ganolfan Gyswllt a'r Hybiau Cymunedol) yn cael hyfforddiant sylfaenol yn y Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd. Gyda holl staff Hybiau Cymunedol ac 1 aelod o staff y Ganolfan Gyswllt yn symud ymlaen i gyrsiau Cymraeg tymor hwy manylach yn y dyfodol agos. Bydd hyn yn rhan o'u cynlluniau hyfforddi a datblygu yn y dyfodol ac yn cefnogi'r gwaith o ddarparu Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid i ddefnyddwyr.

- 2.50 Yng nghwestiwn 14 gofynnais i'r Cyngor faint o'u staff sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg pellach er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith yn y tair blynedd diwethaf? Gofynnais i'r Cyngor nodi ym mha adrannau oedd y staff yma yn gweithio. Dywedodd y Cyngor nad ydyn nhw'n ymwybodol faint o staff y Cyngor sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg pellach gan fod hyn ddim yn rhywbeth sydd yn cael ei gofnodi ganddynt. Dywedodd y Cyngor fodd bynnag, fod cyfleoedd hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg pellach yn cael eu hyrwyddo ar hyn o bryd ar draws y sefydliad.
- 2.51 Dywedodd y Cyngor o fewn eu Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid fod holl staff (o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt a'r Hybiau Cymunedol) yn cael hyfforddiant sylfaenol yn y Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd. Honnir y Cyngor fod holl staff yr Hybiau Cymunedol ac 1 aelod o staff y Ganolfan Gyswllt yn symud ymlaen i gyrsiau Cymraeg mwy manwl, tymor hir, yn y dyfodol. Bydd hyn yn rhan o'u cynlluniau hyfforddi a datblygu yn y dyfodol ac yn cefnogi'r gwaith o ddarparu Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid i'n trigolion.
- 2.52 Yng nghwestiwn 15, gofynnais faint o'r staff sydd yn delio gyda derbyn galwadau ffôn i rifau cyffredinol y Cyngor sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant sgiliau iaith Gymraeg yn y tair blynedd diwethaf? O'r staff hynny sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant, gofynnais i'r Cyngor nodi lefel y cyrsiau dysgu Cymraeg.
- 2.53 Dywedodd y Cyngor fod yr holl staff sy'n delio â derbyn galwadau ffôn i rif ffôn Canolfan Gyswllt y Cyngor wedi derbyn hyfforddiant sgiliau iaith Gymraeg sylfaenol yn ystod y tair blynedd diwethaf. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod y broses hon yn parhau ar hyn o bryd ac mae wedi ei hymestyn i staff o fewn timau Gwasanaethau Budd-daliadau a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol IAA. Bydd hon yn broses barhaus dros y blynyddoedd i ddod i gefnogi hyfforddiant gloywi ac anghenion hyfforddi a datblygu aelodau staff.
- 2.54 Gofynnais i'r Cyngor yng nghwestiwn 16 i ba raddau mae datblygu sgiliau iaith wedi ei ymgorffori i ofynion y swyddi a'r swydd ddisgrifiadau o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod sgiliau iaith Gymraeg wedi bod yn sgil ddymunol o fewn Disgrifiadau Swydd fel rhan o'r broses recriwtio. Fodd bynnag, nid ydi datblygu sgiliau iaith yn rhan o lwfans anghenion hyfforddi aelodau'r staff a datblygiad staff.
- 2.55 Gofynnais i'r Cyngor yng nghwestiwn 17 i roi manylion pob sesiwn hyfforddiant sydd wedi ei ddarparu i staff ar (a) ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys ymwybyddiaeth am hanes yr iaith a'i lle yn niwylliant Cymru); (b) dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg; (c) dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle yn y 3 mlynedd diwethaf. Gofynnais hefyd i'r Cyngor roi manylion swyddi'r staff a maes gwaith y staff a fynychodd.
- 2.56 Dywedodd y Cyngor fod Strategaeth Datblygu'r Gweithlu'r Cyngor yn hyrwyddo ac yn annog staff i chwilio am gyfleoedd hyfforddiant a datblygu, gan gynnwys yn y Gymraeg, a chaiff hyn ei hwyluso drwy ein trefniadau presennol ar gyfer rheolwyr. Dywedodd y Cyngor, yn unol â chwestiwn 13, rydym yn cyfeirio staff at unrhyw gyfleoedd hyfforddi hysbys sydd ar gael.
- 2.57 Gofynnais wedyn am fanylion pob sesiwn hyfforddiant ymwybyddiaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg sydd wedi cael ei roi i staff y ganolfan gyswllt yn y 3 mlynedd diwethaf.
- 2.58 Dywedodd y Cyngor fod sesiynau gloywi iaith wrthi'n cael eu cynnal gyda holl aelodau staff y Gwasanaeth Cwsmeriaid, gan gynnwys Canolfannau Cymunedol, y

Ganolfan Gyswilt a'r Gwasanaethau Budd-daliadau. Honnodd y Cyngor fod hyfforddiant sylfaenol yn y Gymraeg ac ymadroddion cyffredin yn cael eu rhoi mewn Cyfarfodydd Tîm a sesiynau 1 i 1 i gefnogi'r gwaith o ddarparu Gwasanaeth Cwsmeriaid i breswylwr.

- 2.59 Yng nghwestiwn 19 gofynnais am fanylion y canllawiau a/neu hyfforddiant sydd yn cael ei roi i staff newydd ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg ac o gydymffurfiaeth gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod holl staff newydd yn derbyn sesiwn Sefydlu Corfforaethol pan fo (a) (b) ac (c) yn cael eu cynnwys gan y Rheolwr o dan ein Polisiâu Corfforaethol h.y. Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol; Safonau'r Gymraeg ac ati.

Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau

4 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 8: Asesiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad

Geiriad y safon

- 4.1 Dyma eiriad y safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 8

Pan fydd person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi gyfarch y person yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Dehongliadau

- 4.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 4.2.2 – 4.2.6:

“Safon 8

4.2.2. *Rhaid i gorff gyfarch person yn Gymraeg pan fo'r person hwnnw'n cysylltu â'r corff ar un o'i rifau ffôn perthnasol.*

4.2.3. *Gall y term 'cyfarch' gynnwys ymadroddion sy'n cydnabod ac yn croesawu'r person sy'n cysylltu, cyn i'r corff ddechrau delio gyda'r alwad. Er enghraifft, gall corff gyfarch person drwy ddweud 'Bore Da/Prynhawn Da/Noswaith Dda', gan ddilyn hynny gyda fersiwn Gymraeg o enw'r corff (os oes un yn bodoli). Nid yw'r term 'cyfarch' yn cynnwys delio â'r alwad ei hun.*

4.2.4. *Gall corff gyfarch personau yn Gymraeg drwy neges sydd wedi'i recordio o flaen llaw ar system sydd wedi'i hawtomeiddio neu drwy aelod o staff yn cyfarch y person hwnnw yn Gymraeg pan fo'r aelod hwnnw'n ateb yr alwad.*

4.2.5. *Mae gofynion y safon hon yn berthnasol i'r cyfarchiad cyntaf yn unig. Bydd gweddill iaith yr alwad yn ddibynnol ar ddymuniad y person yn unol â safon 10 neu safon 11 (yn ddibynnol ar ba safon sydd wedi ei gosod ar y corff).*

4.2.6. *Gofynion safon 20 sy'n berthnasol i gyfarchion a wneir i berson sy'n cysylltu ar rif ffôn llinell uniongyrchol adran corff neu rif ffôn llinell uniongyrchol aelod staff corff.”*

Gofynion y safon

- 4.3 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau pan fydd person yn cysylltu â hwy ar eu prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'u prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, bod y person sydd yn cysylltu yn derbyn cyfarchiad yn y Gymraeg.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

- 4.4 Cyflwynwyd tystiolaeth o ganlyniadau ein 'gwirio uniongyrchol' o wasanaethau ffôn y Cyngor, sef cyrchu gwasanaethau fel cwsmer go iawn, er enghraifft drwy ddefnyddio gwasanaeth ffôn neu dderbynfa.
- 4.5 Gwnaed tair galwad ffôn i brif rif ffôn y Cyngor sef 01495 311556. Ar ddechrau'r tair galwad, roedd ein galwr wedi dewis yr opsiwn Gymraeg ar y system awtomatig ac felly wedi nodi ei ddewis i gael gwasanaeth Cymraeg. Nodir isod y gwasanaeth a dderbyniwyd gan ein galwr ar bob galwad.
- 4.6 Yn ystod yr alwad gyntaf ar 13/09/2021 am 10:49yb, cychwynnodd ein galwr y sgwrs yn y Gymraeg gan ofyn a oedd y Cyngor yn dosbarthu bagiau baw cŵn. Ni dderbyniwyd cyfarchiad Cymraeg, gwasanaeth Cymraeg, nac unrhyw gydnabyddiaeth bod y galwr wedi siarad Cymraeg. Nodwyd hefyd bod y galwr wedi teimlo'n annifyr i ofyn am wasanaeth Cymraeg yn enwedig wrth ystyried fod y dewis hwnnw eisoes wedi ei nodi.
- 4.7 Yn ystod yr ail alwad ar 01/10/2021 am 09:23yb, galwodd ein galwr y llinell ffôn. Doedd dim ateb ar ôl 6 munud a daethpwyd â'r alwad i ben.
- 4.8 Yn ystod y trydydd alwad ar 05/10/2021 am 09:08yb, cychwynnodd ein galwr y sgwrs yn y Gymraeg ond ni dderbyniwyd cyfarchiad dwyieithog. Gofynnodd ein galwr yn Gymraeg am e-bost y Prif Weithredwr drwy ddefnyddio 'Michelle Morris'. Ymateb y derbynnydd oedd "I will see if she is available". Doedd gan ein galwr ddim dewis ond ymyrryd yn yr alwad drwy droi i'r Saesneg i egluro mai e-bost Michelle Morris oedd yn gofyn amdano ac nid i gael siarad â hi. Nododd y derbynnydd yr e-bost yn syth heb unrhyw gydnabyddiaeth bod ein galwr eisieu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg.
- 4.9 Wrth ymateb i gwestiwn 1 o fewn yr Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor eu bod yn derbyn y dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd ac yn cydnabod eu methiannau i gydymffurfio â Safonau'r Gymraeg, mewn perthynas â gwasanaeth ffôn.
- 4.10 Mae tystiolaeth ein galwr dirgel yn glir na dderbyniodd y galwr neges gyfarch Gymraeg gan yr un atebodd y ffôn ar ddau o'r tair galwad i'r prif rif ffôn. Ni chafodd yr alwad arall ei hateb.
- 4.11 Serch hyn, mae cofnod y galwr dirgel yn nodi fod y neges awtomataidd derbyniwyd ar gychwyn yr alwad yn cydymffurfio â'r safonau. Er nad oes rhaid i neges awtomataidd roi 'cyfarchiad' er mwyn cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau, mae'n bosib bod cyfarchiad Cymraeg wedi ei roi yn y neges honno.
- 4.12 Fodd bynnag, ceisiodd fy swyddogion yr un prif rif ffôn y Cyngor 01495 311556 eto ar fwy nag un achlysur ym mis Mai 2022 wrth baratoi'r adroddiad yma. Derbyniodd fy swyddogion neges hir uniaith Saesneg ynglŷn â delio gyda lefel uchel o alwadau yn ymwneud â'r 'Cost of Living payment' o £150. Nid oedd y neges yma yn Gymraeg. Roedd y neges hir yma yn ymddangos fel neges oedd wedi ei rhoi mewn lle dros dro i roi gwybodaeth ychwanegol (uniaith Saesneg) i rai oedd yn galw dros gyfnod prysur.

- 4.13 Ymhellach, roedd y neges oedd yn dilyn y neges 'dros dro' yn gofyn i alwr ddewis yr opsiwn Gymraeg neu Saesneg hefyd yn cael ei rhoi yn Saesneg yn unig. Ar gychwyn y neges awtomataidd honno rhoddwyd enw'r Cyngor yn Gymraeg cyn cyfarch yn Saesneg yn unig ac roedd gweddill y neges yn rhoi cyfarwyddiadau o ran dewis iaith yn Saesneg yn unig. Ni roddwyd cyfarchiad yn y Gymraeg felly. O ystyried fod dyddiad y galwadau hynny yn dilyn agor yr ymchwiliad hwn ac yn dilyn tystiolaeth y Cyngor ble awgrymodd y Cyngor fod gwelliannau wedi eu gwneud i'r gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg, roedd hyn yn siomedig iawn.
- 4.14 Wrth ystyried y dystiolaeth yn ei chyfanrwydd felly, yn benodol wrth ystyried nad oes cyfarchiad Cymraeg yn y neges ym Mai 2022 chwaith, nid oedd y Cyngor yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 8 ar amser y galwadau oedd yn destun agor yr ymchwiliad yma.

Canfyddiadau

- 4.15 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau pan fydd person yn cysylltu â hwy ar eu prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'u prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, bod y person sydd yn cysylltu yn derbyn cyfarchiad yn y Gymraeg.
- 4.16 Ni dderbyniodd ein galwr dirgel gyfarchiad yn y Gymraeg ar fwy na un achlysur wrth geisio un o brif rifau ffôn y Cyngor fel rhan o'n gwirio uniongyrchol. Wrth bwysu a mesur ein tystiolaeth, mae'n ymddangos na fuasai'n galwr dirgel wedi derbyn cyfarchiad Cymraeg ar y neges awtomataidd chwaith.
- 4.17 Mae hynny yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 8.

Dyfarniad a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 8 ai peidio

- 4.18 Dyfarnaf fod y Cyngor wedi methu a chydymffurfio gyda Safon 8 ar y sail na dderbyniodd ein galwr dirgel gyfarchiad yn y Gymraeg ar ddwy alwad ffôn.

Gweithredu pellach

- 4.19 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant.
- 4.20 Yn achos fy nyfarniad fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 8, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.
- 4.21 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 8: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddatblygu cyfarchiad ffôn safonol Cymraeg.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor hyfforddi holl staff y Cyngor sydd yn delio gyda galwadau ffôn gan y gyhoedd ar sut i roi'r cyfarchiad ffôn safonol Cymraeg yn gywir ac ar gydymffurfiaeth gyda Safon 8.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor godi ymwybyddiaeth o fewn staff o bwysigrwydd rhoi cyfarchiad Cymraeg ac o gynnwys cyfarchiad Cymraeg ar gychwyn galwadau.

4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor werthuso unrhyw negeseuon cyfarch awtomataidd i wirio bod cyfarch yn y Gymraeg yn cael ei roi ar y neges awtomataidd os oes cyfarch yn cael ei roi yn y Saesneg.
5. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 4.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

5 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 11: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad

Geiriad y safon

- 5.1 Dyma eiriad y safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 11

Pan fo person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg os yw'r person yn dymuno hynny -

- (a) hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a
- (b) hyd nes nad oes aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol hwnnw.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Dehongliadau

- 5.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 4.2.2 – 4.2.6:

5.3 “**Safon 11**

- 4.2.17. *Os yw person yn cysylltu â'r corff ar un o'u rhifau ffôn perthnasol, rhaid i'r corff ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg unwaith y mae'n gwybod bod y person yn dymuno cael gwasanaeth Cymraeg dros y ffôn, gan drosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff sy'n gallu delio â'r pwnc penodol yn Gymraeg os yw hynny'n angenrheidiol.*
- 4.2.18. *Byddai person yn debygol o ddymuno cael gwasanaeth Cymraeg dros y ffôn os yw'n dechrau sgwrs gyda'r corff yn Gymraeg yn gyntaf. Os yw person yn dechrau sgwrsio'n gyntaf yn Saesneg, rhaid i gorff beidio â chymryd hynny i olygu nad yw'r person hwnnw'n dymuno cael gwasanaeth ffôn yn Gymraeg.*
- 4.2.19. *Os nad yw dymuniad y person i gael gwasanaeth Cymraeg eisoes yn glir (e.e. os nad yw'n dechrau'r sgwrs yn Gymraeg neu os nad yw'n gofyn am wasanaeth Cymraeg cyn i'r corff wneud hynny), disgwylir i gorff sefydlu'r dymuniad hwnnw'n fwy rhagweithiol, drwy ofyn yn benodol ynghylch dymuniad y person. Disgwylir i gorff sefydlu dymuniad y person i dderbyn gwasanaeth Cymraeg dros y ffôn ar y*

cyfle cyntaf posibl. Fodd bynnag, dylid nodi bod rhaid i gorff gyfarch personau yn Gymraeg dros y ffôn yn unol â safon 8 cyn sefydlu a yw'r person yn dymuno delio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg.

- 4.2.20. *Yn wahanol i safon 10, os nad oes aelod o staff ar gael sy'n gallu delio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg ar y pwnc penodol dan sylw, gall corff drosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n gallu delio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg, ond sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol hwnnw.*
- 4.2.21. *Dylid pwysleisio bod rhaid i gorff sicrhau nad oes aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu'r gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol yn Gymraeg, cyn trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n gallu delio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg. Er mwyn hwyluso hyn, gall corff ddewis cael cofnod o aelodau staff sy'n gallu delio â galwadau yn Gymraeg (e.e. cyfeiriadur staff fesul adran, gwasanaeth neu bwnc penodol).*
- 4.2.22. *Nid yw'r ymadrodd 'pwnc penodol' yn cynnwys cyswllt neu ymholiad cyffredinol. Disgwylir bod corff yn darparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg wrth ymdrin ag ymholiadau cyffredinol, hyd at bwynt lle mae angen i gorff drosglwyddo galwad i aelod di-Gymraeg sy'n gallu delio â phwnc sydd angen lefel o arbenigedd neu wybodaeth benodol er mwyn gallu delio ag ef. Gall enghraifft o'r fath gynnwys cais cynllunio penodol neu achos gwasanaethau cymdeithasol penodol lle mai'r aelod o staff di-Gymraeg hwnnw'n unig sydd â'r wybodaeth berthnasol sydd ei hangen i ddelio â'r alwad."*

Gofynion y safon

- 5.4 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau pan fo person yn cysylltu â hwy ar eu prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'u prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid i'r corff ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg os yw'r person yn dymuno hynny - (a) hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a (b) hyd nes nad oes aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol hwnnw.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

- 5.5 Mae'r wybodaeth sydd yn cael ei gyflwyno yn 3.4 - 3.9 uchod yn berthnasol hefyd yng nghyd-destun y Safon yma.
- 5.6 Nid oes unrhyw dystiolaeth berthnasol wedi ei gyflwyno gan y Cyngor sy'n gwrth brofi unrhyw dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd am brofiad y galwr dirgel wrth ddefnyddio prif rif ffon y Cyngor. Mae'n glir i mi fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio gyda'r Safon yma yng nghyd-destun y galwadau ffôn gan na dderbyniwyd gwasanaeth ffôn o gwbl yn y Gymraeg.
- 5.7 Rhaid cyfeirio yma hefyd at un o'r achosion y dyfarnodd Tribiwnlys y Gymraeg arno (rhif yr achos TyG/WLT/18/5) sydd yn rhoi eglurder pellach ar ddehongliad cywir Safon 11. Mae'n rhaid i sefydliad sicrhau fod modd i berson sydd wedi ffonio ei brif rif ffôn (neu un o'r prif rifau ffôn) fedru cynnal y sgwrs gychwynnol yn Gymraeg. Rhaid i'r alwad gael ei hateb yn Gymraeg yn y lle cyntaf gan aelod o staff sy'n ddigon rhugl i sefydlu, yn Gymraeg, pwy sy'n galw a beth yw natur yr alwad h.y. y pwnc y mae'r

galwr yn dymuno ei drafod. Nid yw'n ddigonol cael proses ble mae aelod o staff yn egluro yn Gymraeg, o fod wedi dysgu rhai ymadroddion a baratowyd ymlaen llaw, ei fod yn trosglwyddo'r alwad i berson arall sy'n medru'r Gymraeg er mwyn delio â'r alwad, am nad yw'r aelod o staff ei hun yn ddigon rhugl i wneud hynny. Pwrpas y safon yw sicrhau y gall aelodau'r cyhoedd gynnal sgwrs gychwynol ac egluro yn Gymraeg beth yw natur ei alwad heb orfod cael ei drosglwyddo at aelod arall o staff.

- 5.8 Er nad oedd gwasanaeth Cymraeg wedi ei roi o gwbl gan y Cyngor yma, gofynnais i'r Cyngor yn yr Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth gyntaf am ba gyfarwyddiadau neu ganllawiau sydd wedi eu rhoi i staff y Cyngor ar sut i sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth â Safonau'r Gymraeg wrth ateb galwadau ffôn.
- 5.9 Wrth ymateb i'r Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth gyntaf gyrrodd y Cyngor gopi o'r Siart Llif Ateb y Ffôn i mi gan esbonio y darperir y ddogfen hon i holl Asiantau'r ganolfan gyswllt. Gweler y ddogfen fel Atodiad 1 isod. Yn y Siart Llif, ar ôl rhoi cyfarchiad dwyieithog, mae'r Siart Llif yn nodi os ydi'r galwr yn ateb yn Gymraeg dylai'r asiant ofyn "*Would you like to continue the call in Welsh?*". Os mai'r ateb ydi 'ie', mae'r siart llif yn cynghori'r asiant: '*Advise the caller that they will be transferred to a Welsh speaker, if available. "I'm sorry I don't speak Welsh. I'll try and put you through to a colleague who does"*'.
- 5.10 Mae'n glir nad oedd y ddogfen yma yn rhoi canllawiau oedd yn sicrhau fod y rhai oedd yn ateb y ffôn yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 11. Hyd yn oed petai'r galwr dirgel wedi cael cyfarchiad yn y Gymraeg ac wedi cael unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg ar yr alwad, petai'r asiant yn dilyn y canllaw, ni fuasai'r alwad dal wedi cydymffurfio gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg. Nid oedd y canllaw oedd wedi ei roi i staff yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 11 er i arweiniad ar ddehongliad y Safon yma gael ei yrru i bob corff oedd yn ddarostyngedig i'r Safonau yn 2019.
- 5.11 Yn yr Ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth i'r Cyngor gofynnais i'r Cyngor os oeddent o'r farn fod y broses oedd wedi ei fanylu yn y siart llif Proses Ateb Galwadau Ffôn a gyflwynwyd gan y Cyngor yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 11. Atebodd y Cyngor nad oeddent o'r farn fod y ddogfen yn cydymffurfio. Esboniodd y Cyngor fod y weithdrefn ffôn a gyflwynwyd ym mis Rhagfyr 2021 ar waith cyn i'r llythyr yn rhoi arweiniad ar ddehongliad y Safon gael ei yrru gan Swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ym mis Awst 2019.
- 5.12 Esboniodd y Cyngor ers hynny, fod Siart Llif Gweithdrefn Ateb Ffôn diwygiedig wedi ei datblygu sy'n cydymffurfio â Safon 11 ac sydd wedi'i rannu â'r holl staff. Dywedodd y Cyngor y caiff y weithdrefn hon ei hyrwyddo a chyfeirir ati yng nghyfarfodydd y tîm Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid o Wyneb yn Wyneb (Hybiau Cymunedol) a'r Ganolfan Gyswllt Gorfforaethol. Atodwyd copi o'r weithdrefn ddiwygiedig hon (Atodiad 2 isod).
- 5.13 Gan fod arweiniad wedi ei roi i bob corff yn 2019, mae yn destun pryder i mi nad oedd y Cyngor wedi edrych ar eu canllawiau ateb ffôn hyd nes i hyn gael ei godi gyda nhw fel rhan o'r ymchwiliad yma, dros ddwy flynedd yn ddiweddarach. Mae'n destun pryder nad oes systemau digonol mewn lle i ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth neu gyngor gan swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg. Mae hefyd yn awgrymu nad oes gofal, ystyriaeth neu barch digonol yn cael ei roi i gydymffurfiaeth gyda'r Safonau, nac i'r canllawiau a'r arweiniad sydd yn eu rhoi iddynt er mwyn eu cynorthwyo i gydymffurfio gyda safonau'r Gymraeg.

Canfyddiadau

- 5.14 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau pan fo person yn cysylltu â hwy ar eu prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'u prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, fod y corff yn delio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg os yw'r person yn dymuno hynny - (a) hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a (b) hyd nes nad oes aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol hwnnw.
- 5.15 Ni dderbyniodd ein galwr dirgel unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg ar ei alwadau ffôn i'r Cyngor. Mae'n glir hefyd nad oedd y canllaw siart llif ateb galwadau ffon oedd ar gael i staff oedd yn ateb y ffon yn ystod cyfnod y galwadau dirgel yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 11.
- 5.16 Mae hynny yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 11.

Dyfarniad a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 11 ai peidio

- 5.17 Dyfarnaf fod y Cyngor wedi methu a chydymffurfio gyda Safon 11 ar y sail na wnaeth y corff ddelio â galwadau ein galwr dirgel yn Gymraeg hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a (b) hyd nes nad oes aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol hwnnw.

Gweithredu pellach

- 5.18 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant.
- 5.19 Yn achos fy nyfarniad fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 11, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.
- 5.20 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 11: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi canllawiau mewn lle i holl staff ar sut i ddelio gyda galwadau ffôn yn unol â Safon 11.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod ganddynt adnoddau i ddelio gyda pob galwad dderbynnir yn unol â Safon 11. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau fod digon o siaradwyr Cymraeg yn y ganolfan alwadau i ddelio gyda galwadau ffôn gan bersonau sy'n dymuno cynnal yr alwad yn Gymraeg, yn unol â safon 11.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi hyfforddiant i holl staff sydd yn delio gyda galwadau ffôn ar sut i roi gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn unol â Safon 11.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 3.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

6 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 17: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

- 6.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 17

Pan na fo gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi roi gwybod i'r personau sy'n galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Dehongliadau

- 6.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 4.2.39 – 4.2.44:

“Safon 17

- 4.2.39. *Pan nad oes gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar un o rifau ffôn perthnasol y corff, rhaid iddo roi gwybod i'r person sy'n galw pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael. Gall sefyllfa lle nad yw gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael gynnwys: o pan fo'r swyddfa ar gau ac felly nad oes gwasanaeth ffôn ar gael o gwbl, neu o pan nad oes aelod staff Cymraeg ar gael i ddelio â'r alwad (yn ôl gofynion safon 11).*
- 4.2.40. *Mewn sefyllfaedd fel hyn, rhaid i gorff roi gwybod pryd y bydd y gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael. Er enghraifft, gall corff wneud hynny drwy egluro beth yw amseroedd agor craidd y swyddfa neu egluro ar ba amseroedd neu ddiwrnodau y bydd y gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael nesaf.*
- 4.2.41. *Gall 'rhoi gwybod' gynnwys gwneud hynny drwy: o gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio, neu o aelod o staff yn rhoi gwybod i'r galwr ar lafar dros y ffôn.*

- 4.2.42. *Mae pa mor berthnasol yw'r safon hon yn amrywio o achos i achos yn ddibynnol ar argaeledd gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg (e.e. yn unol â safonau 10 neu 11) a natur y gwasanaethau ffôn sy'n cael eu cynnig gan gorff.*
- 4.2.43. *Mewn sefyllfa pan nad oes rhaid i gorff ddarparu gwasanaeth ffôn yn Gymraeg yn unol â gofynion safon 11 (h.y. pan nad oes aelod o staff sy'n gallu siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol yn Gymraeg), rhaid i gorff roi gwybod pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael.*
- 4.2.44. *Os oes aelod o staff Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol yn Gymraeg ond nad ydynt yn digwydd bod ar gael ar adeg yr alwad (e.e. ddim yn gweithio ar y diwrnod hwnnw neu bod yr aelod yn delio â galwad arall), rhaid iddo roi gwybod pryd bydd yr aelod hwnnw (neu aelod arall a all ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg) ar gael nesaf. Disgwylir iddo wneud hynny cyn trosglwyddo galwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n gallu siarad Cymraeg. Drwy wneud hynny, gall corff roi'r dewis i'r galwr a yw'n dymuno cael ei drosglwyddo i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg neu ddisgwyl am yr aelod nesaf o staff sy'n medru'r Gymraeg sydd ar gael."*

- 6.3 Mae Rheoliadau yn dweud fod un neu ragor o'r canlynol: Safon 10, Safon 11 a hefyd Safon 16 a Safon 17 yn ddibynnol ar Safon 14.

Gofynion y safon

- 6.4 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau pan na fo gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar eu prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'u prif rifau ffôn), ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, eu bod yn rhoi gwybod i'r personau sy'n galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

- 6.5 Mae'r wybodaeth sydd yn cael ei gyflwyno yn 3.4 - 3.9 uchod yn berthnasol hefyd yma.
- 6.6 Yng nghyd-destun Safon 17 fodd bynnag, dywedodd y Cyngor wrth ymateb i'r Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth gyntaf, credant fod yr alwad wedi dod yn ystod cyfnod pan dderbyniodd y ganolfan gyswllt nifer fawr o alwadau. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod hyn wedi arwain at amseroedd aros hwy i bob cwsmer oedd angen siarad ag asiant canolfan gyswllt. Honnodd ymhellach fod hyn wedi arwain at anghysondeb yn y gwasanaeth gan y byddai'r galwr wedi cael ei drin cyn gynted ag yr oedd yr asiant nesaf ar gael ac felly nid oedd angen iddo fod wedi rhoi'r gorau i'r alwad. Esboniodd y Cyngor nad oes triniaeth ffafriol i alwadau Cymraeg na Saesneg a dderbynnir. Dywedodd y Cyngor nad yw hi'n glir (yng nghyd-destun ail alwad ffôn ein galwr dirgel ble na chafodd yr alwad ei hateb) a fyddai gwasanaeth Cymraeg wedi cael ei gynnig gan nad oedd y galwr dirgel wedi aros ar y llinell ddigon hir i hyn gael ei asesu. Fodd bynnag, os oes mwy o'r rhai sy'n ateb galwadau ffôn yn siarad Saesneg nag yn siarad Cymraeg a bod dim system ble mae galwadau ble Cymraeg yn cael ei blaenoriaethu, mae'n debygol iawn y byddai galwadau ble mae'r defnyddiwr yn dewis gwasanaeth Saesneg yn cael eu hateb ynghynt na galwad ble mae'r defnyddiwr yn dewis gwasanaeth Cymraeg.

- 6.7 Rwyf yn derbyn tystiolaeth y Cyngor ei fod, efallai, yn gyfnod prysur ac na fyddai galwad ble roedd galwyr wedi dewis y botwm Saesneg wedi cael ateb yn yr un amser o ran y trydydd alwad. Fodd bynnag, roedd dwy alwad arall ble na dderbyniodd y galwr dirgel wasanaeth Gymraeg ond ni roddwyd gwybod i'r galwr dirgel pryd y buasai'r gwasanaeth Gymraeg ar gael.

Canfyddiadau

- 6.8 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau pan na fo gwasanaeth Gymraeg ar gael ar eu prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'u prif rifau ffôn), ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, eu bod yn rhoi gwybod i'r personau sy'n galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Gymraeg ar gael.
- 6.9 Ar ddwy o'r tair galwad gwnaethpwyd gan y galwr dirgel, ni dderbyniwyd unrhyw wasanaeth Gymraeg ond ni roddwyd chwaith wybod pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Gymraeg ar gael.
- 6.10 Mae hyn yn fethiant i gydymffurfio â Safon 17.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 17

- 6.11 Dyfarnaf fod y Cyngor wedi methu a chydymffurfio gyda Safon 17 ar y sail na rhoddwyd gwybod i'r person oedd yn galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Gymraeg ar gael er nad oedd gwasanaeth Gymraeg ar gael ar brif rif ffôn y Cyngor.

Gweithredu pellach

- 6.12 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant.
- 6.13 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 17, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.

Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 17: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Pan na fo gwasanaeth ffôn Gymraeg ar gael, rhaid i'r Cyngor fabwysiadu gweithdrefn sydd yn rhoi gwybod i bobol sy'n galw pryd bydd gwasanaeth Gymraeg ar gael yn unol â Safon 17.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu canllaw i'r holl staff sydd yn delio gyda galwadau ffôn perthnasol ar y weithdrefn newydd.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi hyfforddiant i staff ar y weithdrefn newydd.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 3.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

7 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 81: Asesiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

- 7.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd 'r Cyngor:

Safon 81

Rhaid ichi hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg a ddarperir gennych, a hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dehongliadau

- 7.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 4.18.2:

"Safon 81

4.18.2. *Rhaid i gorff hybu a hysbysebu pob gwasanaeth Cymraeg a ddarperir ganddo, a gwneud hynny yn Gymraeg*

- 7.3 Mae ystyr y termau 'hybu a hysbysebu' yn cael eu diffinio yng Nghod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 ym mharagraff 4.18.7:

“4.18.7. *[...] Mae 'hybu' a 'hysbysebu' yn cynnwys corff yn hyrwyddo ac yn codi ymwybyddiaeth ynghylch y gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn rhagweithiol drwy roi sylw i'r ffaith bod gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ac yn annog defnydd o'r gwasanaeth hwnnw.*”

- 7.4 Mae enghreifftiau o gydymffurfio yn cael ei roi ym mharagraff 4.18.8 o'r Cod. Mae'r enghreifftiau'n cynnwys cyhoeddi a rhannu gwybodaeth am rai neu'r holl wasanaethau y mae'r corff yn eu cynnig yn Gymraeg drwy gyfrwng taflen, tudalen ar wefan, trwy ddefnyddio'r cyfryngau cymdeithasol, arwyddion, hysbysiadau ac yn y blaen. Mae'r enghreifftiau hefyd yn cynnwys sicrhau bod gwasanaethau Cymraeg yn amlwg, yn hawdd i'w cyrchu, yn cael eu hyrwyddo'n rhagweithiol a'u bod ar gael yn gyson.

Gofynion y safon

- 7.5 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau eu bod yn hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg a ddarperir ganddynt, ac yn hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

- 7.6 Mae'r Cod Ymarfer yn nodi fod hybu a hysbysebu "*yn cynnwys corff yn hyrwyddo ac yn codi ymwybyddiaeth ynghylch y gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn rhagweithiol drwy roi sylw i'r ffaith bod gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ac yn annog defnydd o'r gwasanaeth hwnnw.*"
- 7.7 Mae 'hybu a hyrwyddo' felly yn fwy felly na dim ond bod gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar y wefan neu fod negeseuon dwyieithog ar gyfryngau cymdeithasol. Mae yna ddisgwyliad ar sefydliad o dan y mesur i godi *ymwybyddiaeth* o'r gwasanaeth Cymraeg ac i *annog* mwy i ddefnyddio'r gwasanaeth hwnnw.
- 7.8 Mae "hybu neu hwyluso defnyddio'r Gymraeg" yn un o amcanion safonau'r Gymraeg. Mae cynyddu'r defnydd o wasanaethau Cymraeg yn un o nodau strategaeth Llywodraeth Cymru, Cymraeg 2050, sy'n nodi bod angen "marchnata deallus", "dull gweithredu sy'n canolbwyntio ar y cwsmer", a deall beth fyddai'n gwneud i fwy o bobl ddefnyddio gwasanaethau Cymraeg.
- 7.9 Mae'r Cod Ymarfer yn rhoi enghreifftiau o sut gellid cydymffurfio gyda'r Safon yma. Er nad oes gofyniad i sefydliad fod yn gwneud pob un o'r enghreifftiau yma er mwyn cydymffurfio gyda'r Safon, mae'n rhesymol i ddisgwyl bod y sefydliad yn cymryd rhai o'r camau sydd yn cael eu hargymell yn y Cod Ymarfer i hybu eu gwasanaethau.
- 7.10 Yn eu tystiolaeth wrth ymateb i'r Ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor eu bod yn cyhoeddi ac yn rhannu gwybodaeth am eu gwasanaethau Cymraeg drwy'r cyfryngau cymdeithasol, eu tudalen gwe, taflenni a drwy hysbysebion. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod staff Hybiau Cymunedol yn hyrwyddo gwasanaethau Cymraeg yn y lleoliad gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid wyneb yn wyneb ar ffurf hysbysebion. Dywedodd y Cyngor bod eu gwefan sgrin groeso yn cynnig dewis iaith glir i ymwelwyr ac yn rhoi'r cynnig i ddefnyddwyr ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg wrth gyrchu gwasanaethau'r wefan.
- 7.11 O ran gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg, honnodd y Cyngor fod neges awtomataidd wrth ffonio prif rif ffôn y Cyngor yn rhoi cyfarchiad Cymraeg ar unwaith gydag opsiwn i bwyso 1 am y Gymraeg a phwyso 2 i gael gwasanaeth Saesneg. Honnodd y Cyngor hefyd fod Asiantau'r Ganolfan Gyswllt yn ateb y ffôn yn ddwyieithog - gan ddilyn Siart Llif y Weithdrefn Ateb Dros y Ffôn. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod asiantau'r Ganolfan Gyswllt yn rhoi gwybod wrth gyfarch y galwr bod gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael os hoffent barhau â'r sgwrs yn Gymraeg. Fel y nodir uchod fodd bynnag, mae'r dystiolaeth a gasglwyd gan fy swyddogion fel galwr dirgel ac ym mis Mai 2022 yn awgrymu nad yw'r gwasanaeth Cymraeg yma yn gweithredu bob tro fel mae'r Cyngor yn ei honni. Rhaid felly gofyn a oes systemau mewn lle i wirio a gwerthuso os ydi'r camau yma, yn ymarferol, yn digwydd fel mae'r Cyngor yn ei honni.
- 7.12 Mae tystiolaeth y Cyngor yn honni eu bod yn cymryd rhai o'r camau sy'n cael ei restru yn y cod ymarfer fel enghreifftiau o sut i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 81 megis:
- cyhoeddi a rhannu gwybodaeth am rai neu'r holl wasanaethau y mae'r corff yn eu cynnig yn Gymraeg drwy gyfrwng taflen, tudalen ar wefan, trwy ddefnyddio'r cyfryngau cymdeithasol, arwyddion, hysbysiadau ac yn y blaen
 - defnyddio rhagdudalen sblash, sef tudalen flaen sydd wedi ei chyhoeddi'n bwrpasol i gynnig dewis iaith yn eglur, er mwyn sicrhau bod y corff yn gwneud

y cynnig rhagweithiol i ddefnyddwyr ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg cyn iddynt gael mynediad at wasanaethau'r wefan neu beiriant hunanwasanaeth

- 7.13 Mae rhai esiamplau nodedig fodd bynnag ble nad oes tystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno gan y Cyngor eu bod yn cael eu gwneud i hybu'r gwasanaethau. Nodir nad oes tystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno fod y Cyngor yn gwneud defnydd o ddeunyddiau laith Gwaith. Nid oes tystiolaeth chwaith fod y Cyngor yn defnyddio'r Gymraeg fel yr iaith ddiofyn wrth ddarparu gwasanaethau ffôn er mwyn hybu a rhoi amlygrwydd i'r gwasanaeth Cymraeg, lle nad oes gofyniad iddo wneud hynny o dan safon arall, a lle nad yw'r person wedi gofyn am y gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg (e.e. dechrau pob sgwrs ar lafar yn Gymraeg dros y ffôn). Nid oes tystiolaeth fod y Cyngor yn sicrhau bod taith y defnyddwyr i ddefnyddio gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg o'r un safon ac ansawdd â'r gwasanaeth Saesneg. Na chwaith o sicrhau bod gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg yn amlwg, yn hawdd i'w cyrchu, yn cael eu hyrwyddo'n rhagweithiol a'u bod ar gael yn gyson.
- 7.14 Fel sydd yn cael ei esbonio eisoes, nid oes rhaid i'r Cyngor fod yn gwneud bob un o'r enghreifftiau sydd yn cael ei roi yn y Cod Ymarfer er mwyn cydymffurfio gyda'r Safon. Ond, mae'n rhesymol i ddisgwyl bod y sefydliad yn cymryd rhai o'r camau sydd yn cael eu hargymell yn y Cod Ymarfer i hybu eu gwasanaethau.
- 7.15 Mae rhai o ganfyddiadau'r ymchwiliad yma hefyd yn awgrymu mai cymysg fuasai profiadau siaradwyr Cymraeg yn wrth geisio cyrchu rhai gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg y Cyngor, megis y gwasanaeth ar brif rif ffôn y Cyngor. Mae hyn yn arwain at ddiffyg hyder neu ymddiriedaeth mewn gwasanaethau Cymraeg sy'n dod yn rhwystr i'w defnyddio. Mae darpariaeth Gymraeg nad yw'n gyson yn gallu bod yn rhwystr sylweddol i hyrwyddo'r defnydd o ddarpariaeth Gymraeg.
- 7.16 Yn yr adroddiad '*Hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg: deall y defnydd a'r diffyg defnydd o wasanaethau Cymraeg*' gan Gyngor ar Bopeth dyddiedig 2015, nodir fod: "*cynnig anghyson yn gallu effeithio ar ddefnydd. Pan fo pobl yn dod ar draws diffyg cysondeb yn ansawdd neu ddilyniant gwasanaethau Cymraeg maent yn colli hyder ac ymddiriedaeth yn y gwasanaethau hynny ac mae hyn yn eu rhwystro rhag eu defnyddio eto.*"
- 7.17 Mae hybu'r gwasanaeth ffôn ble gall defnyddwyr fod wedi cael profiad blaenorol negyddol yng ngwasanaethau Cymraeg y Cyngor felly yn hollbwysig. Mae'n bwysig annog defnyddwyr i droi eto at y gwasanaeth Cymraeg ac i'w argyhoeddi y cawn nhw wasanaeth Cymraeg o safon.
- 7.18 Mae dogfen Gyngor Arferion Da Comisiynydd y Gymraeg '*Hybu defnydd o wasanaethau Cymraeg*' dyddiedig Medi 2020 yn nodi ein bod am weld sefydliadau'n ystyried pa wasanaethau y gellir eu cynnig yn Gymraeg yn y lle cyntaf, heb i ddefnyddwyr orfod gwneud dewis i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg. Mae'n ddogfen gyngor hefyd yn nodi fod defnyddwyr wedi dweud eu bod yn awyddus i weld gwasanaethau Cymraeg yn cael eu dathlu a'u hyrwyddo'n fwy amlwg.
- 7.19 Mae'r ddogfen gyngor hefyd yn nodi gall sefydliadau fynd ati i hyrwyddo'u holl wasanaethau Cymraeg drwy ymgyrch benodol. Awgrymaf, mewn corff fel y Cyngor ble nad yw'r sefydliad yn un o gadarnleoedd y Gymraeg a ble mae cwestiynau wedi eu codi am safon neu gysondeb y gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg a'r dulliau o hybu, y buasai ymgyrch hyrwyddo penodol am y gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg yn fanteisiol

pan fydd y corff yn hyderus fod eu gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau cyflenwi gwasanaeth.

Canfyddiadau

- 7.20 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau eu bod yn hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg a ddarperir ganddynt, ac yn hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg.
- 7.21 Yma mae'r Cyngor wedi nodi eu bod nhw yn cymryd rhai camau i hybu eu gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg ond mae rhai esiamplau amlwg ble nad ydi'r Cyngor wedi cymryd camau i hybu a hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw. Mae hefyd cwestiynau am y modd mae'r Cyngor yn gwerthuso enghreifftiau sydd wedi ei gyflwyno gan y Cyngor.
- 7.22 Er nad yw'r uchod yn gyfystyr a methiant i gydymffurfio â Safon 81 gan fod rhai camau yn cael eu cymryd gan y Cyngor i hybu a hwyluso'r gwasanaethau Cymraeg, mae gwaith pellach gall y Cyngor fod yn ei wneud o dan Safon 81 yn enwedig o ystyried darganfyddiadau ein ymchwiliad fod gwasanaeth Cymraeg mae'r Cyngor yn ei gynnig yn anghyson.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 81

- 7.23 Dyfarnaf nad ydi'r Cyngor wedi methu a chydymffurfio gyda Safon 81 ar y sail bod rhai camau yn cael eu cymryd i hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg ffôn a ddarperir ganddynt, ac yn hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg.

Gweithredu pellach

- 7.24 Mae adran 76 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle na fu methiant.
- 7.25 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig nad yw y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 81, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o wella prosesau hybu'r Cyngor.
- 7.26 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 81: Argymhellion yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rwyf yn argymhell y buasai ymgyrch hyrwyddo penodol am y gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg yn fanteisiol. Dylai ymgyrch o'i fath gael ei wneud pan fydd y corff yn hyderus fod eu gwasanaethau ffôn Cymraeg yn cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau cyflenwi gwasanaeth.

8 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 82: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

8.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i D:

Safon 82

Os byddwch yn darparu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg sy'n cyfateb i wasanaeth yr ydych yn ei ddarparu yn Saesneg, rhaid i unrhyw gyhoeddusrwydd neu ddogfen yr ydych yn ei llunio, neu wefan yr ydych yn ei chyhoeddi, sy'n cyfeirio at y gwasanaeth Saesneg nodi bod gwasanaeth cyfatebol ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dehongliadau

8.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 4.18.3:

"Safon 82

4.18.3. *Rhaid i gorff sicrhau bod unrhyw gyfeiriad a wnaiff y corff at wasanaeth Saesneg hefyd yn cyfeirio at y gwasanaeth cyfatebol Cymraeg, os caiff gwasanaeth o'r fath ei ddarparu ganddo."*

Gofynion y safon

8.3 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau os byddent yn darparu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg sy'n cyfateb i wasanaeth yr ydych yn ei ddarparu yn Saesneg, rhaid i unrhyw gyhoeddusrwydd neu ddogfen mae'r corff yn ei lunio, neu wefan maent yn ei chyhoeddi, sy'n cyfeirio at y gwasanaeth Saesneg nodi bod gwasanaeth cyfatebol ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

8.4 Yn eu tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor fod eu gwefan a holl ddeunydd cyhoeddusrwydd y Cyngor ar gael yn y Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg. Honnodd y Cyngor fod negeseuon ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol wrth roi cyhoeddusrwydd i system ffôn y Cyngor ar draws yr holl blatfformau cymdeithasol yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg.

8.5 Honnir y Cyngor fod cyfeiriad e-bost Corfforaethol y Cyngor, a info@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk hefyd yn hyrwyddo gwasanaeth ffôn Cyngor drwy roi'r dewis o Gymraeg a Saesneg.

8.6 Gan fod yr ymchwiliad yma heb edrych yn benodol ar gyhoeddusrwydd, ddogfennau sydd wedi ei llunio, neu wefan sydd wedi ei chyhoeddi, a bod y Cyngor wedi rhoi tystiolaeth sydd yn awgrymu eu bod yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 82, nid oes gen i reswm i ganfod methiant i gydymffurfio â'r Safon yma.

Canfyddiadau

- 8.7 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau os byddent yn darparu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg sy'n cyfateb i wasanaeth yr ydych yn ei ddarparu yn Saesneg, rhaid i unrhyw gyhoedduswydd neu ddogfen mae'r corff yn ei lunio, neu wefan maent yn ei chyhoeddi, sy'n cyfeirio at y gwasanaeth Saesneg nodi bod gwasanaeth cyfatebol ar gael yn Gymraeg.
- 8.8 Gan fod yr ymchwiliad yma heb edrych yn benodol ar gyhoedduswydd, ddogfennau sydd wedi ei llunio, neu wefan sydd wedi ei chyhoeddi, a bod y Cyngor wedi rhoi tystiolaeth sydd yn awgrymu eu bod yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 82, nid oes gen i reswm i ganfod methiant i gydymffurfio â'r Safon yma.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 82

- 8.9 Gan fod yr ymchwiliad yma heb edrych yn benodol ar gyhoedduswydd, ddogfennau sydd wedi ei llunio, neu wefan sydd wedi ei chyhoeddi, a bod y Cyngor wedi rhoi tystiolaeth sydd yn awgrymu eu bod yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 82, nid oes gen i reswm i ganfod methiant i gydymffurfio â'r Safon yma.
- 8.10 Ni fyddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach o ran y Safon yma.

Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau: Gofyniad i baratoi cynllun gweithredu yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

Oherwydd methiannau ar draws nifer o'r Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau, mae'r gofyniad i baratoi cynllun gweithredu isod yn ymdrin â'r methiannau welwyd ar draws y Safonau hynny sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma;

Disgwylir i unrhyw Gynllun Gweithredu gael ei baratoi a'i gwblhau yn unol â'r canllawiau sydd wedi eu gosod allan yn yr Adroddiad Ymchwiliad, ac yn unol â'r canllawiau cyffredinol sydd yn y Ddogfen Gyngor atodol hefyd.

1. Rhaid i Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent baratoi cynllun gweithredu drafft at y diben o sicrhau bod y Cyngor yn cydymffurfio â'r holl Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau fuodd yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma.
2. Rhaid i'r cynllun gweithredu amlinellu'r camau mae'r Cyngor am eu cymryd sydd am eu galluogi i gydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma.
3. Rhaid i'r camau o fewn y Cynllun Gweithredu gynnwys ymrwymiad gan y Cyngor i:
 - gynnal adolygiad bôn i'r brig o'i drefniadau ar gyfer cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma;

- paratoi cynllun am sut mae'r sefydliad am sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth gyda'r Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau ble mae'r ymchwiliad yma wedi canfod methiant i gydymffurfio â hwy ar draws y sefydliad;
- paratoi cynllun adnoddau dynol ar sut mae'r Cyngor yn mynd i sicrhau adnoddau digonol er mwyn cydymffurfio â'r safonau ffôn.
- cynyddu ei ddealltwriaeth o ofynion y safonau sydd yn berthnasol i'r ymchwiliad yma.

4. Rhaid i'r cynllun gweithredu gynnwys y wybodaeth ganlynol:

- pwy fydd yn gyfrifol ac yn atebol am gymryd pob un o'r camau yn y cynllun
- sicrhau bod gan aelodau o'r Uwch Dim Rheoli rôl wrth graffu ar gynnydd y Cyngor yn erbyn y cynllun hynny.
- amserlen ar gyfer cyflawni pob un o'r camau o fewn y cynllun gyda pob un o'r camau i'w gyflawni mewn dim mwy na **6 mis** o ddyddiad cymeradwyo'r cynllun.

Amserlen: Rhaid i'r Cyngor gyflwyno cynllun gweithredu drafft yn unol â gofynion Adran 80 Mesur y Gymraeg o fewn **3 mis** o dderbyn yr hysbysiad penderfynu terfynol.

Safonau Gweithredu

9 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 127: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

9.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i [D]:

Safon 127

Rhaid ichi asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eich cyflogeion.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dehongliadau

9.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.8.2:

"Safon 127

6.8.2. *Rhaid i gorff asesu sgiliau Cymraeg ei gyflogeion.*

6.8.3. *Gall canlyniadau'r aseiad alluogi corff i gynllunio ei weithlu fel bod lefelau digonol o sgiliau iaith Gymraeg ar gyfer ymateb i unrhyw anghenion drwy:*

- *adnabod beth yw sgiliau iaith Gymraeg presennol y gweithlu, a thrwy hynny, adnabod pwy all ddarparu gwasanaethau yn Gymraeg*
- *adnabod beth yw anghenion y corff o ran sgiliau Cymraeg, gan gynnwys asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag yn unol â safon 136, a*
- *cynllunio i gynnal a chynyddu sgiliau Cymraeg y gweithlu i ateb yr anghenion hynny."*

9.3 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.8.4:

"6.8.4. Gall corff asesu'r sgiliau Cymraeg canlynol:

- *siarad*
- *gwrando*
- *darllen*
- *ysgrifennu*
- *deall.*

- 6.8.5. *Disgwylir i gorff asesu beth yw lefel y sgiliau Cymraeg sydd gan ei gyflogeion yn ôl pob math o sgil a gaiff ei asesu. Gall hyn sicrhau bod gan gorff ddarlun cyflawn o alluoedd cyflogeion.*
- 9.4 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.8.9:
- “6.8.9. Rhaid i gorff sicrhau bod yr asesiad yn galluogi iddo gofnodi'r nifer o gyflogeion sy'n meddu ar sgiliau yn Gymraeg yn unol â safon 151.”*
- 9.5 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.8.12 – 6.8.14:
- “6.8.12. Er mwyn cydymffurfio â gofynion safon 151 (safon cadw cofnodion), rhaid i gorff gadw cofnod o nifer y cyflogeion sy'n meddu ar sgiliau yn y Gymraeg ar ddiwedd pob blwyddyn ariannol.*
- 6.8.13. Felly, er mwyn cydymffurfio â gofynion safon 151 ynghyd â chynnal cofnodion cyfredol, rhaid i gorff gynnal asesiad o'r fath o leiaf yn flynyddol. Fodd bynnag, gall y Comisiynydd ofyn i gorff ddarparu'r wybodaeth uchod ar unrhyw adeg o'r diwrnod gosod ymlaen, yn unol â gofynion safon 172.*
- 6.8.14. Disgwylir bod yr wybodaeth yn cael ei chadw'n gyfredol, gan sicrhau bod unrhyw newidiadau i fanylion sgiliau Cymraeg yn cael eu diweddarau yn ôl yr angen. Gall newidiadau o'r fath gynnwys sefyllfa pan fo: o lefel sgiliau iaith cyflogai yn newid (e.e. yn dilyn mynychu gwersi Cymraeg yn unol â safonau 130 neu 131) o cyflogai yn gadael y corff o cyflogai newydd yn ymuno o cyflogai yn symud i leoliad, cyfarwyddiaeth, adran, neu dîm arall (a bod y newidiadau hynny'n effeithio ar y cofnod sydd gan y corff).”*

Gofynion y safon

- 9.6 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau eu bod yn asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eu cyflogeion.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

- 9.7 Wrth ymateb i'r cwestiwn yn yr Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth am sut eu bod yn asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eu cyflogeion, dywedodd y Cyngor fod data gweithlu'r Cyngor, gan gynnwys dewis gohebiaeth Gymraeg a sgiliau a gallu yn y Gymraeg, yn cael ei storio ar system o'r enw iTrent. Dywedodd y Cyngor yr 'anogir' staff newydd i ddarparu'r wybodaeth hon wrth ymuno â'r sefydliad ac 'anogir' y staff presennol i ddiweddarau eu gwybodaeth yn rheolaidd drwy hysbysiadau cyfathrebu. Dywedodd y Cyngor bod iTrent yn gallu dadansoddi holl ddata'r gweithlu a chynhyrchu adroddiadau a ddefnyddir i asesu sgiliau Cymraeg ei weithwyr.
- 9.8 Fodd bynnag, gofyniad Safon127 yw bod y corff yn 'asesu' beth yw lefel y sgiliau Cymraeg sydd gan ei gyflogeion yn ôl pob math o sgil a gaiff ei asesu. Gall hyn sicrhau bod gan gorff ddarlun cyflawn o alluoedd cyflogeion. Ymhellach, er mwyn cydymffurfio â gofynion safon 151 (safon cadw cofnodion), rhaid i gorff gadw cofnod o nifer y cyflogeion sy'n meddu ar sgiliau yn y Gymraeg ar ddiwedd pob blwyddyn ariannol.

- 9.9 Felly, er mwyn cydymffurfio â gofynion y safon hon, safon 151 ynghyd â chynnal cofnodion cyfredol, rhaid i gorff gynnal asesiad o'r fath o leiaf yn flynyddol. Mae'r safon felly yn gofyn am fwy na dim ond 'annog' staff i gwblhau y gwybodaeth yna ar system fel, sydd yn ymddangos o ddarllen tystiolaeth y Cyngor, sydd yn digwydd yma. Mae gofyniad dan y Safonau i asesu y sgiliau yma, i gofnodi'r sgiliau ac i ail asesu yn flynyddol er mwyn sicrhau fod y cofnod yma yn gyfredol.
- 9.10 Mae cymal 6.8.11 o'r Cod Ymarfer yn nodi mai mater i'r corff ei hun yw penderfynu pwy sy'n cynnal yr asesiad. Gall hyn gynnwys cyflogeion yn hunanasesu eu sgiliau Cymraeg yn debyg i fel sydd yn digwydd yma.
- 9.11 Mae asesu sgiliau Cymraeg staff o dan y safonau yn hanfodol er mwyn manteisio ar y sgiliau sydd ganddynt yn barod, magu hyder y staff ac ychwanegu at gapasiti'r Gymraeg drwy recriwtio a hyfforddi. Heb asesu sgiliau Cymraeg yn gywir, mae'n anodd i sefydliad ystyried pa staff sydd angen hyfforddiant pellach a pha lefel o hyfforddiant iaith sydd eu hangen ar y staff hynny. Mae hefyd yn anodd i sefydliad asesu yn gywir pa sgiliau ieithyddol ychwanegol sydd ei angen o fewn y gweithlu wrth edrych ar faterion recriwtio heb asesiad cyson a chywir.

Canfyddiadau

- 9.12 Rhaid i gorff sicrhau eu bod yn asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eu cyflogeion.
- 9.13 Er fod y Cyngor wedi cyflwyno tystiolaeth eu bod yn 'annog' staff i lenwi manylion am eu sgiliau iaith ar eu system iTrent, nid ydi'r Cyngor wedi cyflwyno unrhyw dystiolaeth bod asesiad o sgiliau Cymraeg eu cyflogeion yn digwydd yn flynyddol.
- 9.14 Mae yma ddiffyg cynllunio a diffyg ymwybyddiaeth o sut mae adnabod y berthynas rhwng sgiliau iaith staff a'r gwasanaeth Cymraeg sydd angen ei ddarparu. Y prif ddylanwad ar allu sefydliadau i gael darpariaeth Gymraeg addas yw'r nifer o'u staff sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg. Yng nghyd-destun gwasanaethau, mae diffyg strwythurau o ran asesu sgiliau iaith staff yn cael effaith uniongyrchol ar y gwasanaethau Cymraeg gall y Cyngor ei gynnig. Dylai strategaethau darparwyr sy'n cynnig gwasanaethau Cymraeg ganolbwyntio ar asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eu staff er mwyn manteisio ar y sgiliau sydd ganddynt yn barod, magu hyder y staff ac yna ychwanegu at gapasiti'r Gymraeg drwy recriwtio a hyfforddi.
- 9.15 Er mwyn cydymffurfio â'r Safon a mynd ymlaen i ddarparu gwasanaethau Cymraeg, nid yw'n ddigon i ond 'annog' neu hyd yn oed 'nodi' sgiliau iaith staff. Mae'r Safonau yn gofyn i'r Cyngor asesu y sgiliau yma, i gofnodi'r sgiliau ac i ail asesu yn flynyddol er mwyn sicrhau fod y cofnod yma yn gyfredol. Mae asesu yn fwy na chasglu gwybodaeth. Rhaid dadansoddi'r wybodaeth a dod i gasgliadau am arwyddocâd y data a'r sgiliau iaith sydd gan staff o fewn y sefydliad.
- 9.16 Nid oes unrhyw dystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno sy'n dangos 'sut' mae asesiad yn cael ei gynnal. Does dim wedi ei gyflwyno yn dangos sut mae'r sefydliad yn defnyddio'r wybodaeth yna i benderfynu pa sgiliau iaith sydd eu hangen arnynt. Does dim tystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno yn dangos sut a pryd mae'r Cyngor yn edrych ac yn ystyried y data a dim tystiolaeth yn dangos yr adroddir ar hynny i uwch swyddogion ac aelodau etholedig.
- 9.17 Os nad yw'r Cyngor yn gallu cydymffurfio â'r safon hon, mae yn annhebygol iawn y gall fyth gydymffurfio â'r safonau eraill gan os nad oes data digonol am sgiliau staff,

does dim modd i'r Cyngor gynllunio yn ddigonol o ran staff sydd eu hangen yn y sefydliad er mwyn cydymffurfio â'r Safonau.

9.18 Mae yn siomedig ag yn bryderus iawn nad ydi'r Cyngor wedi sylweddoli neu parchu pwysigrwydd gofyniad y Safon yma. Does yma chwaith dim tystiolaeth eu bod yn deall canlyniadau hir dymor peidio cydymffurfio yn llawn gyda'r Safon yma yng nghyd-destun y Safonau eraill. Mae yn amlwg nad oes strategaeth gan y Cyngor i lenwi'r bylchau sgiliau iaith sydd ganddo.

9.19 Mae hyn yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 127.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 127

9.20 Dyfarnaf fod y Cyngor wedi methu a chydymffurfio gyda Safon 127 ar y sail nad ydi'r Cyngor yn sicrhau eu bod yn asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eu cyflogeion.

Gweithredu pellach

9.21 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant.

9.22 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 127, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.

9.23 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 127: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod ganddynt weithdrefn er mwyn asesu sgiliau Cymraeg sgiliau Cymraeg eu cyflogeion.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod y sgiliau hynny yn cael eu hasesu yn flynyddol.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gofnodi canlyniadau yr asesiadau blynyddol hynny.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 3.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

10 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 130: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

10.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 130

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith -

(a) i'ch cyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, a

(b) i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dehongliadau

10.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.8.30:

"Safon 130

6.8.30. Rhaid i gorff ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith: o i'w gyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, ac o i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr."

10.3 Mae'r term 'gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol' yn cael ei ddiffinio yn y Cod Ymarfer fel gwersi ar gyfer dysgu sgiliau sylfaenol yn Gymraeg, fel sgiliau gwrando, deall, darllen, siarad ac ysgrifennu. Bwriad y gwersi hyn fyddai galluogi cyflogai i gyflawni swyddogaethau sylfaenol trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

Gofynion y safon

10.4 Mae'n rhaid i gorff ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith i'w gyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, ac o i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

10.5 Mae dwy ran i ofynion y safon yma. Yn gyntaf, mae'n rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith i'w gyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol. Yn ail, mae'n rhaid i rai sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

10.6 Yn eu tystiolaeth, honnodd y Cyngor eu bod wedi bod yn hyrwyddo cwrs Cymraeg Llywodraeth Cymru yn y Gwaith ar-lein ers 2019. Dywedodd y Cyngor y caniateir i staff o bob rhan o'r sefydliad cyfan fynychu hyfforddiant yn ystod oriau gwaith arferol. Honnodd y Cyngor fod nifer o adnoddau Cymraeg sylfaenol hefyd ar gael i aelodau staff megis ar eu mewnwyd 'Cyfarchion Dwyieithog a geiriau allweddol' ac 'Ymadroddion Defnyddiol'.

10.7 Dywedodd y Cyngor nad ydyn nhw yn gwybod faint o staff y Cyngor sydd wedi cael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol yn ystod y tair blynedd diwethaf gan nad yw hyn yn rhywbeth a gofnodir ar hyn o bryd. Aeth y Cyngor fodd bynnag ymlaen i honni fod yr holl staff sy'n delio â derbyn galwadau ffôn i rif ffôn Canolfan Gyswllt y Cyngor wedi derbyn hyfforddiant sgiliau iaith Gymraeg sylfaenol yn ystod y tair blynedd diwethaf. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod y broses hon yn parhau ar hyn o bryd a bod y broses wedi ei hystyngi i staff o fewn timau Gwasanaethau Budd-daliadau a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol IAA. Dywedodd y Cyngor bydd hwn yn broses barhaus dros y blynyddoedd i ddod i gefnogi hyfforddiant gloewi ac anghenion hyfforddi a datblygu aelodau staff.

10.8 Mae'n syndod ac yn codi pryder nad oes gan y Cyngor unrhyw gofnod o faint o staff y Cyngor sydd wedi cael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol yn ystod y tair blynedd diwethaf. Awgrymaf ei fod yn anarferol i gyrsiau hyfforddi staff beidio cael eu cofnodi yn ganolog gan sefydliad fel y Cyngor a gofynnaf ai dim ond hyfforddiant Cymraeg sydd ddim yn cael ei gofnodi gan y Cyngor ac os felly, pam?

- 10.9 Nid oes diffiniad yn y Mesur na'r Cod Ymarfer o beth sy'n ei ofynnol yng nghyd-destun 'darparu cyfleoedd' o dan y Safon yma. Yng nghyd-destun gweddill y dystiolaeth sydd wedi ei gyflwyno gan y Cyngor fodd bynnag, mae yn ymddangos fod yna brinder staff o fewn y rhai sydd yn darparu gwasanaeth ffôn, sydd yn meddu ar sgiliau sylfaenol yn y Gymraeg. Buaswn felly wedi disgwyl bod y Cyngor yn rhoi mwy o bwys ac yn blaenoriaethu rhoi cyfleoedd i staff dderbyn hyfforddiant Cymraeg ac yn cynnig hwnnw yn rhagweithiol gan annog staff i gymryd y cyfleoedd yna. Mae cofnodi'r sgiliau iaith yn gywir ar ôl asesu'r sgiliau hynny yn caniatáu'r sefydliad i weld ymhle mae angen mwy o staff sydd yn meddu ar sgiliau sylfaenol Cymraeg. Mae'n galluogi'r Cyngor yna i fynd ati i roi cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith i'r staff yna fynychu gwersi sylfaenol Cymraeg.
- 10.10 Rwyf yn derbyn tystiolaeth y Cyngor fod canran o'r wybodaeth sydd wedi ei gyflwyno yn ymdrin â chyfnod delio gyda pandemig ac efallai na fod patrymau hyfforddiant arferol mewn lle. Serch hynny, os oes gweithdrefnau cadarn mewn lle, mae sefydliad yn fwy tebygol o lwyddo. Gan nad ydi'r Cyngor hyd yn oed yn cofnodi pwy sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol ar hyn o bryd, awgrymaf nad oes unrhyw weithdrefn gadarn o fewn y sefydliad yma i sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth gyda'r Safon.
- 10.11 Mae ail ran y Safon yn gofyn bod rhai sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr. Nid ydi'r Cyngor wedi cyflwyno unrhyw dystiolaeth ei fod yn rhoi cyfleoedd i reolwr ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg wrth reoli. Mae'n rhaid i mi gasglu felly nad oes hyfforddiant perthnasol ar reoli yn y Gymraeg yn cael ei gynnig i reolwyr.

Canfyddiadau

- 10.12 Mae'n rhaid i gorff ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith i'w gyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, ac o i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.
- 10.13 Gan nad oes gan y Cyngor gofnod o faint o staff sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant Gymraeg sylfaenol dros y tair blynedd diwethaf, mae yn codi amheuaeth nad oes yna weithdrefn gadarn mewn lle o ran cydymffurfiaeth â Safon 130 ac o ran cynnig cyfleon i staff dderbyn hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol.
- 10.14 Nid oes unrhyw dystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno fod staff sy'n rheoli pobl eraill yn cael cyfle i dderbyn hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.
- 10.15 Mae hyn yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 130.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 130

- 10.16 Dyfarnaf fod y Cyngor wedi methu i gydymffurfio â Safon 130.

Gweithredu pellach

- 10.17 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant .
- 10.18 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 130, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.

10.19 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 130: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor greu gweithdrefn i darparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith i'w gyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, ac o i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gofnodi faint o staff sydd yn cael cynnig yr hyfforddiant yma a faint o staff sydd yn derbyn hyfforddiant yma yn flynyddol.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 2.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

11 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 131: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

11.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 131

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd i'ch cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dehongliadau

11.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.8.37 – 6.8.40:

“Safon 131

6.8.37. *Rhaid i gorff ddarparu cyfleoedd i gyflogeion, sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol, gael hyfforddiant pellach am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau iaith ymhellach.*

6.8.38. *Gall hyn gynnwys hyfforddiant ar lefel:*

- *Mynediad (A1)*
- *Sylfaen (A2)*
- *Canolradd (B1)*
- *Uwch (B2)*
- *Hyfedredd (C1)*
- *neu unrhyw lefel arall sy'n datblygu sgiliau iaith Gymraeg y cyflogai ymhellach y tu hwnt i'r lefel a gyrhaeddir yn dilyn y 'gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol' a ddarperir yn unol â safon 130.*

6.8.39. *Gall y math o hyfforddiant hefyd gynnwys hyfforddiant i ddatblygu sgiliau iaith cyflogeion sydd eisoes yn rhugl yn y Gymraeg ond sydd am:*

- *loywi eu sgiliau iaith Gymraeg, neu*
- *ddatblygu hyder i ddefnyddio'u sgiliau iaith i ddrafftio dogfennau a gohebiaeth yn ddwyieithog.*

6.8.40. *Gall y corff sicrhau bod yr hyfforddiant yn cael ei gynnal yn ystod oriau gwaith arferol y cyflogai, ond nid oes rhaid gwneud hynny er mwyn cydymffurfio â'r safon. Fodd bynnag, disgwylir i'r corff sicrhau na fyddai'r oriau y mae'r corff yn eu cynnig i gyflogai yn golygu bod y cyflogai o dan unrhyw anfantais.”*

Gofynion y safon

11.3 Rhaid i gorff ddarparu cyfleoedd i'w cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

11.4 Yn eu tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor nad ydyn nhw'n ymwybodol faint o staff y Cyngor sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg pellach gan fod hyn ddim yn rhywbeth sydd yn cael ei gofnodi ganddynt. Dywedodd y Cyngor fodd bynnagbod cyfleoedd hyfforddiant iaith Gymraeg pellach yn cael eu hyrwyddo ar hyn o bryd ar draws y sefydliad.

11.5 Dywedodd y Cyngor o fewn eu Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid fod holl staff (o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt a'r Hybiau Cymunedol) yn cael hyfforddiant sylfaenol yn y Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd. Honnir y Cyngor fod holl staff yr Hybiau Cymunedol ac 1 aelod o staff y Ganolfan Gyswllt yn symud ymlaen i gyrsiau Cymraeg mwy manwl, tymor hir, yn y dyfodol. Dywedodd y Cyngor y bydd hyn yn rhan o'u cynlluniau hyfforddi a datblygu yn y dyfodol ac yn cefnogi'r gwaith o ddarparu gwasanaethau cwsmeriaid.

11.6 Nid yw'r Cyngor wedi darparu tystiolaeth fod cyfleoedd hyfforddi yn cael eu darparu. Buaswn wedi disgwyl gweld copi o negeseuon yn hyrwyddo'r cyfleoedd, sgrinluniau o negeseuon ar fewnwyd, taflenni, neu bosteri yn dangos sut mae'r Cyngor yn darparu cyfleoedd i dderbyn hyfforddiant Gymraeg. Mae'n ymddangos os nad ydi'r Cyngor yn asesu sgiliau iaith yn unol â'r Safon nac yn cofnodi pa staff sydd yn derbyn hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol bod dim posib wedyn i'r Cyngor, yn ymarferol dargedu hyfforddiant bellach a darparu cyfleoedd digonol i staff perthnasol gael hyfforddiant pellach er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau iaith yn unol â'r Safon.

Canfyddiadau

11.7 Rhaid i gorff ddarparu cyfleoedd i'w cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.

11.8 Gan nad oes gan y Cyngor gofnod o faint o staff sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant pellach dros y tair blynedd diwethaf ac nad oes tystiolaeth yn dangos bod cyfleoedd wedi eu darparu, mae yn codi amheuaeth nad ydi'r Cyngor yn cydymffurfio â Safon 131 o ran cynnig cyfleon i staff dderbyn hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol.

11.9 Mae hyn yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 131.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 131

11.10 Dyfarnaf fod y Cyngor wedi methu i gydymffurfio â Safon 131.

Gweithredu pellach

11.11 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant .

11.12 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 131, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.

11.13 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 131: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor greu gweithdrefn i ddarparu cyfleoedd i'w cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gofnodi faint o staff sydd yn cael cynnig yr hyfforddiant yma a faint o staff sydd yn derbyn hyfforddiant yma yn flynyddol.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 2.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

12 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 132: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

12.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 132

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyrsiau hyfforddi er mwyn i'ch cyflogeion ddatblygu -
(a) ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys ymwybyddiaeth am hanes yr iaith a'i lle yn niwylliant Cymru);
(b) dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg;
30/09/2016
(c) dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/09/2016

Dehongliadau

12.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.8.41 – 6.8.43:

“Safon 132

6.8.41. Rhaid i gorff ddarparu'r hyfforddiant yn y meysydd canlynol i'w cyflogeion:

- o ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg
- o dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg, a
- o dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

6.8.42. Nid oes rhaid i'r hyfforddiant gael ei gynnal yn Gymraeg yn unol â'r safon hon, ond disgwylir i gorff ystyried gofynion sydd ar y corff yn unol â safon 128 i ddarparu'r hyfforddiant yn Gymraeg os yw'n darparu hynny yn y meysydd hyfforddiant perthnasol.

6.8.43. Gall enghreifftiau o'r hyn y gellir ei gynnwys yn yr hyfforddiant gynnwys:

- o **ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg**—gall hyn gynnwys gwybodaeth am hanes yr iaith, tarddiad yr iaith Gymraeg, ffeithiau am yr iaith Gymraeg (megis gwybodaeth o'r Cyfrifiad), manteision defnyddio'r Gymraeg neu wybodaeth am Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg
- o **dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg**—gall hyn gynnwys gwybodaeth am yr union safonau y mae'n rhaid i'r corff gydymffurfio â hwy a hefyd wybodaeth am y Mesur a'i amcanion
- o **dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle**—gall hyn gynnwys gwybodaeth am sut mae'r corff yn hybu a hwyluso defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle neu wybodaeth am y safonau gweithredu yn y rheoliadau a'r hawliau sy'n deillio o'r rheiny.”

Gofynion y safon

12.3 Rhaid i gorff ddarparu'r hyfforddiant i'w cyflogeion ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg, dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg, a dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

12.4 Mae cynnwys Hyfforddiant Ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg o dan y Safon yma fel rhan o hyfforddiant staff yn sicrhau bod staff (Cymraeg a di-gymraeg) yn gallu trin defnyddwyr gwasanaethau sy'n siarad Cymraeg mewn ffordd sensitif a gwybodus. Gall diffyg ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg gan staff gael effaith negyddol ar brofiad defnyddwyr a'u hatal rhag defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y dyfodol.

12.5 Roedd profiad ein galwr dirgel wrth ddefnyddio gwasanaeth ffôn y Cyngor yn awgrymu nad oedd gan y sawl atebodd y ffôn ymwybyddiaeth ddigonol o'r Gymraeg. Nid yn unig ni dderbyniwyd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ond ni chwaith dderbyniwyd cydnabyddiaeth fod ein galwr dirgel wedi siarad Cymraeg.

12.6 Gofynnais i'r Cyngor yng nghwestiwn 17 yr hysbysiad tystiolaeth i roi manylion pob sesiwn hyfforddiant sydd wedi ei ddarparu i staff ar (a) ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys ymwybyddiaeth am hanes yr iaith a'i lle yn niwylliant Cymru); (b) dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg; (c) dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle yn y 3 mlynedd diwethaf. Gofynnais hefyd i'r Cyngor roi manylion swyddi'r staff a maes gwaith y staff a fynychodd.

12.7 Ni atebodd y Cyngor y cwestiwn yma mewn unrhyw fanylder. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod Strategaeth Datblygu'r Gweithlu'r Cyngor yn hyrwyddo ac yn annog staff i chwilio am gyfleoedd hyfforddiant a datblygu, gan gynnwys yn y Gymraeg, a chaiff hyn ei hwyluso drwy eu trefniadau presennol ar gyfer rheolwyr. Dywedodd y Cyngor eu bod yn cyfeirio staff at unrhyw gyfleoedd hyfforddi hysbys sydd ar gael.

12.8 Gofynnais wedyn am fanylion pob sesiwn hyfforddiant ymwybyddiaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg sydd wedi cael ei roi i staff y ganolfan gyswllt yn y 3 mlynedd diwethaf.

12.9 Dywedodd y Cyngor fod sesiynau gloywi iaith 'wrthi'n' cael eu cynnal gyda holl aelodau staff y Gwasanaeth Cwsmeriaid, gan gynnwys Canolfannau Cymunedol, y Ganolfan Gyswllt a'r Gwasanaethau Budd-daliadau. Honnodd y Cyngor fod hyfforddiant sylfaenol yn y Gymraeg ac ymadroddion cyffredin mewn Cyfarfodydd Tîm a sesiynau 1 i 1 i gefnogi'r gwaith o ddarparu Gwasanaeth Cwsmeriaid i breswylwr.

12.10 Mae'r ymddangos i mi fod yr atebion gan y Cyngor i'r cwestiynau am hyfforddiant ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg yn fwrriadol amwys. Roedd y cwestiynau yn gofyn am atebion pendant ac am fanylion yr hyfforddiant sydd wedi ei roi i staff yn y maes yma. Nid ydwyf wedi derbyn unrhyw dystiolaeth gan y Cyngor fod y sesiynau yma wedi eu rhoi i staff yn unol â Safon 132.

Canfyddiadau

12.11 Rhaid i gorff ddarparu'r hyfforddiant i'w cyflogeion ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg, dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg, a dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

12.12 Yn yr adroddiad 'Hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg: deall y defnydd a'r diffyg defnydd o wasanaethau Cymraeg' gan Gyngor ar Bopeth dyddiedig 2015, nodir:

"Gall diffyg ymwybyddiaeth neu sensitifrwydd ieithyddol gan aelodau staff gael effaith negyddol ar brofiad defnyddwyr a'u hatal rhag defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y dyfodol."

12.13 Dylai'r corff ddarparu'r hyfforddiant i'w cyflogeion ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg er mwyn sicrhau bod staff (Cymraeg a di-gymraeg) yn gallu trin defnyddwyr gwasanaethau sy'n siarad Cymraeg mewn ffordd sensitif a gwybodus.

12.14 Mae ymwybyddiaeth iaith, sef fod ymwybyddiaeth staff o'r gofynion yn hanfodol os yw'r sefydliad am (i) gydymffurfio â'r safonau (ii) roi profiad da i siaradwyr Cymraeg. Does dim posibil i'r Cyngor gydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau os nad yw staff yn gwybod beth yw'r gofynion a sut mae cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau hynny.

12.15 Mae hyn fethiant sylfaenol gan y Cyngor ac yn enghraifft pellach o agwedd ddi-hid y Cyngor tuag at gydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau.

12.16 Er fod y Cyngor yn honni eu bod yn darparu hyfforddiant yn ymwneud â gloywi iaith yn cael ei ddarparu gan y Cyngor, nid ydwyf wedi derbyn unrhyw dystiolaeth gan y Cyngor fod y sesiynau am ymwybyddiaeth am y Gymraeg wedi eu rhoi i staff yn unol â Safon 132.

12.17 Mae hyn yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 132.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 132

12.18 Dyfarnaf nad ydi'r Cyngor wedi cydymffurfio gyda Safon 132 ar y sail nad oed unrhyw dystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno fod hyfforddiant ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg a dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg, a dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

Gweithredu pellach

12.19 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant.

12.20 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 132, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.

12.21 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 132: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu hyfforddiant i'w cyflogeion ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg, dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg, a dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gael gweithdrefn mewn lle sydd yn sicrhau bod yr hyfforddiant yma'n cael ei ail gyflwyno'r hyfforddiant yma yn gyfnodol.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 2.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

13 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 133: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

13.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 133

Pan fyddwch yn darparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd (er enghraifft, fel rhan o broses ymsefydlu), rhaid ichi ddarparu gwybodaeth er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/09/2016

Dehongliadau

13.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.8.44 – 6.8.46:

“Safon 133

6.8.44. *Os yw corff yn darparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd (e.e. fel rhan o'r broses ymsefydlu), rhaid iddo ddarparu gwybodaeth i'r cyflogeion hynny er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.*

6.8.45. *Gellid darparu'r wybodaeth fel rhan o hyfforddiant neu ar ffurf dogfen. Nid oes rhaid darparu'r wybodaeth hon yn Gymraeg yn unol â'r safon hon, ond disgwylir i'r corff ystyried gofynion sydd arno yn unol â safon 128 i ddarparu'r wybodaeth yn Gymraeg os yw'n darparu hynny yn y meysydd hyfforddiant perthnasol.*

6.8.46. *Gall corff ddarparu gwybodaeth sy'n cynnwys:*

- *gwybodaeth am hanes yr iaith*
- *gwybodaeth am darddiad yr iaith Gymraeg*
- *ffeithiau am yr iaith Gymraeg (megis gwybodaeth o'r Cyfrifiad)*
- *gwybodaeth am yr iaith Gymraeg yn yr ardal y mae'r corff yn ei gwasanaethu*
- *manteision a phwysigrwydd defnyddio'r Gymraeg*
- *gwybodaeth am Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg, y safonau a dyletswyddau iaith.”*

Gofynion y safon

13.3 Mae'r Safon yn ei wneud yn ofynnol ar gorff, os ydynt yn darparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd (e.e. fel rhan o'r broses ymsefydlu), i ddarparu gwybodaeth i'r cyflogeion hynny er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

- 13.4 Yn yr Ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth, gofynnais i'r Cyngor am fanylion y canllawiau a/neu hyfforddiant sydd yn cael ei roi i staff newydd ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg ac o gydymffurfiaeth gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg. Dywedodd y Cyngor fod holl staff newydd yn derbyn sesiwn Sefydlu Corfforaethol pan fo (a) (b) a (c) yn cael eu cynnwys gan y Rheolwr o dan Bolisiau Corfforaethol y Cyngor h.y. Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol, Safonau'r Gymraeg ac ati.
- 13.5 Mae'r Cod Ymarfer yn esbonio gall darparu gwybodaeth er mwyn codi ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg gynnwys rhoi gwybodaeth am hanes yr iaith, tarddiad yr iaith Gymraeg, ffeithiau am yr iaith Gymraeg (megis gwybodaeth o'r Cyfrifiad), gwybodaeth am yr iaith Gymraeg yn yr ardal y mae'r corff yn ei gwasanaethu, manteision a phwysigrwydd defnyddio'r Gymraeg a gwybodaeth am Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg, y safonau a dyletswyddau iaith. Er nad oes angen i sefydliad wneud pob un o'r camau awgrymir yn y Cod Ymarfer er mwyn cydymffurfio gyda'r Safon, mae'n rhesymol i ystyried y dylai sefydliad fod yn gwneud rhai o'r camau yma. Gellir dadlau fodd bynnag, y dylai sefydliad fod yn gwneud mwy nag un o'r camau yr awgrymir yn y Cod Ymarfer er mwyn cydymffurfio.
- 13.6 Er nad oes gwybodaeth drylwyr wedi ei gyflwyno am yr hyfforddiant sydd yn cael ei ddarparu, mae'n ymddangos o ymateb y Cyngor eu bod yn rhoi gwybodaeth ar safonau'r Gymraeg i gyflogeion newydd fel rhan o'r broses ymsefydlu. Mae'n ymddangos yn debygol felly, os ydi'r Cyngor yn darparu gwybodaeth gyflawn am safonau'r Gymraeg y buasai'r Cyngor yn rhoi gwybodaeth am Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg, y safonau a dyletswyddau iaith y Cyngor.
- 13.7 Fodd bynnag, nid ydi'r Cyngor wedi cyflwyno tystiolaeth sydd yn awgrymu eu bod yn rhoi unrhyw hyfforddiant bellach am ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg i gyflogeion newydd. Awgrymaf fod hwn yn gyfle sydd yn cael ei golli gan y sefydliad gan ei fod yn gyfle amhrisiadwy i drochi staff yn syth wrth iddynt ymuno â'r sefydliad ym mhwsigrwydd, hanes a tharddiad yr iaith.
- 13.8 Nid ydwyf o'r farn fod rhoi gwybodaeth am y Safonau yn unig, fel yr awgrymir sydd yn cael ei roi gan y Cyngor, yn gyfystyr â chydymffurfio gyda'r gofyniad i ddarparu gwybodaeth er mwyn codi ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg i gyflogeion newydd. Mae rhoi gwybodaeth a hyfforddiant am y Safonau yn wybodaeth sylfaenol bydd angen i lawer o staff y Cyngor eu derbyn beth bynnag yn rhinwedd eu swyddi yn enwedig os ydynt yn ymwneud â'r cyhoedd. Mae'r Safonau yn ymwneud â chodi ymwybyddiaeth yn mynd yn bellach na hynny ac yn gofyn i sefydliad godi ymwybyddiaeth ehangach o'r Gymraeg a'i hanes.

Canfyddiadau

13.9 Mae'r Safon yn ei wneud yn ofynnol ar gorff, os ydynt yn darparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd (e.e. fel rhan o'r broses ymsefydlu), i ddarparu gwybodaeth i'r cyflogeion hynny er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.

- 13.10 Dylai'r corff gynnwys Hyfforddiant Ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg fel rhan o hyfforddiant cynefino staff er mwyn sicrhau bod staff (Cymraeg a di-gymraeg) yn gallu trin defnyddwyr gwasanaethau sy'n siarad Cymraeg mewn ffordd sensitif a gwybodus.
- 13.11 Gall y Cyngor fod yn cydymffurfio'n rhwydd gyda'r safonau hyn drwy greu pecyn y byddai modd ei ail ddefnyddio drosodd a throsodd ac mae'r faith nad ydynt wedi gwneud hynny ar ôl 6 mlynedd yn dystiolaeth pellach o ddifaterwch y Cyngor tuag at y gyfundrefn Safonau.
- 13.12 Er fod y Cyngor yn honni eu bod yn darparu hyfforddiant yn ymwneud â Safonau'r Gymraeg i gyflogeion newydd, nid ydwyf wedi derbyn unrhyw dystiolaeth gan y Cyngor bod gwybodaeth er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg wedi eu darparu yn unol â Safon 133.
- 13.13 Mae hyn yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 133.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 133

- 13.14 Dyfarnaf nad ydi'r Cyngor wedi cydymffurfio gyda Safon 133 ar y sail nad oed unrhyw dystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno bod gwybodaeth er mwyn codi ymwybyddiaeth cyflogeion newydd o'r Gymraeg wedi eu darparu yn unol â Safon 133.

Gweithredu pellach

- 13.15 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant.
- 13.16 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 133, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.
- 13.17 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 133: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor addasu eu gweithdrefnau a sesiynau ymsefydlu i gynnwys ddarparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor baratoi pecyn gwybodaeth am y Gymraeg a rhannu'r pecyn hwn gyda phob aelod newydd o staff.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 a 2.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

14 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 136: Asesiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

14.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 136

Pan fyddwch yn asesu'r anghenion ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag, rhaid ichi asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a'i chategoreiddio fel swydd pan fo un neu ragor o'r canlynol yn gymwys

-

- (a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol;
- (b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd;
- (c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol; neu
- (ch) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dehongliadau

14.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.9.2 – 6.9.8:

14.3 “**Safon 136**

6.9.2. *Os yw corff yn asesu'r anghenion ar gyfer unrhyw swydd newydd neu swydd wag, rhaid iddo asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a chategoreiddio'r swydd fel swydd sy'n gymwys i unrhyw un neu ragor o'r categorïau canlynol:*

- o bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol*
- o bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd*
- o bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol*
- o nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.*

- 6.9.3. *Er mwyn asesu gofynion ieithyddol swydd, disgwylir i gorff ystyried anghenion ieithyddol fel mater o drefn pan gaiff swydd ei chreu o'r newydd neu pan ddaw swydd yn wag, gan edrych ar allu'r corff i gwrdd a gofynion y safonau law yn llaw â hynny.*
- 6.9.4. *Dylid nodi bod rhaid i gorff gadw cofnod o bob asesiad a gynhelir mewn perthynas â safon 136 yn unol â safonau 153 a 154.*
- 6.9.5. *Gellir ystyried y canlynol fel rhan o'r meini prawf wrth ystyried sut i bennu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg ar gyfer swydd:*
- *swyddogaeth y swydd—a oes cyswllt allanol lle disgwylir i'r aelod staff allu cyfathrebu yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg fel ei gilydd; a fydd yn gweithio mewn ardal ddaearyddol benodol lle ceir nifer neu ganran uchel o siaradwyr Cymraeg*
 - *ystyriaethau lleol polisi iaith sefydliad e.e. yr angen i weinyddu yn fewnol neu'n fwyfwy drwy'r Gymraeg, neu fod isafswm sgiliau iaith Gymraeg wedi'i osod ar gyfer swyddi penodol mewn polisi*
 - *nifer presennol y staff sydd ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg— disgwylir i gorff gyfeirio yn y fan hon at asesiad sgiliau y corff a wneir yn unol â safon 127 gan gyfeirio at unrhyw fylchau mewn sgiliau iaith i ddarparu gwasanaethau*
 - *yr angen i ddelio â sefydliadau eraill sy'n gweinyddu'n fewnol trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog.*
- 6.9.6. *Fel arfer, mae sgiliau Cymraeg yn 'hanfodol' mewn sefyllfa lle nad oes unrhyw un ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu os oes angen mwy o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg er mwyn darparu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg.*
- 6.9.7. *Os nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, mae'n bosibl y bydd corff yn dod i'r casgliad bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn 'ddymunol'. Gall hyn gynnwys sefyllfa lle mae eisoes capasiti o fewn y sefydliad i allu darparu gwasanaeth penodol yn Gymraeg, ond y byddai'n ddymunol i gryfhau'r ddarpariaeth Gymraeg honno drwy recriwtio rhagor o staff sydd â sgiliau yn y Gymraeg i ddarparu'r gwasanaeth. Yn gyffredinol, os yw sgiliau Cymraeg yn 'ddymunol' i swydd, yna gall corff gymryd bod gan ymgeisydd sy'n meddu ar sgiliau Cymraeg fantais dros ymgeisydd arall wrth gael ei ystyried am swydd ond ni fyddai'n angenrheidiol i'r ymgeisydd llwyddiannus feddu ar y sgiliau hynny.*
- 6.9.8. *Gall corff bennu swydd gyda'r angen i ddysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd. Fel arfer, byddai rhaid i'r sawl sy'n cael eu penodi i'r swydd gyrraedd lefel angenrheidiol o ruglder fel amod penodi. Mae'r amod hwnnw yn cael ei nodi wrth hysbysebu'r swydd fel arfer. Gall enghraifft o sefyllfa lle mae swyddi yn cael eu categoreiddio fel hyn gynnwys: o os oedd corff wedi'i adnabod fel swydd lle mae sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, ond bu anhawster recriwtio ymgeisydd sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg i'r swydd dan sylw ac yn penderfynu ail-hysbysebu'r swydd honno, ac*

- o os yw corff yn gwybod â sicrwydd bod prinder sylweddol o bersonau sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg all gyflawni'r swydd dan sylw, ac y byddai'n debygol y bydd rhaid penodi ymgeisydd di-Gymraeg i swydd (e.e. swydd arbenigol iawn)."

14.4 At ddibenion safonau 136 1 136A yn unig, nodir yn Atodlen 3, Rhan 3, Paragraff 15 y rheoliadau: "(a) mae "swydd" yn cynnwys penodiad cyhoeddus (b) ystyr "penodiad cyhoeddus" yw unrhyw benodiad i gorff cyhoeddus neu swydd gyhoeddus."

14.5 Caiff ei nodi yn 6.9.13 o'r Cod Ymarfer fod hyn yn cynnwys unrhyw swydd newydd o fewn y corff neu unrhyw swydd a ddaw yn wag ar ôl y diwrnod gosod, boed hynny yn swydd barhaol neu dros dro, neu'n swydd a gaiff ei hysbysebu'n fewnol yn unig neu'n allanol.

Gofynion y safon

14.6 Mae'r Safon yn ei wneud yn ofynnol ar gorff pan yn asesu'r anghenion ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag, i asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a'i chategoreiddio fel swydd sy'n gymwys i unrhyw un neu ragor o'r categorïau canlynol:

(a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol

(b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd

(c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol

(d) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

14.7 Yn eu tystiolaeth wrth ymateb i'r ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor yn y tair blynedd diwethaf fod 2 swydd wedi eu hysbysebu o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswilt a bod y ddwy swydd wedi eu hysbysebu fel swyddi ble roedd sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol.

14.8 Ble roedd sgiliau iaith y swyddi yma yn Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, gofynnais i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth eu bod wedi nodi hynny yn yr hysbysebion swydd. Darparodd y Cyngor gopi o ddogfen 'Recruitment Authorisation' mewn perthynas â'r recriwtio i'r tîm. Nodir yn y ddogfen honno (sydd wedi ei ddyddio 08.03.22) fodd bynnag, fod 4 swydd yn cael ei hysbysebu, dwy swydd lawn amser a dwy swydd cyfnod penodol. Mae'n peri i mi feddwl felly nad oedd ateb y Cyngor mai ond dwy swydd sydd wedi eu hysbysebu yn y tair blynedd diwethaf yn gywir gan ei fod yn ymddangos fod o leiaf 4 swydd wedi eu hysbysebu o fewn y 6 mis diwethaf.

14.9 Gofynnais i'r Cyngor esbonio sut gwnaethpwyd yr asesiad honno am y sgil iaith oedd ei angen i'r rolau yma. Atebodd y Cyngor fod pob swydd o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswilt wedi cael ei hysbysebu fel swyddi ble roedd cael sgiliau iaith Gymraeg yn ddymunol ond ni rhoddwyd esboniad pellach o sut a pham y penderfynwyd ar yr asesiad hwnnw.

14.10 Er mwyn asesu gofynion ieithyddol swydd, disgwylir i gorff ystyried anghenion ieithyddol fel mater o drefn pan gaiff swydd ei chreu o'r newydd neu pan ddaw swydd yn wag, gan edrych ar allu'r corff i gwrdd â gofynion y safonau law yn llaw â hynny. O fewn y Cod Ymarfer, nodir fel arfer bod sgiliau Cymraeg yn 'hanfodol' mewn sefyllfa

Ile nad oes unrhyw un ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu os oes angen mwy o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg er mwyn darparu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg.

- 14.11 Nodir yn y Cod Ymarfer, os nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, mae'n bosibl y bydd corff yn dod i'r casgliad bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn 'ddymunol'. Gall hyn gynnwys sefyllfa lle mae eisoes capasiti o fewn y sefydliad i allu darparu gwasanaeth penodol yn Gymraeg, ond y byddai'n ddymunol i gryfhau'r ddarpariaeth Gymraeg honno drwy recriwtio rhagor o staff sydd â sgiliau yn y Gymraeg i ddarparu'r gwasanaeth.
- 14.12 Rhoddir esiamplau yn y Cod Ymarfer o rai ystyriaethau gellir eu gwneud fel rhan o'r meini prawf wrth ystyried sut i bennu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg ar gyfer swydd. Nodir, er enghraifft y gall sefydliad ystyried a oes cyswllt allanol lle disgwylir i'r aelod staff allu cyfathrebu yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg fel ei gilydd a hefyd i ystyried nifer presennol y staff sydd ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth yn y Gymraeg.
- 14.13 Mae'n rhaid i gorff gadw cofnod o bob asesiad a gynhelir mewn perthynas â safon 136 yn unol â safonau 153 a 154. Mae'r Cyngor wedi darparu copi o'r ddogfen 'Recruitment Authorisation' sy'n rhoi rhai ystyriaethau neu gwestiynau i ystyried wrth asesu'r sgiliau sydd ei angen. Mae'r ddogfen hefyd yn nodi fod y tîm rheoli wedi penderfynu fod pob rôl o fewn y Cyngor yn mynd i gael eu pennu fel swyddi ble mae'r Gymraeg yn oleaif yn ddymunol.
- 14.14 Yn yr atebion mae'r Cyngor wedi cadarnhau fod y rôl yn delio gyda'r cyhoedd, bod y rôl yn delio hefo'r cyhoedd yn 'gyson' (hynny ydi, yn ddyddiol). Ond, yn y trydydd cwestiwn sydd yn gofyn pa mor debygol yw bod y rôl angen delio gyda'r cyhoedd trwy'r Gymraeg, mae'r person sydd wedi cwblhau'r asesiad wedi nodi annhebygol iawn 'very unlikely'.
- 14.15 Mae dau gwestiwn pellach o fewn yr asesiad am sgiliau Cymraeg sydd ei angen ar y Gymraeg heb eu hateb o gwbl:

"Please provide any relevant evidence that supports this roles frequency and likelihood of involvement with the public through the medium of the Welsh Language Standards? Examples being current service user levels, requirements under the Welsh Language Standards, levels of Welsh language usage and fluency in the area and for members of the public."

"Are there any other factors relating to this role that should be considered as part of the Welsh language job assessment? e.g. working with staff that require Welsh language engagement, meeting other relevant standard requirements e.g. dealing with correspondence, holding events, meetings regarding individuals well-being, etc."

- 14.16 Er fod y ddogfen yn dangos ystyriaethau wrth ddod i'r penderfyniad am categori'r swydd, mae'n ymddangos o ymateb y Cyngor, fodd bynnag ei fod yn fater o drefn fod swyddi'r ganolfan gyswllt yn cael eu hysbysebu fel swyddi ble mae sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn 'ddymunol'. Disgwylir, yn hytrach, bod yna ystyriaeth gydwbybodol ar bob achlysur o ba sgiliau sydd eu hangen yn y rôl sydd yn cael ei hysbysebu ac o fewn yr adran honno. Nid oes unrhyw dystiolaeth wedi ei roi o broses neu ystyriaethau rhesymegol am pam fod y swyddi hyn yn cael eu hasesu fel rhai ble mae'r Gymraeg yn ddymunol. Nid oes dystiolaeth yn yr achos yma wedi ei gyflwyno

am pam ei fod yn 'annhebygol iawn' fod yr un oedd yn derbyn y rôl angen delio gyda'r cyhoedd trwy'r Gymraeg.

- 14.17 Mae'n amlwg o ganlyniadau gweddill yr ymchwiliad yma fod prinder staff sydd yn meddu ar y sgiliau i gynnig gwasanaeth Cymraeg o fewn yr adran derbyn galwadau ffôn. Mae'n amlwg hefyd bod y swyddi yma yn rhai â chyswllt allanol uchel lle disgwylir, yn unol â'r Safonau, i rai aelodau staff allu cyfathrebu yn y Gymraeg. Felly er ei fod i fyny i'r sefydliad asesu'r swyddi, mae'n peri syndod i mi nad oes mwy o ystyriaeth i gapasiti yr adran i ddarparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn unol â'r Safonau yn cael ei wneud wrth asesu'r angen am sgiliau Cymraeg wrth recriwtio rolau. Mae hynny yn enwedig felly o fewn adran sydd yn delio mor agos gyda'r cyhoedd.
- 14.18 Mae'r Cyngor yma wedi nodi'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a'i chategoreiddio o ran lefel sgiliau sydd ei angen. Fodd bynnag, nid ydwyf wedi derbyn tystiolaeth fod 'asesiad' wedi ei wneud yn benodol ar gyfer y rôl sydd yn cael ei hysbysebu yma. Mae'n ymddangos mai ymarferiad ticio bocs, di-feddwl sydd yma. Nid oes unrhyw resymeg wedi ei roi yn yr asesiad (mae dau gwestiwn sydd yn gofyn am dystiolaeth neu resymeg heb eu hateb) am pam ei fod yn annhebygol iawn y byddai'r aelod yma o staff angen delio gyda staff yn y Gymraeg. Nodir o fewn Dogfen Gyngor Arferion Da Comisiynydd y Gymraeg dyddiedig Medi 2020 ei fod yn *'allweddol fod yr asesiadau'n seiliedig ar ddealltwriaeth o'r angen am sgiliau Cymraeg. Mae hefyd yn bwysig fod trefniadau cadarn mewn lle i wneud yn siŵr fod yr asesiadau'n digwydd'*. Nid ydwyf wedi derbyn tystiolaeth fod hyn mewn lle o fewn y Cyngor wrth recriwtio ac mae hyn yn fethiant i gydymffurfio â'r Safon.

Canfyddiadau

- 14.19 Mae'r Safon yn ei wneud yn ofynnol ar gorff wrth asesu'r anghenion ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag, i asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a'i chategoreiddio fel swydd sy'n gymwys i unrhyw un neu ragor o'r categorïau canlynol:
- (a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol
 - (b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd
 - (c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol
 - (d) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.
- 14.20 Er bod y Cyngor wedi categoreiddio'r swydd rhoddwyd fel esiampl i mi yn eu tystiolaeth fel un ble roedd sgiliau Cymraeg yn ddymunol, nid oes tystiolaeth fod ystyriaethau o anghenion Cymraeg yr adran a'r rôl wedi cymryd lle.
- 14.21 Mae hyn yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda Safon 136.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 136

- 14.22 Dyfarnaf fod y Cyngor wedi methu cydymffurfio â safon 136 ar y sail nad oes tystiolaeth fod ystyriaethau gydwobodol yn ymwneud â'r Gymraeg wedi eu gwneud wrth asesu a categoreiddio sgiliau iaith swyddi.

Gweithredu pellach

14.23 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant.

14.24 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 136, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.

14.25 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 136: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi hyfforddiant i staff sydd yn asesu anghenion sgiliau iaith ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag ar sut i wneud asesiadau sydd yn cydymffurfio gyda gofynion Safon 136.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor baratoi canllaw i staff ar sut mae cynnal asesiad o anghenion sgiliau iaith swydd.
3. Wrth wneud asesiadau o dan Safon 136, rhaid i'r Cyngor, ar bob achlysur, ystyried capasiti o fewn maes gwaith y swydd i roi gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn unol â'r Safonau ac ystyried a dylai'r swydd gael eu hysbysebu fel swydd ble mae sgiliau Cymraeg yn hanfodol.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 3.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

15 Cydymffurfiaeth â safon 136A: Aseiad, canfyddiadau a dyfarniad arfaethedig

Geiriad y safon

15.1 Dyma'r safon fel y mae'n ymddangos yn yr hysbysiad cydymffurfio a roddwyd i'r Cyngor:

Safon 136A

Os byddwch wedi categorio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid ichi -

- (a) pennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a
- (b) hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dehongliadau

15.2 Mae Cod Ymarfer Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 1) 2015 yn nodi ym mharagraff 6.9.2 – 6.9.8:

15.3 “**Safon 136A**”

- 6.9.9. *Os yw corff yn categorio swydd (yn unol â safon 136) yn un y mae sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid iddo: o bennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a o hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.*
- 6.9.10. *Gall hyn gynnwys pennu categori y swydd yn y disgrifiad swydd, y fanyleb person a'r hysbyseb ei hun (yn y wasg, mewn hysbysebion neu ar wefan y corff).*
- 6.9.11. *Gall corff benderfynu hysbysebu swyddi lle mae'r Gymraeg yn hanfodol yn uniaith Gymraeg os yw'n dymuno. Er enghraifft, gall corff benderfynu hysbysebu'n uniaith Gymraeg mewn hysbysebion a gyhoeddir mewn cyhoeddiadau Cymraeg neu wneud hynny gyda nodyn esboniadol byr yn Saesneg mewn hysbysebion a gyhoeddir mewn cyhoeddiadau Saesneg.”*

Gofynion y safon

15.4 Os bydd corff wedi categorio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid i'r corff bennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.

Ystyried cydymffurfiaeth â'r safon

- 15.5 Yn eu tystiolaeth wrth ymateb i'r ail Hysbysiad Tystiolaeth, dywedodd y Cyngor yn y dair blynedd diwethaf fod 2 swydd wedi eu hysbysebu o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt a fod y ddwy swydd wedi eu hysbysebu fel swyddi ble roedd sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol. O dan Safon 136A felly roedd angen i'r Cyngor bennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.
- 15.6 Gofynnais i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth eu bod wedi nodi hynny yn yr hysbysebion swydd. Gofynnais hefyd i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth bod y swyddi wedi cael eu hysbysebu yn y Gymraeg.
- 15.7 Darparodd y Cyngor gopi o swydd ddisgrifiad am swydd o fewn y Ganolfan Gyswllt. Yn y swydd ddisgrifiad, mae'r ffaith fod sgiliau Cymraeg yn ddymunol i'r swydd wedi ei nodi o fewn y swydd ddisgrifiad, yn unol â'r Safon. Awgrymaf fodd bynnag fod yna ddiffyg gofal wrth gwblhau'r swydd ddisgrifiad yma yng nghyd-destun y Gymraeg fodd bynnag a bod y wybodaeth yn aneglur i ymgeiswyr. Mae gwybodaeth groes am y sgiliau Cymraeg yn y ddogfen. Mewn un lle mae 'Essential' wedi ei nodi wrth ymyl 'Welsh language skills are essential (levels 4 and 5)' ond yna mae croes wedi ei roi wrth ymyl bod angen lefel '0' o ran sgiliau Siarad / Gwranddo, Darllen a Deall ac Ysgrifennu. Mae'r ddogfen yn mynd yn ei blaen i nodi bod y gallu i gyfathrebu yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol. Nid ydyw'n ymddangos fod y ddogfen wedi ei chwblhau yn gywir neu yn y man lleiaf, mae'r wybodaeth yn aneglur i ymgeiswyr.
- 15.8 Mae Dogfen Gyngor Comisiynydd y Gymraeg 'Recriwtio' dyddiedig Medi 2020 yn rhoi arferion da wrth recriwtio gan nodi ei fod yn fanteisiol i hysbysebion a swydd-ddisgrifiadau fod yn eglur wrth ddisgrifio'r sgil neu gymhwyster angenrheidiol i weithio trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Un dull o wneud hyn yw drwy ddefnyddio geiriad perthnasol, hawdd ei ddeall wrth hysbysebu.
- 15.9 Ymhellach, nid oes tystiolaeth wedi ei ddarparu fod y swydd honno wedi ei hysbysebu yn y Gymraeg. Mae'n bosib fod y swydd yma wedi cael ei hysbysebu ar wefan y Cyngor yn ddwyieithog ond nid ydwyf wedi derbyn unrhyw dystiolaeth o hynny gan mai disgrifiad swydd uniaith Saesneg sydd wedi ei ddarparu gan y Cyngor.
- 15.10 Dywedodd y Cyngor ar y ddau achlysur lle mae swyddi Canolfannau Cyswllt wedi eu hysbysebu dros y tair blynedd diwethaf a ble hysbysebwyd y swyddi fel sgiliau iaith Gymraeg yn ddymunol, honnodd y Cyngor nad oedd unrhyw un o ymgeiswyr y swyddi hynny yn gallu dangos sgiliau iaith Gymraeg.
- 15.11 Mae Dogfen Gyngor Comisiynydd y Gymraeg 'Recriwtio' yn nodi fel mae rhai sefydliadau wedi mynd ati'n rhagweithiol i sicrhau eu bod yn cyrraedd ymgeiswyr posibl. Er enghraifft, drwy sefydlu perthynas â choleg addysg bellach lleol, neu chweched dosbarth mewn ysgol leol er mwyn hyrwyddo cyfleoedd i bobl ifanc sy'n gadael, ymgysylltu â sefydliadau a mudiadau lleol, a chodi posteri yn yr ardal, yn hytrach na hysbysebu ar wefan gorfforaethol y sefydliad yn unig. Roedd rhai sefydliadau wedi chynhyrchu fideo ar gyfer y cyfryngau a'r we er mwyn hyrwyddo ymgyrch i recriwtio mwy o siaradwyr Cymraeg.

Canfyddiadau

- 15.12 Os bydd corff wedi categoreiddio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid i'r corff bennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.

15.13 Yn yr enghraifft o swydd ddisgrifiad sydd wedi ei gyflwyno, mae'r Cyngor wedi pennu fod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol (er bod peth dryswch am hynny yn y swydd ddisgrifiad) ond nid oes tystiolaeth wedi ei dderbyn fod y swydd wedi ei hysbysebu yn y Gymraeg.

15.14 Mae hynny yn fethiant i gydymffurfio gyda safon 136A.

Dyfarniad arfaethedig a fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon 136A

15.15 Dyfarnaf fod y Cyngor wedi methu i gydymffurfio â Safon 136A gan nad oes tystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno fod y swydd sydd yn cael ei gyfeirio ati yn y dystiolaeth wedi cael ei hysbysebu yn y Gymraeg.

Gweithredu pellach

15.16 Mae adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg yn caniatáu i mi weithredu ymhellach lle bu methiant.

15.17 Yn achos fy nyfarniad arfaethedig fod y Cyngor wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 136A, byddaf yn gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant i gydymffurfio rhag parhau.

15.18 Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 136A: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor newid ei weithdrefnau fel pan bydd y Cyngor yn categoreiddio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid i'r corff bennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg yn unol â Safon 136A.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1.

Amserlen: O fewn tri mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safonau Gweithredu: Gofyniad i baratoi cynllun gweithredu yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

Oherwydd methiannau ar draws nifer o'r Safonau Gweithredu, mae'r gofyniad i baratoi cynllun gweithredu isod yn ymdrin â'r methiannau gwelwyd ar draws y Safonau hynny.

Disgwylir i unrhyw Gynllun Gweithredu gael ei baratoi a'i gwblhau yn unol â'r canllawiau sydd wedi eu gosod allan yn yr Adroddiad Ymchwiliad, ac yn unol â'r canllawiau cyffredinol sydd yn y Ddogfen Gyngor atodol hefyd.

1. Rhaid i Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent baratoi cynllun gweithredu drafft at y diben o sicrhau bod y Cyngor yn cydymffurfio â'r holl Safonau Gweithredu fuodd yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma.
2. Rhaid i'r cynllun gweithredu amlinellu'r camau mae'r Cyngor am eu cymryd sydd am eu galluogi i gydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau Gweithredu sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma.
3. Rhaid i'r camau o fewn y Cynllun Gweithredu gynnwys ymrwymiad gan y Cyngor i:
 - gynnal adolygiad bân i'r brig o'i drefniadau ar gyfer cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau Gweithredu sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma;
 - paratoi cynllun am sut mae'r sefydliad am sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth gyda'r Safonau Gweithredu ble mae'r ymchwiliad yma wedi canfod methiant i gydymffurfio â hwy ar draws y sefydliad;
 - cynyddu ei ddealltwriaeth o ofynion y safonau sydd yn berthnasol i'r ymchwiliad yma ac yn benodol eu prosesau asesu sgiliau iaith, hyfforddiant Gymraeg ac asesu anghenion iaith swyddi.
4. Rhaid i'r cynllun gweithredu gynnwys y wybodaeth ganlynol:
 - pwy fydd yn gyfrifol ac yn atebol am gymryd pob un o'r camau yn y cynllun
 - sicrhau bod gan aelodau o'r Uwch Dim Rheoli rôl wrth graffu ar gynnydd y Cyngor yn erbyn y cynllun hynny.
 - amserlen ar gyfer cyflawni pob un o'r camau o fewn y cynllun gyda pob un o'r camau i'w gyflawni mewn dim mwy na **6 mis** o ddyddiad cymeradwyo'r cynllun.

Amserlen: Rhaid i'r Cyngor gyflwyno cynllun gweithredu drafft yn unol â gofynion Adran 80 Mesur y Gymraeg o fewn **3 mis** o dderbyn yr hysbysiad penderfynu terfynol.

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg i roi cyhoeddusrwydd i'r methiant i gydymffurfio:

Oherwydd fy anfodlonrwydd gyda sawl elfen o safon cydymffurfiaeth y Cyngor gyda Safonau'r Gymraeg o fewn yr ymchwiliad, bydd swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg yn rhoi cyhoeddusrwydd i ganlyniadau'r ymchwiliad yma.

Bydd swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg yn rhoi cyhoeddusrwydd i fethiant y Cyngor i gydymffurfio â'r safonau uchod drwy roi datganiad am y methiant i'r wasg dim llai na 28 diwrnod wedi dyddiad cyhoeddi dyfarniad terfynol y Comisiynydd. Bydd swyddfa Comisiynydd y Gymraeg yn rhoi rhybudd o 5 diwrnod gwaith i'r Cyngor o'r dyddiad y bwriedir ryddhau y datganiad.

Hysbysiad penderfynu

At: Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent

Rhif achos: CS092

Dyddiad: 28/07/2022

Dyfarniad

Yn sgil derbyn cwyn gan aelod o'r cyhoedd, cynhaliais ymchwiliad dan adran 71 Mesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011 er mwyn dyfarnu a fu methiant gan Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent i gydymffurfio ag un neu fwy o safonau'r Gymraeg y mae dan ddyletswydd i gydymffurfio â hwy.

Mae'r safonau oedd yn berthnasol i'r ymchwiliad fel a ganlyn:

Safon 8

Pan fydd person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi gyfarch y person yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 8.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw fod y Cyngor wedi methu a chydymffurfio gyda Safon 8 ar y sail na dderbyniodd ein galwr dirgel gyfarchiad yn y Gymraeg ar ddwy alwad ffôn.

Safon 11

Pan fo person yn cysylltu â chi ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), neu ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi ddelio â'r alwad yn Gymraeg os yw'r person yn dymuno hynny -

(a) hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a

(b) hyd nes nad oes aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol hwnnw.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 11.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw na wnaeth y corff ddelio â galwadau ein galwr dirgel yn Gymraeg hyd nes ei bod yn angenrheidiol trosglwyddo'r alwad i aelod o staff nad yw'n siarad Cymraeg sy'n gallu darparu gwasanaeth ar bwnc penodol; a (b) hyd nes nad oes aelod o staff sy'n siarad Cymraeg ar gael i ddarparu gwasanaeth ar y pwnc penodol hwnnw.

Safon 17

Pan na fo gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar eich prif rif ffôn (neu ar un o'ch prif rifau ffôn), ar unrhyw rifau llinell gymorth neu rifau canolfan alwadau, rhaid ichi roi gwybod i'r personau sy'n galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael.

Diwrnod gosod: 03/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 17.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw na rhoddwyd gwybod i'r person oedd yn galw (pa un ai drwy gyfrwng neges wedi ei hawtomeiddio neu fel arall) pryd y bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael er nad oedd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael ar brif rif ffôn y Cyngor.

Safon 81

Rhaid ichi hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg a ddarperir gennych, a hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 81.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw bod rhai camau yn cael eu cymryd i hybu unrhyw wasanaeth Cymraeg ffôn a ddarperir ganddynt, ac yn hysbysebu'r gwasanaeth hwnnw yn Gymraeg.

Safon 82

Os byddwch yn darparu gwasanaeth yn Gymraeg sy'n cyfateb i wasanaeth yr ydych yn ei ddarparu yn Saesneg, rhaid i unrhyw gyhoeddusrwydd neu ddogfen yr ydych yn ei llunio, neu wefan yr ydych yn ei chyhoeddi, sy'n cyfeirio at y gwasanaeth Saesneg nodi bod gwasanaeth cyfatebol ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dyfarnaf nad yw Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 82.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw gan fod yr ymchwiliad yma heb edrych yn benodol ar gyhoeddusrwydd, ddogfennau sydd wedi ei llunio, neu wefan sydd wedi ei chyhoeddi, a bod y Cyngor wedi rhoi tystiolaeth sydd yn awgrymu eu bod yn cydymffurfio gyda Safon 82, nid oes gen i reswm i ganfod methiant i gydymffurfio â'r Safon yma.

Safon 127

Rhaid ichi asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eich cyflogeion.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 127.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw nad ydi'r Cyngor yn sicrhau eu bod yn asesu sgiliau Cymraeg eu cyflogeion.

Safon 130

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith -
(a) i'ch cyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, a
(b) i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 130.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw gan nad oes gan y Cyngor gofnod o faint o staff sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant Gymraeg sylfaenol dros y tair blynedd diwethaf, mae yn codi amheuaeth nad oes yna weithdrefn gadarn mewn lle o ran cydymffurfiaeth â Safon 130 ac o ran cynnig cyfleon i staff dderbyn hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol. Nid oes unrhyw dystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno fod staff sy'n rheoli pobl eraill yn cael cyfle i dderbyn hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.

Safon 131

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyfleoedd i'ch cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 131.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw gan nad oes gan y Cyngor gofnod o faint o staff sydd wedi derbyn hyfforddiant pellach dros y tair blynedd diwethaf ac nad oes tystiolaeth yn dangos bod cyfleoedd wedi eu darparu, mae yn codi amheuaeth nad ydi'r Cyngor yn cydymffurfio â Safon 131 o ran cynnig cyfleon i staff dderbyn hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol.

Safon 132

Rhaid ichi ddarparu cyrsiau hyfforddi er mwyn i'ch cyflogeion ddatblygu -

(a) ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg (gan gynnwys ymwybyddiaeth am hanes yr iaith a'i lle yn niwylliant Cymru);

(b) dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg;
30/09/2016

(c) dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/09/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 132.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw nad oed unrhyw dystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno fod hyfforddiant ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg a dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg, a dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

Safon 133

Pan fyddwch yn darparu gwybodaeth i gyflogeion newydd (er enghraifft, fel rhan o broses ymsefydlu), rhaid ichi ddarparu gwybodaeth er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/09/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 133.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw nad oed unrhyw dystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno bod gwybodaeth er mwyn codi ymwybyddiaeth cyflogeion newydd o'r Gymraeg wedi eu darparu yn unol â Safon 133.

Safon 136

Pan fyddwch yn asesu'r anghenion ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag, rhaid ichi asesu'r angen am sgiliau yn y Gymraeg, a'i chategoreiddio fel swydd pan fo un neu ragor o'r canlynol yn gymwys

-

- (a) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol;
- (b) bod angen dysgu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg pan benodir rhywun i'r swydd;
- (c) bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn ddymunol; neu
- (ch) nad yw sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn angenrheidiol.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 136.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw nad oes tystiolaeth fod ystyriaethau gydwybodol yn ymwneud â'r Gymraeg wedi eu gwneud wrth asesu a categoreiddio sgiliau iaith swyddi.

Safon 136A

Os byddwch wedi categoreiddio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid ichi -

- (a) pennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a
- (b) hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg.

Diwrnod gosod: 30/03/2016

Dyfarnaf bod Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent wedi methu â chydymffurfio â safon 136A.

Sail fy nyfarniad yw nad oes tystiolaeth wedi ei gyflwyno fod y swydd sydd yn cael ei gyfeirio ati yn y dystiolaeth wedi cael ei hysbysebu yn y Gymraeg.

Gweithredu pellach

Yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg rwyf wedi penderfynu gweithredu ymhellach at y diben o atal y methiant rhag parhau neu gael ei ailadrodd.

Mae manylion y gweithredu pellach isod.

Safon 8: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddatblygu cyfarchiad ffôn safonol Cymraeg.

2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor hyfforddi holl staff y Cyngor sydd yn delio gyda galwadau ffôn gan y gyhoedd ar sut i roi'r cyfarchiad ffôn safonol Cymraeg yn gywir ac ar gydymffurfiaeth gyda Safon 8.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor godi ymwybyddiaeth o fewn staff o bwysigrwydd rhoi cyfarchiad Cymraeg ac o gynnwys cyfarchiad Cymraeg ar gychwyn galwadau.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor werthuso unrhyw negeseuon cyfarch awtomataidd i wirio bod cyfarch yn y Gymraeg yn cael ei roi ar y neges awtomataidd os oes cyfarch yn cael ei roi yn y Saesneg.
5. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 4.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safon 11: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi canllawiau mewn lle i holl staff ar sut i ddelio gyda galwadau ffôn yn unol â Safon 11.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod ganddynt adnoddau i ddelio gyda pob galwad dderbynnir yn unol â Safon 11. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau fod digon o siaradwyr Cymraeg yn y ganolfan alwadau i ddelio gyda galwadau ffôn gan bersonau sy'n dymuno cynnal yr alwad yn Gymraeg, yn unol â safon 11.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi hyfforddiant i holl staff sydd yn delio gyda galwadau ffôn ar sut i roi gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn unol â Safon 11.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 3.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safon 17: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Pan na fo gwasanaeth ffôn Cymraeg ar gael, rhaid i'r Cyngor fabwysiadu gweithdrefn sydd yn rhoi gwybod i bobol sy'n galw pryd bydd gwasanaeth Cymraeg ar gael yn unol â Safon 17.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu canllaw i'r holl staff sydd yn delio gyda galwadau ffôn perthnasol ar y weithdrefn newydd.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi hyfforddiant i staff ar y weithdrefn newydd.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 3.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau: Gofyniad i baratoi cynllun gweithredu yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

Oherwydd methiannau ar draws nifer o'r Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau, mae'r gofyniad i baratoi cynllun gweithredu isod yn ymdrin â'r methiannau welwyd ar draws y Safonau hynny sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma;

Disgwylir i unrhyw Gynllun Gweithredu gael ei baratoi a'i gwblhau yn unol â'r canllawiau sydd wedi eu gosod allan yn yr Adroddiad Ymchwiliad, ac yn unol â'r canllawiau cyffredinol sydd yn y Ddogfen Gyngor atodol hefyd.

1. Rhaid i Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent baratoi cynllun gweithredu drafft at y diben o sicrhau bod y Cyngor yn cydymffurfio â'r holl Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau fuodd yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma.
2. Rhaid i'r cynllun gweithredu amlinellu'r camau mae'r Cyngor am eu cymryd sydd am eu galluogi i gydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma.
3. Rhaid i'r camau o fewn y Cynllun Gweithredu gynnwys ymrwymiad gan y Cyngor i:
 - gynnal adolygiad bôn i'r brig o'i drefniadau ar gyfer cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma;
 - paratoi cynllun am sut mae'r sefydliad am sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth gyda'r Safonau Cyflenwi Gwasanaethau ble mae'r ymchwiliad yma wedi canfod methiant i gydymffurfio â hwy ar draws y sefydliad;
 - paratoi cynllun adnoddau dynol ar sut mae'r Cyngor yn mynd i sicrhau adnoddau digonol er mwyn cydymffurfio â'r safonau ffôn.
 - cynyddu ei ddealltwriaeth o ofynion y safonau sydd yn berthnasol i'r ymchwiliad yma.
4. Rhaid i'r cynllun gweithredu gynnwys y wybodaeth ganlynol:
 - pwy fydd yn gyfrifol ac yn atebol am gymryd pob un o'r camau yn y cynllun
 - sicrhau bod gan aelodau o'r Uwch Dim Rheoli rôl wrth graffu ar gynnydd y Cyngor yn erbyn y cynllun hynny.
 - amserlen ar gyfer cyflawni pob un o'r camau o fewn y cynllun gyda pob un o'r camau i'w gyflawni mewn dim mwy na **6 mis** o ddyddiad cymeradwyo'r cynllun.

Amserlen: Rhaid i'r Cyngor gyflwyno cynllun gweithredu drafft yn unol â gofynion Adran 80 Mesur y Gymraeg o fewn **3 mis** o dderbyn yr hysbysiad penderfynu terfynol.

Safon 127: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod ganddynt weithdrefn er mwyn asesu sgiliau Cymraeg sgiliau Cymraeg eu cyflogeion.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor sicrhau bod y sgiliau hynny yn cael eu hasesu yn flynyddol.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gofnodi canlyniadau yr asesiadau blynyddol hynny.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 3.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safon 130: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor greu gweithdrefn i darparu cyfleoedd yn ystod oriau gwaith i'w gyflogeion gael gwersi Cymraeg sylfaenol, ac o i gyflogeion sy'n rheoli pobl eraill gael hyfforddiant ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn eu rôl fel rheolwyr.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gofnodi faint o staff sydd yn cael cynnig yr hyfforddiant yma a faint o staff sydd yn derbyn hyfforddiant yma yn flynyddol.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 2.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safon 131: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor greu gweithdrefn i ddarparu cyfleoedd i'w cyflogeion sydd wedi cwblhau hyfforddiant Cymraeg sylfaenol gael hyfforddiant pellach yn rhad ac am ddim er mwyn datblygu eu sgiliau yn yr iaith.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gofnodi faint o staff sydd yn cael cynnig yr hyfforddiant yma a faint o staff sydd yn derbyn hyfforddiant yma yn flynyddol.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 2.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safon 132: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu hyfforddiant i'w cyflogeion ar ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg, dealltwriaeth o'r ddyletswydd i weithredu yn unol â safonau'r Gymraeg, a dealltwriaeth am y modd y gellir defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle.

2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor gael gweithdrefn mewn lle sydd yn sicrhau bod yr hyfforddiant yma'n cael ei ail gyflwyno'r hyfforddiant yma yn gyfnodol.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 2.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safon 133: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor addasu eu gweithdrefnau a sesiynau ymsefydlu i gynnwys ddarparu gwybodaeth i gyflogaion newydd er mwyn codi eu hymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor baratoi pecyn gwybodaeth am y Gymraeg a rhannu'r pecyn hwn gyda phob aelod newydd o staff.
3. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 a 2.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safon 136: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor roi hyfforddiant i staff sydd yn asesu anghenion sgiliau iaith ar gyfer swydd newydd neu swydd wag ar sut i wneud asesiadau sydd yn cydymffurfio gyda gofynion Safon 136.
2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor baratoi canllaw i staff ar sut mae cynnal asesiad o anghenion sgiliau iaith swydd.
3. Wrth wneud asesiadau o dan Safon 136, rhaid i'r Cyngor, ar bob achlysur, ystyried capasiti o fewn maes gwaith y swydd i roi gwasanaeth Cymraeg yn unol â'r Safonau ac ystyried a dylai'r swydd gael eu hysbysebu fel swydd ble mae sgiliau Cymraeg yn hanfodol.
4. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1 - 3.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safon 136A: Gofyniad i gymryd camau yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

1. Rhaid i'r Cyngor newid ei weithdrefnau fel pan bydd y Cyngor yn categoreiddio swydd fel un sy'n gofyn bod sgiliau yn y Gymraeg yn hanfodol, yn ddymunol neu

fod angen eu dysgu, rhaid i'r corff bennu hynny wrth hysbysebu'r swydd, a hysbysebu'r swydd yn Gymraeg yn unol â Safon 136A.

2. Rhaid i'r Cyngor ddarparu tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig sy'n bodloni Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei fod wedi cwblhau camau gorfodi 1.

Amserlen: O fewn 6 mis o ddyddiad cyhoeddi'r dyfarniad terfynol.

Safonau Gweithredu: Gofyniad i baratoi cynllun gweithredu yn unol ag adran 77 Mesur y Gymraeg

Oherwydd methiannau ar draws nifer o'r Safonau Gweithredu, mae'r gofyniad i baratoi cynllun gweithredu isod yn ymdrin â'r methiannau gwelwyd ar draws y Safonau hynny.

Disgwylir i unrhyw Gynllun Gweithredu gael ei baratoi a'i gwblhau yn unol â'r canllawiau sydd wedi eu gosod allan yn yr Adroddiad Ymchwiliad, ac yn unol â'r canllawiau cyffredinol sydd yn y Ddogfen Gyngor atodol hefyd.

1. Rhaid i Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent baratoi cynllun gweithredu drafft at y diben o sicrhau bod y Cyngor yn cydymffurfio â'r holl Safonau Gweithredu fuodd yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma.
2. Rhaid i'r cynllun gweithredu amlinellu'r camau mae'r Cyngor am eu cymryd sydd am eu galluogi i gydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau Gweithredu sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma.
3. Rhaid i'r camau o fewn y Cynllun Gweithredu gynnwys ymrwymiad gan y Cyngor i:
 - gynnal adolygiad bôn i'r brig o'i drefniadau ar gyfer cydymffurfio gyda'r Safonau Gweithredu sydd wedi bod yn destun yr ymchwiliad yma;
 - paratoi cynllun am sut mae'r sefydliad am sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth gyda'r Safonau Gweithredu ble mae'r ymchwiliad yma wedi canfod methiant i gydymffurfio â hwy ar draws y sefydliad;
 - cynyddu ei ddealltwriaeth o ofynion y safonau sydd yn berthnasol i'r ymchwiliad yma ac yn benodol eu prosesau asesu sgiliau iaith, hyfforddiant Gymraeg ac asesu anghenion iaith swyddi.
4. Rhaid i'r cynllun gweithredu gynnwys y wybodaeth ganlynol:

- pwy fydd yn gyfrifol ac yn atebol am gymryd pob un o'r camau yn y cynllun
- sicrhau bod gan aelodau o'r Uwch Dim Rheoli rôl wrth graffu ar gynnydd y Cyngor yn erbyn y cynllun hynny.
- amserlen ar gyfer cyflawni pob un o'r camau o fewn y cynllun gyda pob un o'r camau i'w gyflawni mewn dim mwy na **6 mis** o ddyddiad cymeradwyo'r cynllun.

Amserlen: Rhaid i'r Cyngor gyflwyno cynllun gweithredu drafft yn unol â gofynion Adran 80 Mesur y Gymraeg o fewn **3 mis** o dderbyn yr hysbysiad penderfynu terfynol.

Hawl i apelio i Dribiwnlys y Gymraeg

Pan fo'r Comisiynydd wedi dyfarnu na fu methiant i gydymffurfio â safon, gall yr achwynydd apelio i Dribiwnlys y Gymraeg. Pan fo'r Comisiynydd yn wedi dyfarnu bod person wedi methu â chydymffurfio â gofyniad perthnasol, gall y person hwnnw apelio i Dribiwnlys y Gymraeg. Yn ogystal, pan fo'r Comisiynydd wedi penderfynu cymryd camau gorfodi mewn cysylltiad â methiant yn unol ag adran 79 Mesur y Gymraeg, gall y Cyngor apelio i Dribiwnlys y Gymraeg ar y sail fod y camau gorfodi'n afresymol neu'n anghymesur. Ceir rhagor o wybodaeth am y broses yn y daflen amgaeedig, ac ar wefan y Tribiwnlys.

Canlyniadau peidio cydymffurfio â gofyniad mewn hysbysiad penderfynu

Os yw Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent yn methu â chydymffurfio ag unrhyw ofyniad yn yr hysbysiad penderfynu hwn, caiff y Comisiynodd wneud cais i lys sirol am orchymyn yn ei gwneud yn ofynnol [iddo/iddi/iddynt] gydymffurfio.

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Sarah King
Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd, Llywodraethau a Partneriaethau
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent

Trwy e-bost: sarah.king@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

28/03/2023

Annwyl Sarah

Yn dilyn ein cyfarfod ar 17/03/2023 ysgrifennaf atoch ymhellach i argymhell camau gweithredu pellach ar gyfer sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth lawn o rhai safonau a drafodwyd gennym yn y cyfarfod.

Monitro, Asesu a Gweithredu

Mae'r Comisiynydd yn monitro cydymffurfiaeth sefydliadau gyda safonau yn unol a'i [fframwaith rheoleiddio](#). Mae hyn yn cynnwys asesu cydymffurfiaeth sefydliadau gyda'r safonau y maent o dan ddyletswydd i gydymffurfio â hwy, ac adnabod unrhyw gamau gweithredu y gall y sefydliad eu cymryd i sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth.

Bu i chi ddarparu tystiolaeth o gydymffurfiaeth i'r Comisiynydd drwy ymateb i gais am dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig a gwnaed arolygon pen desg gan swyddogion y Comisiynydd. Yn dilyn hyn cynhaliwyd cyfarfod casglu tystiolaeth rhyngom.

Yn sgil yr holl waith casglu tystiolaeth anfonwn y llythyr hwn er mwyn argymhell camau gweithredu pellach ar gyfer sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth lawn gyda safonau penodol. Mae'r argymhellion hyn wedi'u gosod allan isod:

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Siambrau'r Farchnad
5-7 Heol Eglwys Fair
Caerdydd CF10 1AT

0345 6033 221
post@comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru
Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru

Welsh Language Commissioner
Market Chambers
5-7 St Mary Street
Cardiff CF10 1AT

0345 6033 221
post@welshlanguagecommissioner.wales
Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

welshlanguagecommissioner.wales



**Camau Gweithredu
Dogfennau
Safon 49**

Os byddwch yn llunio fersiwn Gymraeg a fersiwn Saesneg o ddogfen ar wahân, rhaid ichi sicrhau bod y fersiwn Saesneg yn datgan yn glir bod y ddogfen hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Yn ystod arolygon 2022-2023 nid oedd unrhyw ddogfen yn cydymffurfio â safon 49.

1. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor wrth ymgymryd â'r gwaith o gynllunio gwefan newydd ei fod yn cynnal arolwg o'r dogfennau sydd ar gael ar y wefan er mwyn sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth lawn â safonau 49.
2. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor yn atgoffa pob adran am ofyniad safon 49 a bod y rhai sydd wedi'u nodi gan y Comisiynydd yn ystod yr arolygon yn cael sylw ar gyfer y fersiynau nesaf.

Amserlen: Diweddariad erbyn 28/04/2023

Safon 52

Rhaid ichi sicrhau -

- (a) bod testun pob tudalen ar eich gwefan ar gael yn Gymraeg,*
- (b) bod pob tudalen Gymraeg ar eich gwefan yn gweithredu'n llawn,*
ac
- (c) nad yw'r Gymraeg yn cael ei thrin yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg ar eich gwefan.*

Safon 56

Rhaid ichi ddarparu'r rhyngwyneb a'r dewislenni ar bob tudalen ar eich gwefan yn Gymraeg.

Yn ystod arolygon 2022-2023 canfuwyd nifer o wallau ar y wefan. Nodwyd yn y cyfarfod casglu tystiolaeth bod gwaith eisoes ar y gweill i sefydlu gwefan newydd ond bod y broses yn un araf ar hyn o bryd

1. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor yn sicrhau bod y wefan Gymraeg yn cynnig yr un gwasanaeth â'r fersiwn Saesneg a ddim yn cael ei thrin yn llai ffafriol na'r fersiwn Saesneg.
2. Gofynnwn am amserlen ar gyfer cwblhau'r Rhaglen Trawsnewid Digidol

Amserlen: 28 Ebrill 2023

Safon 58

Pan fyddwch yn defnyddio'r cyfryngau cymdeithasol, rhaid ichi beidio â thrin y Gymraeg yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg.

Yn ystod arolygon 2022-2023 canfuwyd nad oedd 4/10 post ar Facebook ar gael yn Gymraeg.

1. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor yn gwirio ei brosesau er mwyn sicrhau bod pob cyfrif cyfryngau cymdeithasol yn cydymffurfio'n llawn.

Amserlen: 28 Ebrill 2023

Safon 98

Rhaid ichi ddatblygu polisi ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn fewnol, gyda'r bwriad o hybu a hwyluso defnyddio'r Gymraeg, a rhaid ichi gyhoeddi'r polisi hwnnw ar eich mewnwyd.

Nodwyd yn yr ymateb i'r holiadur hunanasesu nad oedd gan y Cyngor bolisi ffurfiol.

1. Argymhellwn bod y Cyngor yn datblygu polisi ar ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn fewnol.

Amserlen: 29 Medi 2023

Gofynnwn ichi ddarparu tystiolaeth eich bod wedi cyflawni'r argymhellion uchod erbyn 28 Ebrill 2023 a 29 Medi 2023.

Mae'r Comisiynydd yn cadw'r hawl i ymchwilio i'r materion hyn pe bai amheuan am gydymffurfiaeth â'r safonau dan sylw yn parhau.

Gellir ymestyn unrhyw ddyddiad cwblhau pe bai angen drwy gysylltu â mi.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Dylan Jones

Ar ran Comisiynydd y Gymraeg

Copi: Andrew Parker
Emma Scherptong
Katherine Watkins-Hughes

Sarah King
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnership
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Via e-mail: Sarah.King@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

28/03/2023

Dear Sarah

Following our meeting on 17/03/2023, I am writing to recommend further actions to ensure full compliance with some of the standards discussed in the meeting.

Monitoring, Assessment and Action

The Commissioner monitors organisations' compliance with standards in accordance with his regulatory framework. This includes assessing organisations' compliance with the standards with which they have a duty to comply and identifying any actions the organisation can take to ensure compliance.

You provided evidence of compliance to the Commissioner by responding to a request for written evidence and desktop surveys were conducted by the Commissioner's officers. Following this, an evidence gathering meeting was held between us.

As a result of the evidence gathering, we are sending this letter to recommend further actions to ensure full compliance with specific standards. These recommendations are set out below:

Actions

Documents

Standard 49

If you produce a Welsh language version and a separate English language version of a document, you must ensure that the English language version clearly states that the document is also available in Welsh.

During the 2022-2023 surveys no documents complied with standard 49

1. We recommend that the Council when undertaking the work of designing the new website that it undertakes a review of the documents to ensure full compliance with standard 49.
2. We recommend that the Council reminds all departments of the requirement under standard 49 and that the documents noted in the Commissioner's survey are given attention for the next versions.

Timetable: Update by 28 April 2023

Standard 52

You must ensure that –

- (a) the text of each page of your website is available in Welsh,*
- (b) every Welsh language page on your website is fully functional, and*
- (c) the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language on your website.*

Standard 56

You must provide the interface and menus on every page of your website in Welsh.

During the 2021-2022 surveys several mistakes were found on the website. It was noted in the meeting that work was in progress to launch a new website.

During the 2022-2023 survey, numerous errors were found on the website. It was noted during the meeting that work was continuing on a new website but this was progressing slowly.

1. We recommend that the Council ensures that the Welsh version of the website offers the same service as the English version and does not treat the Welsh version less favourably than the English version.
2. We ask the Council for a timetable of completing the Digital Transformation Programme.

Timetable: 28 April 2023

Standard 58

When you use social media, you must not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

During the 2022-2023 survey, it was found that 4/10 posts on Facebook were not available in Welsh.

1. We recommend that the Council reviews its processes to ensure that all social media accounts comply fully.

Timetable: 28 April 2023

Standard 98

You must develop a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language, and you must publish that policy on your intranet.

It was noted in the response to the self-assessment questionnaire that the Council does not have a formal policy.

1. We recommend that the Council develops a policy on using the Welsh internally.

Timetable: 29 September 2023

We ask you to provide evidence that you have actioned the above recommendations by 28 April 2023 and 29 September 2023.

The Commissioner reserves the right to investigate these matters if doubts regarding compliance with the standards in question continue.

The timetable dates can be extended if required by contacting myself.

Yours sincerely,

Dylan Jones

On behalf of the Welsh Language Commissioner

Cc: Andrew Parker
Emma Scherptong
Katherine Watkins-Hughes

Agenda Item 9

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**

Report Subject: **Digital Transformation Strategy for the Council**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member for Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias – Chief Officer Commercial and Customer
Leanne Roberts – Service Manager Customer Experience & Digital Transformation**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 24/08/2023 | 04.09.23 | | | 14/09/2023 | 04/10/2023 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report to present the Council Digital Transformation Strategy 2023 – 2027 (hereafter ‘the strategy’) to Cabinet for approval.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Council has been progressing with its digital transformation journey over the last few years, with the introduction of new ways of working, modern technology and cloud-based software.
- 2.2 The scope of the strategy sets out our ambition to make digital transformation an integral part of our approach to providing high quality services.
- 2.3 The key principles and priorities of the strategy are aimed at those that need and want to access the Council. The intention is to build good quality services with those that use and provide them.
- 2.4 The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities.
- 2.5 Through our customer-centred design approach we will consider each element of a process and how customers use our services.
- 2.6 Having the right culture and leadership to drive our digital ambition will support the development of customer-centred services.
- 2.7 Improved use of data, better engagement and collaboration will allow us to join up services to remove barriers between organisations so that customers can easily access what they need.
- 2.8 The Strategy is underpinned by two key principles and three priorities and are essential to improving and delivering our services in the future.
- 2.9 **Principle One:**, developing a culture that supports digital improvement and a seamless customer experience;

Principle Two: improving collaboration to make the best use of knowledge and expertise to create better services;

Priority One: to be a customer focussed organisation;

Priority Two: to be a digitally enabled Borough;

Priority Three: to maximise the use of our resources and technology.

- 2.10 The key themes and priorities of this strategy have been developed through user research and engagement with customers; staff engagement; senior management workshops; elected member engagement; discussions with local authority partners and results of digital maturity assessments.

These were shared with CLT and a Member engagement session was held in July 2023.

The Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment and investment into: -

- Becoming a citizens focused organisation;
- Supporting learning and development
- Providing equal access to services
- Identifying and developing the right technology in the right way
- Improving collaboration with others

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 CLT endorsed the Strategy on 24th August 2023.

3.2 The Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee recommended Option 1.

3.3 **Option 1:**
That Cabinet approves the Digital and Transformation Strategy.

Option 2:
That the Cabinet considers the Digital and Transformation Strategy and suggests recommendations for changes prior to approval.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15), places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement.

As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also places individual duties on public bodies. The legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and creating a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

- 4.2 The Strategy supports these objectives and the Corporate Plan priority “an ambitious and innovative Council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place.”.
- 4.3 The strategy is an important part of the overall governance framework and is aligned to other key Council plans and strategies including the Customer Services Strategy (currently in the democratic process for approval), the Commercial strategy, the Workforce Strategy, and Communication Strategy.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

- 5.1.2 The Strategy supports elements of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and aspects of its delivery are included within the Commercial Strategy and within the Bridging the Gap Programme
- 5.1.3 There is a clear alignment to the digital programmes that are currently in progress
- 5.1.4 There are no current anticipated impacts on budget to deliver the core values of the strategy, the strategy is clearly aligned to the Corporate Digital Programme and ICT Investment Road map

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 5.2.1 There is a risk of non-compliance of the adoption of the strategy. Failure to comply with the ambitions of the strategy will impact the delivery and savings associated with the Strategic Financial programme called Bridging the Gap, such as:
- Reducing Third Party Spend Strategic Business Review
 - Workplace Transformation Strategic Business Review
 - Use of data and insight to support decision making Strategic Business Review
 - Designing services around the customer Strategic Business Review
 - Behavioural Insight Strategic Business Review
- 5.2.2 Non-compliance to the strategy will impact the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan priorities and pose risks to the delivery of other key plans and strategies, such as:
- Customer Strategy
 - Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - Workforce Strategy
 - Regeneration Strategy
 - Education ICT Strategy
 - Commissioning and Procurement Strategy
 - Commercial Strategy
- 5.2.3 The mitigation of these risks will be monitored through officer networks (mentioned in Performance Section 6 of the report).

5.3 ***Legal***

Adherence to GDPR Principles, Security and code of practices

5.4 **Human Resources**

Attendance at Officer Networks across the Council, i.e. Service Design and Digital Board will support the adoption of the strategy

5.5 **Health and Safety**

None identified.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.2 Key deliverables

- Developing our My Services portal and Blaenau Gwent app so customers can self-serve and access services easily;
- Review of online content, so it's easier to understand;
- Continue to look at digital solutions to help customers self-serve;
- Identifying training opportunities to improve digital skills for staff, members and how we can access support for customers;
- Continue to rationalise the number of digital systems across the Council to reduce our third party spend;
- Looking at areas where we can use automation and artificial intelligence to improve processes.

6.1.3 There will be a set of delivery plans against each priority set out in the strategy and will have a number of key success measures, such as % of customers accessing front facing services rating the service they receive as excellent or good; % of customers choosing to self-serve.

6.1.4 Behavioural insight will also inform delivery of the strategy moving forward.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The strategy will support our aim to be proactive, embracing opportunities for national, regional, partnership and local collaboration to better meet the needs of the community.

6.2.2 People already interact digitally with shops, banks and schools and request many services online. Modern customers expect to do the same with their local Council.

6.2.3 The demands and expectations of customers and staff and the speed of digital innovation means that we need to be able to deal with the rising volume of customers' requests, who want faster, more comprehensive services across a growing range of channels.

6.2.4 The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities.

6.2.5 To support the successful delivery of this strategy there are some clear links to the level of service that customers can expect to receive, whatever channel they choose to use and will be closely aligned to our Customer Services Strategy (currently in draft).

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

- 6.3.1 The Strategy, has been developed with engagement via;
- Feedback from customers, non-users, learners, businesses, partners, staff and data gathered during various service design projects;
 - Evidence from work undertaken on service design projects, i.e Planning and content design;
 - Wider CLT session facilitated by Centre of Public Digital Services to understand current position, opportunities, barriers and objectives;
 - Feedback from elected members, MCS induction session;
 - Digital self-evaluation, facilitated by WLGA;
 - Digital Exclusion project across Gwent;
 - Customer Experience and Access review;
 - Review of agile working
 - Community feedback on budget proposals – 62% want easy access to digital services

6.3.2 User research will be a key part of the strategy implementation moving forward.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

6.4.1 The Digital landscape has changed dramatically over recent years and is constantly evolving with higher expectations of standards of service and accessibility, including the way the public receive council services.

6.4.2 The Pandemic changed customer behaviour, and the way in which public services needed to respond has given momentum to shaping a new vision for the Councils customer offer.

6.4.3 The lasting impact of COVID-19 has accelerated the need for the review of the Digital and Transformation delivery model.

6.4.4 Closely aligning the strategy with understanding our demographics utilising new technology will provide a pathway for future proofing the Council moving forward into the 21st Century.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 The demands and expectations of customers and staff and the speed of digital innovation means that we need to be able to deal with the rising volume of customers' requests, who want faster, more comprehensive services across a growing range of channels.

6.5.2 The key principles and priorities of this strategy and the Customer Services Strategy are aimed at those that need and want to access the Council.

6.5.3 The intention is to build good quality services with those that use and provide them. The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities.

- 6.5.4 Through our customer-centred design approach we will consider each element of a process and how customers use our services. Having the right culture and leadership to drive our ambition will support the development of customer-centred services.
- 6.5.5 Improved use of data, better engagement and collaboration will allow us to join up services to remove barriers between organisations so that customers can easily access what they need, supporting behaviour change where possible.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
The strategy will be shared with key partners to support working towards a more joined up public services experience for customers.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
The strategy takes a whole council approach and promotes knowledge sharing across service areas.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
Utilisation of digital solutions where customers are able to also supports decarbonisation, ability to transact online where customers are able.
- 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***
See Appendix 2.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1.1 The Service Design and Digital Leadership Board will oversee the delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy.
- 7.1.2 Each year the strategy will have a set of Delivery Plans developed against each priority. A set of key success measures will also be developed.
- 7.1.3 The strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure we keep pace with ongoing changes to digital innovation, technologies and customer expectation.
- 7.1.4 This strategy is one of a set of strategic digital/ICT programmes designed to secure the future sustainability across the community and deliver improved outcomes for our customers, businesses and learners.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 Digital and Transformation Strategy
- Appendix 2 Integrated Impact Assessment

Blaenau Gwent Council Digital Transformation Strategy

2023 - 2027



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Foreword

'The way that we work and live our lives today is constantly changing and will continue to do so into the future.'

We live in a digital age, where the use of digital technologies is having a big impact on the way we connect with our families, friends, and the outside world. The way we receive information and access services has changed significantly.

The range of digital options available presents us with exciting opportunities to change the way we do things. From using mobile phones and smart devices to help us book appointments and order goods online, to the growing capabilities that artificial intelligence can give us.

Our priorities will enable us to improve our customers' experience. This will mean involvement in ambitious projects to ensure those who are able to use the internet can access information and services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We will be working hard to ensure Blaenau Gwent is a place where people can connect, communicate and access the services they need quickly and efficiently.

Through collaboration with our partners, we will support the more vulnerable in our community to use digital tools and technologies that can help them be independent, stay safe, keep well and be able to get the help they need easily. Equal access is very important to us and for customers unable to access services via digital technologies, the traditional channels will continue to be provided for as long as they are needed.

Stephen Thomas - Leader

Helen Cunningham - Deputy Leader

Introduction

Where we are now

Blaenau Gwent has been progressing with its digital transformation journey over the last few years, with the introduction of new ways of working, modern technology and cloud-based software.

What we are trying to achieve

The scope of this strategy sets out our ambition to make digital transformation an integral part of our approach to providing high quality services.

Our aim is to be proactive, embracing opportunities for national, regional, partnership and local collaboration to better meet the needs of the community.

People already interact digitally with shops, banks and schools and request many services online. Modern customers expect to do the same with their local Council.

The demands and expectations of customers and staff and the speed of digital innovation means that we need to be able to deal with the rising volume of customers' requests, who want faster, more comprehensive services across a growing range of channels.

We work with customers who find themselves digitally excluded and learn from their experiences to better support them.



The digital picture for ...

... the UK

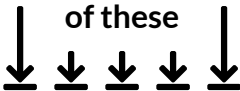
23%

of the UK population



(12.6 million people)

lack basic digital skills



49%

are disabled

60%

have no formal qualifications

63%

are over 75

90%

of jobs nationally **require digital skills** to some degree

... Wales

58%

of adults in Wales access the internet



Internet users in Wales spent an average of

21 hours online per week

Blaenau Gwent

7.3%

of households do not have internet access



93.5%

of households with internet access have **superfast broadband**

Blaenau Gwent Context

This strategy will support the Council's Vision of being 'a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities'.

It will help to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent

Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities

An ambitious and innovative Council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place

Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient

The strategy is aligned to the ambitions of the following key plans and strategies:

- > Customer Strategy (in Draft)
- > Workforce Strategy
- > Education ICT Strategy
- > Regeneration Strategy
- > Medium Term Financial Strategy
- > Commissioning and Procurement Strategy
- > Commercial Strategy

This strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment and investment into becoming a customer focussed organisation by:

- > supporting learning and developing skills
- > providing equal access to services
- > identifying and developing the right technology in the right way
- > improving collaboration with others

The key themes and priorities this strategy have been developed through user research and engagement with customers, staff engagement, senior management workshops, elected member engagement, discussions with local authority partners and results of digital maturity assessments.

Wales Context

The strategy will contribute towards the requirements and standards set out in the following:

- > **Well-being and Future Generations Act**
- > **Digital Strategy for Wales**
- > **Digital Service Standards for Wales**
- > **Welsh Language Act**

Whilst delivering this Strategy, we will ensure the decisions we make consider the well-being goals and five ways of working:

Long Term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration and Prevention.

We will ensure that our decisions are evidenced-based and consider the social and economic impact on our communities.

The key principles and priorities of this strategy are aimed at those who need and want to access the Council. The intention is to build good quality services with those who use and provide them. The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities.

Through our customer-centred design approach we will consider each element of a process and how customers use our services. Having the right culture and leadership to drive our digital ambition will support the development of customer-centred services.

Improved use of data, better engagement and collaboration will allow us to join up services to remove barriers between organisations so that customers can easily access what they need.

Our Principles

The Strategy is underpinned by two key principles and three priorities which are essential to improving and delivering our services in the future:

Principle One

Develop a culture that supports digital improvement and a seamless customer experience.

Aim: To ensure we have a shared understanding of what digital means for our organisation, customers, businesses and learners.

We will do this by:

- > developing a shared vision on how the Council will improve and deliver its services
- > influencing behaviours that put the customer at the heart of everything we do
- > developing a customer-centric approach to delivering services
- > working as one organisation to remove silos
- > developing a data driven culture to improve and design services
- > developing an innovating and intrapreneurial culture to modernise the organisation
- > collaborating with partners and organisations to design digital services that can be used for the whole of Wales
- > developing an open culture where information is shared and reused whilst ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place

Principle Two

Improve collaboration to make the best use of knowledge and expertise to create better services.

Aim: To improve how we engage with customers, businesses, learners and partners to provide an opportunity to build services that are fit for the 21st Century.

We will do this by:

- > working with communities to design digital services to solve complex problems
- > working with all stakeholders to understand issues with service delivery
- > working with partners to align projects and contracts to make the best use of resources
- > building and developing multi-disciplinary teams to improve skills and draw on expertise
- > becoming more efficient when delivering projects with shared knowledge, ownership and understanding
- > improving communication and sharing of information across the organisation and with stakeholders

Our Priorities

Priority One - To be a customer focussed organisation

Aim: Design services based on what our customers and businesses need by taking a customer-centred approach

We will achieve this by:

- > designing digital services that are so good that people prefer to use them
- > ensuring our services are fully accessible and meet all required local and national standards
- > making it easier to find and understand information online
- > making it easier to contact and transact with us
- > making it easier to manage services on behalf of friends and family
- > increasing the number of services available for customers and businesses online
- > ensuring that customers and businesses only share information with us once
- > continuing to review and redesign our processes to make us efficient and effective



Priority Two - To be a digitally enabled Borough

Aim: To develop digital and data skills to deliver services that meet customer and business needs.

We will achieve this by:

- > putting customers and businesses at the heart of everything we do
- > building the right skills that are necessary to deliver customer-centred services
- > develop staff so they are confident in their digital skills to future-proof them and the organisation for the 21st century
- > ensure all elected members and senior managers are digital leaders and support customer-centred approaches
- > ensuring we can adapt quickly to the changing needs and demands of customers and service requirements
- > improving the quality of our data to provide better services
- > making decisions based on evidence
- > using data and insights to become proactive rather than reactive
- > ensuring that all data is protected appropriately
- > sharing data when it is safe and appropriate to do so
- > exploring the use of Open Data to help solve complex problems



Priority Three - To maximise the use of our resources and technology

Aim: To ensure our technology and digital infrastructure is responsive, secure and adaptive to meet the changing needs of our customers, businesses and staff.

We will achieve this by:

- > recruiting and retaining the right people with the right skills for the 21st century
- > ensuring staff have the right tools to deliver efficient and effective services
- > enabling staff to securely work with any device from anywhere (subject to policy)
- > working with communities and businesses to ensure we have the right technology to meet their needs
- > having reliable, secure technology that is cost effective and minimises our carbon footprint
- > developing our digital infrastructure to support the delivery of 21st century services
- > understanding the need for digital products in the Council
- > identifying new technologies and innovations to improve services and how we work
- > collaborating and sharing digital products and technology internally and with partners
- > maintaining our systems so they are always safe and secure
- > automating routine tasks so that our staff can focus on value added work



Monitoring and Review

The Service Design and Digital Leadership Board will oversee the delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy.

Each year the strategy will have a set of Delivery Plans developed against each priority.

A set of key success measures will also be developed.

The strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure we keep pace with ongoing changes to digital innovation, technologies and customer expectation.

This strategy is one of a set of strategic digital/ICT programmes designed to secure the future sustainability across the community and deliver improved outcomes for our customers, businesses and learners.



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Website: www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment.

- Section 1-Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Section 2-Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Section 3-Corporate Plan
- Section 4-Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Section 6-Children’s Right “The Right Way”
- Section 7-Community Safety
- Section 8 Armed Forces
- Section 9-Data
- Section 10-Consultations Statutory Consultation Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles
- Section 11-Monitoring
- Section 12-Decision of proposal

| Lead Officer | Head of Service | Service Area & Department | Date |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Jonathan Morgan/Shawn Hughes | Leanne Roberts | Corporate Services | 29/8/2023 |

Briefly outline the proposal indicating what change or decision is to be made, also provide any documentation that may be used to support this.
What is the proposal that needs to be assessed?

The development and introduction of a Digital Transformation Strategy and Customer Services Strategy including Customer Service Standards and Customer Service charter. These will be embedded so that a clear description of the level of service customers can expect when dealing with the Council.

Section 1
Outline how the proposal will impact on any people or groups of people with protected characteristics, please refer to the Equalities Act 2010 (Wales) for further information [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and the EHRC guidance [The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty: EHRC](#)
Briefly outline below if there will be any positive or negative impacts as a result of the proposal being considered.

| Protected characteristics | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
|---|--|---|--|
| Age (<i>people of all ages</i>) | Yes | Positive impact – customers will be able to self serve as much as possible, but also for those unable to self serve alternative ways to contact us are available. | Customers will be able to take responsibility for their own actions by interacting with us on-line as much as possible rather than waiting to see or speak to an agent. This can be 24/7, 365 days a year. The Contact Centre and Community Hubs only operate during working hours Monday to Friday. |
| Disability (<i>people with disabilities/ long term conditions</i>) | Yes | Positive impact – clear guidance will show how customers will be able to self serve as much as possible, speak to an agent in the Contact | Customers will be able to take responsibility for their own actions by interacting with us on-line as much as possible rather than waiting to see or speak to an agent. This can be 24/7, 365 days a year. The Contact Centre and Community Hubs only operate during working hours Monday to Friday. |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | | Centre or visit a Community Hub. Negative impact – location of the Community Hubs in town centres may be challenging to some residents in terms of their location. | |
| Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth)</i> | Considered but no impact identified | | |
| Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i> | Considered but no impact identified | | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)</i> | Yes | Positive impact – customers will be able to self serve as much as possible, but also for those unable to self serve alternative ways to contact us are available. | Customers will be able to take responsibility for their own actions by interacting with us on-line as much as possible rather than waiting to see or speak to an agent. This can be 24/7, 365 days a year. The Contact Centre and Community Hubs only operate during working hours Monday to Friday. |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| | | Negative impact – parking in town centres near to the Community Hub maybe challenging due to traffic restrictions. | |
| Race (<i>people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds</i>) | Considered but no impact identified | n/a | |
| Religion or Belief (<i>people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs</i>) | Considered but no impact identified | n/a | |
| Sex (<i>women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender</i>) | Considered but no impact identified | n/a | |
| Sexual Orientation (<i>lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other</i>) | Considered but no impact identified | n/a | |

NOTE: Section 2 only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. See page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.

Section 2
Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)
The Welsh Governments [Socio-economic Duty](#) provides a framework in order to ensure tackling inequality is at the forefront of decision making.

.Please consider the below vulnerable groups and consider how the proposal could affect them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People misusing substances
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system

| Socio Economic disadvantage definitions. | Will the proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impacts on the below? | How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined? | Please highlight any evidence that has been considered. |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i></p> | <p>Positive – customers will have a choice to access services on their own devices, telephone or visit Community Hubs.</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial constraints. Also, costly to travel to Community Hubs.</p> <p>Customers will have a choice as to how best their circumstances allow them to interact with us.</p> | <p>Every case is treated on its own merits and the Customer Service delivery provided to our customers will depend on their individual circumstance.</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Low and/or No Wealth (<i>enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future</i>)</p> | <p>Positive – customers will have a choice to access services on their own devices, telephone the Contact Centre or visit Community Hubs</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial constraints or personal choice. Also, costly to travel to Community Hubs</p> <p>Customers will have a choice as to how best their circumstances allow them to interact with us.</p> | <p>Every case is treated on its own merits and the Customer Service delivery provided to our customers will depend on their individual circumstance</p> |
| <p>Material Deprivation (<i>unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.</i>)</p> | <p>Positive – residents will be able to access services on their own devices rather than travel to Community Hubs</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial constraints or personal choice. Also, costly to travel to Community Hubs</p> <p>Customers will have a choice as to how best their circumstances allow them to interact with us.</p> | <p>Every case is treated on its own merits and the Customer Service delivery provided to our customers will depend on their individual circumstance</p> |
| <p>Area Deprivation (<i>where you live (rural areas), where you work</i>)</p> | <p>Positive – residents will be able to access services on their own</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial</p> | <p>Customers will a choice of how to interact with the Council</p> |


| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><i>(accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i></p> | <p>devices rather than travel to Community Hubs</p> | <p>constraints or personal choice. Also, costly to travel to Community Hubs and public transport services to town centres are limited in certain areas.</p> | <p>dependant on their individual circumstances.</p> |
| <p>Socio-economic Background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i></p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | <p>n/a</p> | |
| <p>Socio-economic Disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p> | <p>Positive – residents will be able to access services om their own devices rather than travel to Community Hubs</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial constraints or choice.</p> | <p>Customers will a choice of how to interact with the Council dependant on their individual circumstances.</p> |



| | | | |
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Section 3-Corporate Plan

Please outline any Corporate Plan linkages of the proposal - [BG Corporate Plan 22-27](#)

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Priority 1 - Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent</p> | <p>Priority 2 of the Digital Strategy – “To be a digitally enabled Borough” – To develop digital and data skills to deliver services that meet customer and business needs. We have a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement.</p> |
| <p>Priority 2 - Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities</p> | <p>The Customer Service Strategy will link into the Decarbonisation Plan.</p> |
| <p>Priority 3 - An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place</p> | <p>Both strategies emphasise the importance of investing in our staff and developing a culture that supports digital improvement and a seamless, positive customer experience.</p> |
| <p>Priority 4 - Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient</p> | <p>Allowing customers to have the choice of how they interact with us but with the knowledge that, as Priority 2 of the digital Strategy says, all data is protected appropriately and only shared when it is safe and appropriate to do so.</p> |

| Section 4-Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (ICLIP) | |
|---|--|
| <i>Sustainable development principles. The WCFG Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)</i> | |
| Five Ways of Working | How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal? |
| <p>Long Tern</p>  | <p>Consider the long-term impact of the proposal on the ability of communities to secure their well-being. The Digital and Customer Service landscape has changed dramatically over recent years and is constantly evolving with higher expectations of standards of service and accessibility, including the way the public receive council services.</p> <p>The Pandemic changed customer behaviour, and the way in which public services needed to respond has given momentum to shaping a new vision for the Councils customer offer.</p> <p>The lasting impact of COVID-19 has accelerated the need for the review of the Digital and Transformation and Customer Services delivery model.</p> <p>Closely aligning the strategy with understanding our demographics utilising new technology will provide a pathway for future proofing the Council moving forward into the 21st Century</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Prevention</p>  | <p>Consider how the proposal is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse The demands and expectations of customers and staff and the speed of digital innovation means that we need to be able to deal with the rising volume of customers’ requests, who want faster, more comprehensive services across a growing range of channels</p> <p>The key principles and priorities of the Digital and Customer Services Strategies are aimed at those that need and want to access the Council.</p> <p>The intention is to build good quality services with those that use and provide them. The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities.</p> <p>Through our customer-centred design approach we will consider each element of a process and how customers use our services. Having the right culture and leadership to drive our ambition will support the development of customer-centred services.</p> <p>Improved use of data, better engagement and collaboration will allow us to join up services to remove barriers between organisations so that customers can easily access what they need, supporting behaviour change where possible</p> |
| <p>Integration</p>  | <p>Consider how your proposal will impact on other services provided in our communities (these might be Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups) The strategies take a whole council approach and promotes knowledge sharing across service areas.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Collaboration</p>  | <p>Consider how you are working with Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups in our communities. The strategies will be shared with key partners to support working towards a more joined up public services experience for customers.</p> |
| <p>Involvement</p>  | <p>Consider how you involve people who have an interest in this proposal and ensure that they represent the diversity of our communities.</p> <p>The Strategies, has been developed with engagement via;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An externally facilitated organisational review of the customer experience and access involving a range of service areas and engagement through journey mapping with customers who use our services • Feedback from customers, non-users, learners, businesses, partners, staff and data gathered during various service design projects; • User research with customers including that gained through service re design projects • Evidence from work undertaken on service design projects, i.e Planning and content design; • Wider CLT session facilitated by Centre of Public Digital Services to understand current position, opportunities, barriers and objectives; • Senior management and Elected member feedback • Feedback from elected members, MCS induction session; • Digital self-evaluation, facilitated by WLGA; • Digital Exclusion project across Gwent; • Customer Experience and Access review; • Review of agile working • Community feedback on budget proposals – 62% want easy access to digital services |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>User research will be a key part of the strategy implementation moving forward.</p> |
|--|--|

How does your proposal link to the Welsh Governments Priorities for Wales? Please indicate below.

1. **A PROSPEROUS WALES** ... an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

The strategy will contribute towards the requirements and standards set out in the following: > Well-being and Future Generations Act > Digital Strategy for Wales > Digital Service Standards for Wales > Welsh Language Act Whilst delivering this Strategy, we will ensure the decisions we make consider the well-being goals and five ways of working: Long Term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration and Prevention. We will ensure that our decisions are evidenced-based and consider the social and economic impact on our communities. The key principles and priorities of this strategy are aimed at those who need and want to access the Council. The intention is to build good quality services with those who use and provide them. The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities. Through our customer-centred design approach we will consider each element of a process and how customers use our services. Having the right culture and leadership to drive our digital ambition will support the development of customer-centred services. Improved use of data, better engagement and collaboration will allow us to join up services to remove barriers between organisations so that customers can easily access what they need

2. **A RESILIENT WALES** ... a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change). Think about how your activity will have regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

Considered but no impact identified

3. **A HEALTHIER WALES** ... a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

The strategies will provide our residents with a choice of how they interact with us dependant on the individual circumstances and needs.

4. **A MORE EQUAL WALES** ... A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

The strategies will provide our residents with a choice of how they interact with us dependant on the ondividual circumstances and needs.

5. **A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES** ... attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

We aim to ensure our technology and digital infrastructure is responsive, secure and adaptive to meet changing needs of our customers, business and staff and we will aim to do this by working with communities, developing a digital infrastruture to support 21st century services, collaborating with partners but maintaining our systems so they are always safe and secure

6. **A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING** ... a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

Improving customer digital skills can open many doors to opportunity and skills developme

7. **A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES** ... a nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

The Digital Strategy will contribute towards the requirements and standards set out in the following: > Well-being and Future Generations Act > Digital Strategy for Wales > Digital Service Standards for Wales > Welsh Language Act



Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact that any proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language. [Welsh Language Standards](#))

| Requirement | Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts in regards to the below? | What can be done to mitigate any negative impacts? | Please demonstrate any evidence used to form this opinion. |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>Specifically Standards 88 - 93</i></p> | <p>Positive – the strategies support the Welsh language and support the equalities agenda.</p> | <p>Ensuring the Welsh language standards are adhered to and embedded into every service area.</p> | <p>Customers will be given the choice of communicating in their preferred language of choice.</p> |
| <p>What opportunities are there to promote the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i></p> | <p>Correspondance will be provided in the language of choice.</p> | | |
| <p>What opportunities are there for a person or person to use the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</i></p> | <p>Customers will be able to deal with queries in their preferred language of their choice</p> | <p>Whilst there are already Welsh speakers in the LA, front line customer service staff are currently under-going Welsh language training.</p> | <p>Customers will be able to converse with customer service staff in their preferred choice of language.</p> |

| | | | |
|--|------------|--|--|
| <p>Has the Welsh Language been considered in order to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>Whilst there are already Welsh speakers in the LA, front line customer service staff are currently under-going Welsh language training.</p> | <p>We are currently following an action plan following intervention from the Welsh language Commissioner</p> |
|--|------------|--|--|

| <p>Section 6 – Children’s Rights Approach - The Right Way</p> <p>The Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It places the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrates children’s rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Right Way focuses on three main them Participation, Provision and Protection.</p> | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Protected characteristics</p> | <p>Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?</p> | <p>Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?</p> | <p>Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.</p> |
| <p>Participation (child or young person as someone who actively</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| contributes to society as a citizen) | | | |
| Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop) | Considered but no impact identified | | |
| Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination) | Considered but no impact identified | | |

Section 7– Community Safety

Duty to Consider Crime and Disorder Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the local authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder, anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, re-offending and serious violence.

| | | | |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| Impacts | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on crime and disorder? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on crime and disorder? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
|----------------|---|---|--|

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Crime (consider impact on each: victims, offenders and neighbourhoods)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |
| <p>Anti-Social Behaviour and behaviour adversely affecting the local environment (consider impact on each: victims, offenders, neighbourhoods and green spaces)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |
| <p>Misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances (Think vulnerable children, adults, families and communities)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |
| <p>Re-offending (Think young people and adults, victims, families, communities)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |
| <p>Serious Violence (Think vulnerable young people, vulnerable adults, victims, families, communities)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Counter Terrorism (People and places that are vulnerable to terrorism or violent extremism) | Considered but no impact identified | | |
| Community Cohesion (Asylum seekers, Migrants, Victims or Hate Crime, Community tensions) | Considered but no impact identified | | |

| Section 8- Armed Forces Covenant Duty AFC Draft Statutory Guidance - Final.pdf | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Impacts | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the armed forces community? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the armed forces community? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
| Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of services • Planning and funding • Co-operation between bodies and professionals | Considered but no impact identified | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>These healthcare functions are within scope of the Duty in the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Primary Care services, including general practice, community pharmacies, NHS dental, NHS optometry services and public health screening services. • NHS Secondary Care services, including urgent and emergency care, hospital and community services, specialist care, mental health services, and additional needs services (as applicable). • Local authority-delivered healthcare services, including sexual health services and drug and alcohol misuse services | | | |
| <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Educational attainment and curriculum • Child wellbeing | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Attendance • Additional needs support • Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (England only) <p>These education functions are within scope of the Duty in compulsory education settings, that is, primary, secondary, and, for England only, compulsory further education. The Duty does not cover nursery (early years education), higher education, or other voluntary adult education settings</p> | | | |
| <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations policy for social housing • Tenancy strategies (England only) • Homelessness • Disabled Facilities Grants | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |

Section 9-Data-Please outline any data or evidence that has been used to develop the proposal, this can be previous consultations, local/national data, pilot projects, reports, feedback from clients etc.

| Data/evidence –What data/evidence was used? - provide any links. | What were the key findings? | How has the data/evidence informed this proposal? |
|--|---|---|
| <p>The Strategies have been developed with engagement via;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from customers, non-users, learners, businesses, partners, staff and data gathered during various service design projects; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from work undertaken on service design projects, i.e Planning and content design; • Wider CLT session facilitated by Centre of Public Digital Services to understand current position, opportunities, barriers and objectives; • Feedback from elected members, MCS induction session; • Digital self-evaluation, facilitated by WLGA; • Digital Exclusion project across Gwent; • Customer Experience and Access review; • Review of agile working | <p>The external review undertaken in 2022 of customer experience across the Council found;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People value the interaction and the experience of in person customer service channels • There are many access points and it’s confusing people • Some people lack the ability to use digital channels but not all • Customers who are able to self-serve are opting to call for reasons including difficulty in navigating the online experience • Often the content we communicate is misunderstood and causes confusion | <p>All the evidence and data we have gathered has allowed us to consider our position in order to develop these strategies</p> |

- Community feedback on budget proposals – 62% want easy access to digital services

User research will be a key part of the strategy implementation moving forward.

- Closer working between Customer Services officers and service areas could alleviate frustrating and confusing experiences for people.

There will be a set of delivery plans against each priority set out in the strategy and will have a number of key success measures, such as % of customers accessing front facing services rating the service they receive as excellent or good; total number of complaints received per thousand populations (aligned to Council Complaints procedure)

Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?

n/a

Section 10-Consultation. Please provide details of consultation undertaken to support the proposal. Please consider the Gunning Principles: -

Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.

Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?

Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?

Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision

Briefly describe any planned consultations or consultations that have been carried out to date. Please consider the above principles.

Please consider the following questions; -

- 1. Who did you consult?**
- 2. When did the consultation take place and was adequate time given for a response?**
- 3. Was there enough information provided to respond effectively?**
- 4. What were the findings?**
- 5. Have the findings been considered in regards to the decision?**

The Strategy, Standards and Charter has been developed with engagement via;

- An externally facilitated organisational review of the customer experience and access involving a range of service areas and engagement through journey mapping with customers who use our services
- User research with customers including that gained through service re design projects
- Senior management and Elected member feedback

- Undertaking desk top research and,
- Discussions with partner organisations

User research will be a key part of the strategy implementation moving forward

Section 11-Monitoring and Review

| | |
|---|---|
| How will the implementation of the proposal be monitored, including the impacts or changes made? | Information will be included in the quarterly Joint finance and performance report which is part of the committee forward work programme, including an annual quarter 4 position |
| What monitoring tools will be used? | To be considered |
| How will the results be used for future development? | Each year the strategy will have a set of Delivery Plans developed against each priority. A set of key success measures will also be developed. |
| How and when will it be reviewed? | For the Customer Service strategy an annual quarter 4 position but with a mid-point review of the strategies to be undertaken. The Digital strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure we keep pace with ongoing changes to digital innovation, technologies and customer expectation |
| Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? | The Future Working Programme Board chaired by the Chief Executive will receive progress updates on the implementation of the Customer Services strategy. The Service Design and Digital Leadership Board will oversee the delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy. |

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Section 12 - Decision

Using the information you have gathered from sections 1-9 please state in the table below whether you are able to proceed with the proposal.

Continue with the proposal in its current form Yes No

| | |
|--|---|
| Continue with proposal but take into account reasonable steps to mitigate any negative impacts of the proposal | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|---|

| Name of person completing the IIA | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Name: | Jonathan Morgan |
| Job Title: | Team Manager Customer Contact |
| Date: | 7/9/2023 |

| Head of Service Approval | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------|------------------|
| Name: | Leanne Roberts | | |
| Job Title: | Service Manager – Customer Experience & Transformation | | |
| Signature: | L.C.Roberts | Date: | 29/8/2023 |

Please contact Policy & Partnerships should you require any further advice or guidance on completing your assessment via lissa.friel@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or emma.scherptong@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.

Agenda Item 10

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**

Report Subject: **Customer Service Strategy for the Council**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member for Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias – Chief Officer Commercial and Customer
Leanne Roberts – Service Manager Customer Experience & Digital Transformation**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 24/08/2023 | 04.09.23 | | | 14/09/2023 | 04/10/2023 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Council Customer Services Strategy 2023 – 2027 (hereafter ‘the strategy’) and the associated customer standards and charter to Cabinet for approval.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Customer Services landscape has changed dramatically over recent years and is constantly evolving with higher expectations of standards of service and accessibility, including the way the public receive council services.
- 2.2 The Pandemic changed customer behaviour, and the way in which public services needed to respond has given momentum to shaping a new vision for the Council’s customer offer. The lasting impact of COVID-19 has accelerated the need for the review of the Customer Services delivery model.
- 2.3 The development of our vision and approach to customer services for the Council recognises the changing public expectations which we need to plan and deliver for. It also acknowledges that different channels for different customer contacts are important alongside looking to maximise the potential for digital solutions to provide a better offer and value for money. The development of the strategy was grounded in an approach which would:
- Continue to build on our relationship with residents and strengthen the Councils reputation
 - Strive for consistency in the quality of our customer service offer across the whole Council
 - Put users at the centre of services, mapping the journey through our services through their eyes

- Defines “customer” as all residents, visitors, businesses who use the services we provide and enables us to develop mixed channels so the more complex contacts keep the human touch; and
- Improve our digital presence and ease of use so those who can self-serve are able to, helping us realise efficiencies to support our medium term financial planning.

2.4 The Strategy is underpinned by three key principles and three priorities: -

Principle One: to deliver a Positive Customer Service experience;

Principle Two: investing in our staff to support customers and to resolve queries at first point of contact where possible;

Principle Three: developing a culture that supports digital improvement, innovation and continues to make the best use of new technology;

Priority One: designing services to meet the needs of our customers;

Priority Two: delivery of a customer focused culture;

Priority Three: giving our customers the choice on how they interact with us, based on feedback.

2.5 Implementation of the strategy will be driven by a Customer Service Standards document (Appendix 2) and a Customer Service Charter (Appendix 3). It will commence on a phased basis with the emphasis on the Community Hub and Contact Centre services in the first instance before expanding to wider service areas.

2.6 In December 2022 an external review was undertaken with the aim to gain a better organisational oversight of customer service delivery across the Council. The review offered an opportunity to better understand what our customers think of the way we interact with them, the barriers they face when contacting us and views on how they would like to contact us in the future.

2.7 The findings from the review were shared with Wider Corporate Leadership Team (WCLT) and a Member briefing session held in March 2023. The main findings are set out in the performance information section of this report.

2.8 The review was used to inform the development of our strategy alongside service area knowledge and a desk top research exercise of the customer service models in other councils.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 CLT endorsed the Strategy on 24th August 2023

- 3.2 The Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee recommended Option 2, namely, that an amendment is made to Appendix 2 – Customer Service Standards “When customers *contact* the Council”.
- 3.3 **Option 1:**
That Cabinet approves the Customer Services Strategy and associated Customer Standards and Charter;
- Option 2:**
That Cabinet considers the Customer Services Strategy and associated Customer Standards and Charter and suggests recommendations for changes prior to approval.
4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15), places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also places individual duties on public bodies. The legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and creating a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.
- 4.2 The Strategy supports these objectives and the Corporate Plan priority “an ambitious and innovative Council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place.”.
- 4.3 The strategy is an important part of the overall governance framework and is aligned to other key Council plans and strategies including the Digital Strategy (currently in the democratic process for approval), the Commercial strategy, the Workforce Strategy, the Communication Strategy and the Decarbonisation Plan.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***
- 5.1.1 The Strategy supports elements of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and aspects of its delivery are included within the Commercial Strategy and within the Bridging the Gap Programme.
- 5.1.2 There is a clear alignment to the telephony and digital programmes that are currently in progress.
- 5.1.3 There are no anticipated impacts on budget to deliver the core values of the strategy.
- 5.1.4 Staff within the Customer Service team would be required to ensure adoption of the strategy, standards and charter across the Council.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 There is a risk of non-compliance of the adoption of the strategy. Failure to comply with the ambitions of the strategy will impact the delivery and savings associated with the Strategic Financial programme called Bridging the Gap, such as:

- Reducing Third Party Spend Strategic Business Review
- Workplace Transformation Strategic Business Review
- Use of data and insight to support decision making Strategic Business Review
- Designing services around the customer Strategic Business Review
- Behavioural Insight Strategic Business Review

5.2.2 Non-compliance to the strategy will impact the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and pose risks to the delivery of other key plans and strategies, such as:

- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Workforce Strategy
- Regeneration Strategy
- Education ICT Strategy
- Commissioning and Procurement Strategy
- Commercial Strategy

5.2.3 The mitigation of these risks will be monitored through officer networks (mentioned in Performance Section 6 of the report).

5.3 ***Legal***

Adherence to Welsh Language Standards will be part of the delivery of the strategy.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

5.4.1 Training of staff across the Council and delivery of the strategy will be undertaken with consultation with colleagues in Human Resources.

5.4.2 Attendance at Officer Networks across the Council, i.e. Future Working Programme Board and Service Design and Digital Board will support the adoption of the strategy.

5.5 ***Health and Safety***

None identified.

6. ***Supporting Evidence***

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.2 The external review undertaken in 2022 of customer experience across the Council found:

- People value the interaction and the experience of in person customer service channels
- There are many access points and it's confusing people

- Some people lack the ability to use digital channels but not all
- Customers who are able to self-serve are opting to call for reasons including difficulty in navigating the online experience
- Often the content we communicate is misunderstood and causes confusion
- Closer working between Customer Services officers and service areas could alleviate frustrating and confusing experiences for people.

6.3 There will be a set of delivery plans against each priority set out in the strategy and will have a number of key success measures, such as % of customers accessing front facing services rating the service they receive as excellent or good; total number of complaints received per thousand populations (aligned to Council Complaints procedure)

6.4 Behavioural insight will inform delivery of the strategy moving forward.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

6.2.1 To support the successful delivery of this strategy there are some clear links to the level of service that customers can expect to receive, whatever channel they choose to use.

6.2.2 Our Customer Service Standards and Charter (currently in draft – Appendix 2 and 3) underpins our customer services delivery model and describes the basic standards of service that a customer can expect from Blaenau Gwent Council.

6.2.3 Within our Customer Charter the term “customer” relates to all residents, visitors, businesses who use the services we provide.

6.2.4 Transforming our customer service delivery will undoubtedly impact on the standards outlined in our Customer Charter. It is important that these changes and their impact are considered. The charter will be reviewed and updated regularly throughout the life of the strategy.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Strategy, Standards and Charter has been developed with engagement via;

- An externally facilitated organisational review of the customer experience and access involving a range of service areas and engagement through journey mapping with customers who use our services
- User research with customers including that gained through service re design projects
- Senior management and Elected member feedback
- Undertaking desk top research and,
- Discussions with partner organisations

6.3.1 User research will be a key part of the strategy implementation moving forward.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

- 6.4.1 The Customer Services landscape has changed dramatically over recent years and is constantly evolving with higher expectations of standards of service and accessibility, including the way the public receive council services.
- 6.4.2 The Pandemic changed customer behaviour, and the way in which public services needed to respond has given momentum to shaping a new vision for the Council's customer offer.
- 6.4.3 The lasting impact of COVID-19 has accelerated the need for the review of the Customer Services delivery model.
- 6.4.4 Closely aligning the strategy with understanding our demographics utilising new technology will provide a pathway for future proofing the Council moving forward into the 21st Century.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

- 6.5.1 The demands and expectations of customers and staff and the speed of digital innovation means that we need to be able to deal with the rising volume of customers' requests, who want faster, more comprehensive services across a growing range of channels
- 6.5.2 The key principles and priorities of this strategy and the Digital Strategy are aimed at those that need and want to access the Council.
- 6.5.3 The intention is to build good quality services with those that use and provide them. The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities.
- 6.5.4 Through our customer-centred design approach we will consider each element of a process and how customers use our services. Having the right culture and leadership to drive our ambition will support the development of customer-centred services.
- 6.5.5 Improved use of data, better engagement and collaboration will allow us to join up services to remove barriers between organisations so that customers can easily access what they need, supporting behaviour change where possible

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The strategy will be shared with key partners to support working towards a more joined up public services experience for customers.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The strategy takes a whole council approach and promotes knowledge sharing across service areas.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The Community Hub model places the emphasis on delivering customer services closer to the communities.

Utilisation of digital solutions where customers are able to also supports decarbonisation, ability to transact online where customers are able

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

See Appendix 4.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Information will be included in the quarterly Joint finance and performance report which is part of the committee forward work programme, including an annual quarter 4 position.

7.1.2 The Future Working Programme Board chaired by the Chief Executive will receive progress updates on the implementation of the strategy.

7.1.3 The Service Design and Digital Board which has representations from across the service areas will review its terms of reference to support monitoring and delivery of the strategy.

7.1.4 A midpoint review of the strategy will be undertaken.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 - Customer Services Strategy
- Appendix 2 - Customer Services Standards
- Appendix 3 - Customer Service Charter
- Appendix 4 – Integrated Impact Assessment

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Blaenau Gwent Council Customer Services Strategy

2023 - 2027



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Foreword

Welcome to the Customer Service Strategy

The strategy sets out the key outcomes, activities and behaviours that Blaenau Gwent Council will pursue in support of our corporate priorities and a culture of continuous improvement.

Understanding the experience of our key community groups will allow us to provide services where and when they are needed along with supporting the corporate approach to reducing inequalities. As the demand for council services increases, listening to our customers, the residents of Blaenau Gwent is essential to our success on delivering excellent customer service.

Blaenau Gwent Council is committed to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and, leaders in our organisation actively support this, as well as utilising customer insight to inform policy and strategy.

Along with guiding our customer service to be the best it can be for all our customers the strategy links to our Corporate Plan 2022 -2027 and complements our Digital Strategy 2023 - 2027 that likewise will allow and continue to inform our work in delivering the best customer service.

The journey to achieving what is set out in the strategy will involve the experience and expertise of all our council staff and partners.

This strategy has been developed in consultation with a cross service council officer group (Wider Corporate Leadership Team), elected members and Corporate Leadership Team. This will ensure customer service has a prominent presence at the centre of all service development demonstrating its strategic importance.

This Customer Service Strategy will ensure that service provision is designed and delivered to meet local needs and that services improvements are customer led and outcome focused.

Steve Thomas - Leader

Helen Cunningham - Deputy Leader

Introduction

Where we are now

Blaenau Gwent is committed to its customer service delivery and ensuring a positive customer experience for all.

In 2022 a review was undertaken in relation to customer service delivery across the organisation, part of which included understanding the access points across the Council (from telephony, face to face, email addresses).

The objective of the review was to:

- > Understand what our customers think of the way we interact with them
- > Establish what barriers our customers face when contacting us and;
- > To obtain ideas / suggestions as to how customers would like to interact with us in the future

The key themes and priorities of this strategy have been developed through various methods, including:

- > user research, feedback and engagement with our customers
- > senior management and elected member feedback
- > undertaking desk top research, and
- > discussions with partner organisations

We work with customers who find themselves digitally excluded and learn from their experiences to better support them.

What we are trying to achieve

Blaenau Gwent is committed to its customer service delivery and ensuring a positive customer experience for all.

This strategy sets out our ambition to deliver a positive customer experience throughout the Council, putting the customer at the heart of everything we do.

The importance of customer service delivery has never been more vital. As demand for council services increases, the way in which we respond to our customers' needs to be consistent (irrespective of what service customers are accessing), accurate, effective and efficient

Our customers and staff have been the driving force behind the creation of our Customer Service Standards and Customer Service Charter (in draft). We believe our customers have the right to know what level of service they can expect from us and how we will put things right if / when things go wrong.

Blaenau Gwent Context

This strategy will support the Council’s vision of being “a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities”

It will help to deliver the Council’s Corporate Plan Priorities:

An ambitious and innovative Council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place (closer to our communities)

Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient

Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent

Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities

This strategy is aligned to the ambitions of the following key plans and strategies:

- > Customer Strategy (in draft)
- > Workforce Strategy
- > Commercial Strategy
- > Communication Strategy
- > Commissioning and Procurement Strategy
- > Medium Term Financial Strategy
- > Decarbonisation Plan

This strategy demonstrates the Council’s commitment and investment into becoming a customer focussed Council by:

- > providing equal access to services
- > supporting learning and developing skills
- > identifying and developing the right technology in the right way
- > improving collaboration with others

66,900

people live in Blaenau Gwent



30,000 households in Blaenau Gwent

There are 4,035 Welsh Speaking Residents

7,497

Residents visited our Community Hubs in 2022/23

There are over 90

services in Blaenau Gwent that can be transacted on-line



58,821

calls were handled in the Contact Centre in 2022/23

@ 6,500+

residents contacted us via our info@ email address last year

f Blaenau Gwent has 17,845 followers on Facebook

X Blaenau Gwent has 13,698 followers on X

150,000 people visit our website each quarter

7.3%

of households do not have internet access

93.5%

of households with internet access have superfast broadband

Our Principles

The strategy sets out the commitment of Blaenau Gwent Council in providing excellent customer services from highly skilled staff, thus enhancing the experience received.

It is underpinned by three key principles and three priorities. These are essential to the delivery of a positive customer service experience across the Council.

Principle One

To deliver a Positive Customer Service experience.

We will do this by:

- > developing a shared vision on how the Council improve and deliver its services
- > influencing behaviours that put the customer at the heart of everything we do
- > developing a customer-centric approach to delivering services
- > working as one to remove silos
- > developing a data driven culture to improve and design services
- > developing an innovating and intrapreneurial culture to modernise the Council
- > developing an open culture where information is shared and reused where able to
- > learning from customer feedback, both positive and negative and using this to improve service delivery
- > working with customers who are digitally excluded

Principle Two

Invest in our staff to support customers and to resolve queries at first point of contact where possible.

We will do this by:

- > assessing the skills and capabilities required
- > providing ongoing mentorship and training to all customer service representatives
- > collaborating with partners and organisations around training
- > creating a customer service network
- > developing a customer service champion network
- > creating a Customer Service Charter and Standards
- > developing staff skills to future proof customer service delivery and the organisation

Principle Three

Develop a culture that supports digital improvement, innovation and continues to make the best use of new technology.

We will do this by:

- > reviewing and assessing current systems and processes used across the Council that supports customer service delivery
- > understanding what our customers' needs are, putting them at the heart of everything we do
- > reviewing services so that they are fully accessible and meet all required standards
- > making it easy to find and understand information online
- > making it easy for customers to contact and transact with us online
- > increasing the number of services available online
- > continually move with the times but ensuring customers' needs always come first
- > supporting the building of services that are fit for the 21st Century

Our Priorities

Priority One - Designing Services to meet the needs of our customers.

Aim: Identify customer needs and priorities across Blaenau Gwent through ongoing engagement.

The active participation of people who have used our services can bring valuable knowledge and experience which will contribute to the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of our services as we move forward.

This strategy builds on a solid foundation and further develops the work that is already underway in the organisation to support the delivery of customer focussed services.

At all times we must strive to meet our customers' expectations and deliver an excellent quality of service.

We will do this by:

- > working with our customers and stakeholders to help shape our services
- > community engagement with community groups, 3rd sector partners and Community Hub attendees
- > continuing to review and redesign our services to make us efficient and effective
- > monitoring and improving our communication processes with our customers, making it easier for customers to understand letters etc. to be able to contact us via their preferred method.

Demonstrate delivery by:

- > Example of key performance indicators - % of customers accessing front facing services rating the service they receive as excellent or good; total number of complaints received per thousand population.

Priority Two - Delivery of a customer focused culture

Aim: A positive customer experience to be provided at all times. It is important that all staff work within a customer focused culture, putting the customer at the heart of everything they do.

The variety and breadth of the services we provide preclude the establishment of a single model of customer care.

We will have in place a range of tools and processes that are tailored to the specific needs of the customer, the service required and the delivery of that service.

We will do this by:

- > delivering customer service training as part of induction for all employees
- > learning from complaints to improve service delivery
- > embedding customer service delivery within business plans
- > continually measuring customer service satisfaction
- > developing a customer service charter and standards (in draft)
- > providing information and advice to our customers in a concise and professional way
- > utilising all communication channels, linking to Corporate Communication Strategy
- > undertaking first contact resolution where possible

Demonstrate delivery by:

- > Example key performance indicators, % resolution at first point of contact
- > Example key performance indicators, % of customers who rated services received as good / excellent

Priority Three - Redesigning Services, giving our customers the choice on how they interact with us.

Aim: Digital technology is changing the way that we communicate. There is an expectation by many of our customers that we will offer a wide range of digital services. Customers should have the choice of how they want to communicate with us.

We will do this by:

- > further development of the My Council Services platform
- > developing phase 2 of Community Hubs delivery
- > transforming the Corporate Contact Centre to understand why customers are contacting us and what is important to them
- > the development of the Digital Exclusion project, supporting our customers to be more digitally included where they want to be
- > providing a website that meets the needs of customers
- > communicating in plain language, accessible formats with inclusivity for all

Demonstrate delivery by:

- > Example key performance indicators, % resolution at first point of contact
- > Example key performance indicators, % of customers who rated services received as good / excellent

Customer Service Standards and Customer Charter

To support the successful delivery of this strategy there are some clear links to the level of service that customers can expect to receive, whatever channel they choose to use.

Our current Customer Service Standards and Charter (in draft) underpins our customer services delivery model and describes the basic standards of service that a customer can expect from Blaenau Gwent Council.

Within our Customer Charter the term “customer” relates to all residents, visitors, businesses who use the services we provide.

Transforming our customer service delivery will undoubtedly impact on the standards outlined in our Customer Charter.

It is important that these changes and their impact are considered. The charter will be reviewed and updated regularly throughout the life of this strategy.

Monitoring and Review

The structure for customer service within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is as follows:

- > Leadership through Cabinet Members, the Leader and Portfolio Member for Corporate Overview and Performance
- > Chief Officer Commercial and Customer
- > Service Manager Customer Experience and Transformation;
- > Customer Experience Team Lead

The strategy will have a set of delivery plans against each priority and each priority will have a number of key success measures.

Information will be included in the quarterly Joint finance and performance report which is part of the committee forward work programme, including an annual quarter 4 position.

The Future Working Programme Board chaired by the Chief Executive will receive progress updates on the implementation of the strategy.

The Service Design and Digital Board which has representations from across the service areas will review its terms of reference to support monitoring and delivery of the strategy.

A midpoint review of the strategy will be undertaken.

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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Customer Service Standards

Customer Service Standards

Why do we need Customer Service Standards?

The Customer Service Standards helps define what Blaenau Gwent customers can expect from services and how it should be delivered.

Our Customer Service Standards

The Customer Service Standards helps define what Blaenau Gwent customers can expect from services and how it should be delivered.

> Telephone Standards

When calling the contact centre, customers can expect calls to be answered as quickly as possible; generally, within six rings. This is linked to the customer service standard of answering 80% of all calls within 20 seconds. Like every contact centre we will have busy times, when we cannot answer all calls this quickly. However, this will be the exception to the rule. We will deliver this commitment by ensuring that we are staffed to meet customer demand and that staff are well trained, so they can resolve calls quickly.

> Written Standards

Upon receipt of a customer letter or email the Council will ensure that a reply is sent within five working days. If the query is complex and will take some time to answer, we will acknowledge receipt of the correspondence within five working days and provide the customer with the timescales for a full response.

> Face to Face Standards

Customers visiting the Community Hubs can expect to be seen by an appropriate member of staff as quickly as possible. Like our contact centre we will have busy times, but we will try to ensure that on most occasions we are staffed to deal with demand and appropriately trained to resolve queries in an efficient manner.

> **Customer choice in accessing services**

As a Council we will provide services through the quickest and most efficient access channel for the customer, whether that is over the phone, online, face to face or via letter. We recognise that quick, simple and straightforward transactions are easily completed online or via the phone and therefore we are committed to making this possible for all of these services. We recognise that for more in depth and complex issues customers may need to speak with us face to face. We are already committed to providing this in the Community Hubs across the borough.

> **Resolving customer enquiries promptly and conveniently**

We want to resolve customer queries as quickly as we can. Therefore, if we can resolve it during the first contact, we will. In order to achieve this, we are committed to providing comprehensive training to all frontline staff and empowering them to make decisions that will speed up the process

> **Clear communication**

When customers contact the Council we promise to listen. If it takes longer than expected to resolve the matter, we will keep them informed, explaining the reasons why. We will also be clear with our communication and avoid the use of jargon.

> **We will be courteous and welcoming**

When customers visit Council buildings they can expect a welcoming environment. We will be polite and courteous and will ensure that we treat everyone equally.

> **Equality in accessing Council services**

Accessibility and fairness is a key priority for us. When visiting the Community Hubs customers can access services in languages other than English, staff are also being trained in the Welsh Language. Our website is also in the process of being re-designed to make it accessible to all, providing a range of facilities to help customers access the services they need. We aim to continuously improve in order to ensure that we provide access to services in a fair way.

> **Putting things right**

If customers are unhappy with a service they have received from the Council or they want to tell us about something we have done well, we want to know. To make this as easy as possible we have a very clear and consistent Concerns and Complaints policy. Concerns and Complaints should be acknowledged within three working days and a response should be given within ten working days.

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Customer Service Charter

Customer Service Charter

Why do we need a Customer Service Charter?

The Customer Service Charter describes the standards of service customers can expect from Blaenau Gwent Council.

Who are our Customers?

Within the charter the term “customer” relates to all residents and visitors who use the services we provide and includes the pupils, parents and carers served by our schools.

Our pledge to you

We want to provide an excellent customer service to everyone in Blaenau Gwent, this means putting the customer at the heart of the service and processes.

This Customer Charter will let you know what you can expect from us when receiving our services, and what we can expect from you.

Treating you fairly - WE will:

- > Be polite, helpful and considerate and take time to listen to you
- > Treat you with respect
- > Treat you as an individual and according to your needs
- > Protect your personal information
- > Deal with your requests and complaints quickly

Making access easier - WE will:

- > Develop services with your help, that meet your needs
- > Make our website accessible to everyone
- > Increase our online services for you to use at a time that suits you
- > Clearly advertise all the ways you can access our services (including face to face)

Keeping you informed - WE will:

- > Give you clear information about the right people to help you
- > Talk to you in plain language, without jargon
- > Keep all the information on our website up-to-date
- > Update you with any progress on requests and complaints

Getting it right - WE will:

- > Do what we say we will do
- > Say sorry and put things right if we have made a mistake
- > Tell you what to do next if you are not happy with how you have been treated
- > Use your feedback to shape our services
- > Train our staff to the highest standards

How you can help - YOU will:

- > Treat our staff with courtesy and respect
- > Give us the opportunity to put things right first
- > Provide us with honest feedback
- > Participate in surveys and consultations.

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Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment.

- Section 1-Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Section 2-Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Section 3-Corporate Plan
- Section 4-Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Section 6-Children’s Right “The Right Way”
- Section 7-Community Safety
- Section 8 Armed Forces
- Section 9-Data
- Section 10-Consultations Statutory Consultation Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles
- Section 11-Monitoring
- Section 12-Decision of proposal

| Lead Officer | Head of Service | Service Area & Department | Date |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Jonathan Morgan/Shawn Hughes | Leanne Roberts | Corporate Services | 29/8/2023 |

Briefly outline the proposal indicating what change or decision is to be made, also provide any documentation that may be used to support this.
What is the proposal that needs to be assessed?

The development and introduction of a Digital Transformation Strategy and Customer Services Strategy including Customer Service Standards and Customer Service charter. These will be embedded so that a clear description of the level of service customers can expect when dealing with the Council.

Section 1
Outline how the proposal will impact on any people or groups of people with protected characteristics, please refer to the Equalities Act 2010 (Wales) for further information [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and the EHRC guidance [The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty: EHRC](#)
Briefly outline below if there will be any positive or negative impacts as a result of the proposal being considered.

| Protected characteristics | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
|---|--|---|--|
| Age (<i>people of all ages</i>) | Yes | Positive impact – customers will be able to self serve as much as possible, but also for those unable to self serve alternative ways to contact us are available. | Customers will be able to take responsibility for their own actions by interacting with us on-line as much as possible rather than waiting to see or speak to an agent. This can be 24/7, 365 days a year. The Contact Centre and Community Hubs only operate during working hours Monday to Friday. |
| Disability (<i>people with disabilities/ long term conditions</i>) | Yes | Positive impact – clear guidance will show how customers will be able to self serve as much as possible, speak to an agent in the Contact | Customers will be able to take responsibility for their own actions by interacting with us on-line as much as possible rather than waiting to see or speak to an agent. This can be 24/7, 365 days a year. The Contact Centre and Community Hubs only operate during working hours Monday to Friday. |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | | Centre or visit a Community Hub. Negative impact – location of the Community Hubs in town centres may be challenging to some residents in terms of their location. | |
| Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth)</i> | Considered but no impact identified | | |
| Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i> | Considered but no impact identified | | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)</i> | Yes | Positive impact – customers will be able to self serve as much as possible, but also for those unable to self serve alternative ways to contact us are available. | Customers will be able to take responsibility for their own actions by interacting with us on-line as much as possible rather than waiting to see or speak to an agent. This can be 24/7, 365 days a year. The Contact Centre and Community Hubs only operate during working hours Monday to Friday. |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| | | Negative impact – parking in town centres near to the Community Hub maybe challenging due to traffic restrictions. | |
| Race (<i>people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds</i>) | Considered but no impact identified | n/a | |
| Religion or Belief (<i>people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs</i>) | Considered but no impact identified | n/a | |
| Sex (<i>women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender</i>) | Considered but no impact identified | n/a | |
| Sexual Orientation (<i>lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other</i>) | Considered but no impact identified | n/a | |

NOTE: Section 2 only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. See page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.

Section 2
Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)
The Welsh Governments [Socio-economic Duty](#) provides a framework in order to ensure tackling inequality is at the forefront of decision making.

.Please consider the below vulnerable groups and consider how the proposal could affect them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People misusing substances
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system

| Socio Economic disadvantage definitions. | Will the proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impacts on the below? | How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined? | Please highlight any evidence that has been considered. |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i></p> | <p>Positive – customers will have a choice to access services on their own devices, telephone or visit Community Hubs.</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial constraints. Also, costly to travel to Community Hubs.</p> <p>Customers will have a choice as to how best their circumstances allow them to interact with us.</p> | <p>Every case is treated on its own merits and the Customer Service delivery provided to our customers will depend on their individual circumstance.</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Low and/or No Wealth (<i>enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future</i>)</p> | <p>Positive – customers will have a choice to access services on their own devices, telephone the Contact Centre or visit Community Hubs</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial constraints or personal choice. Also, costly to travel to Community Hubs</p> <p>Customers will have a choice as to how best their circumstances allow them to interact with us.</p> | <p>Every case is treated on its own merits and the Customer Service delivery provided to our customers will depend on their individual circumstance</p> |
| <p>Material Deprivation (<i>unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.</i>)</p> | <p>Positive – residents will be able to access services on their own devices rather than travel to Community Hubs</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial constraints or personal choice. Also, costly to travel to Community Hubs</p> <p>Customers will have a choice as to how best their circumstances allow them to interact with us.</p> | <p>Every case is treated on its own merits and the Customer Service delivery provided to our customers will depend on their individual circumstance</p> |
| <p>Area Deprivation (<i>where you live (rural areas), where you work</i>)</p> | <p>Positive – residents will be able to access services on their own</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial</p> | <p>Customers will a choice of how to interact with the Council</p> |


| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><i>(accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i></p> | <p>devices rather than travel to Community Hubs</p> | <p>constraints or personal choice. Also, costly to travel to Community Hubs and public transport services to town centres are limited in certain areas.</p> | <p>dependant on their individual circumstances.</p> |
| <p>Socio-economic Background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i></p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | <p>n/a</p> | |
| <p>Socio-economic Disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p> | <p>Positive – residents will be able to access services om their own devices rather than travel to Community Hubs</p> | <p>Negative – no access to digital technology due to financial constraints or choice.</p> | <p>Customers will a choice of how to interact with the Council dependant on their individual circumstances.</p> |

| | | | |
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Section 3-Corporate Plan

Please outline any Corporate Plan linkages of the proposal - [BG Corporate Plan 22-27](#)

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Priority 1 - Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent</p> | <p>Priority 2 of the Digital Strategy – “To be a digitally enabled Borough” – To develop digital and data skills to deliver services that meet customer and business needs. We have a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement.</p> |
| <p>Priority 2 - Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities</p> | <p>The Customer Service Strategy will link into the Decarbonisation Plan.</p> |
| <p>Priority 3 - An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place</p> | <p>Both strategies emphasise the importance of investing in our staff and developing a culture that supports digital improvement and a seamless, positive customer experience.</p> |
| <p>Priority 4 - Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient</p> | <p>Allowing customers to have the choice of how they interact with us but with the knowledge that, as Priority 2 of the digital Strategy says, all data is protected appropriately and only shared when it is safe and appropriate to do so.</p> |

| Section 4-Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (ICLIP) | |
|---|--|
| <i>Sustainable development principles. The WCFG Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)</i> | |
| Five Ways of Working | How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal? |
| <p>Long Tern</p>  | <p>Consider the long-term impact of the proposal on the ability of communities to secure their well-being. The Digital and Customer Service landscape has changed dramatically over recent years and is constantly evolving with higher expectations of standards of service and accessibility, including the way the public receive council services.</p> <p>The Pandemic changed customer behaviour, and the way in which public services needed to respond has given momentum to shaping a new vision for the Councils customer offer.</p> <p>The lasting impact of COVID-19 has accelerated the need for the review of the Digital and Transformation and Customer Services delivery model.</p> <p>Closely aligning the strategy with understanding our demographics utilising new technology will provide a pathway for future proofing the Council moving forward into the 21st Century</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Prevention</p>  | <p>Consider how the proposal is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse The demands and expectations of customers and staff and the speed of digital innovation means that we need to be able to deal with the rising volume of customers' requests, who want faster, more comprehensive services across a growing range of channels</p> <p>The key principles and priorities of the Digital and Customer Services Strategies are aimed at those that need and want to access the Council.</p> <p>The intention is to build good quality services with those that use and provide them. The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities.</p> <p>Through our customer-centred design approach we will consider each element of a process and how customers use our services. Having the right culture and leadership to drive our ambition will support the development of customer-centred services.</p> <p>Improved use of data, better engagement and collaboration will allow us to join up services to remove barriers between organisations so that customers can easily access what they need, supporting behaviour change where possible</p> |
| <p>Integration</p>  | <p>Consider how your proposal will impact on other services provided in our communities (these might be Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups) The strategies take a whole council approach and promotes knowledge sharing across service areas.</p> |

Collaboration



Consider how you are working with Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups in our communities. The strategies will be shared with key partners to support working towards a more joined up public services experience for customers.

Involvement



Consider how you involve people who have an interest in this proposal and ensure that they represent the diversity of our communities.

The Strategies, has been developed with engagement via;

- An externally facilitated organisational review of the customer experience and access involving a range of service areas and engagement through journey mapping with customers who use our services
- Feedback from customers, non-users, learners, businesses, partners, staff and data gathered during various service design projects;
- User research with customers including that gained through service re design projects
- Evidence from work undertaken on service design projects, i.e Planning and content design;
- Wider CLT session facilitated by Centre of Public Digital Services to understand current position, opportunities, barriers and objectives;
- Senior management and Elected member feedback
- Feedback from elected members, MCS induction session;
- Digital self-evaluation, facilitated by WLGA;
- Digital Exclusion project across Gwent;
- Customer Experience and Access review;
- Review of agile working
- Community feedback on budget proposals – 62% want easy access to digital services

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>User research will be a key part of the strategy implementation moving forward.</p> |
|--|--|

How does your proposal link to the Welsh Governments Priorities for Wales? Please indicate below.

1. **A PROSPEROUS WALES** ... an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

The strategy will contribute towards the requirements and standards set out in the following: > Well-being and Future Generations Act > Digital Strategy for Wales > Digital Service Standards for Wales > Welsh Language Act Whilst delivering this Strategy, we will ensure the decisions we make consider the well-being goals and five ways of working: Long Term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration and Prevention. We will ensure that our decisions are evidenced-based and consider the social and economic impact on our communities. The key principles and priorities of this strategy are aimed at those who need and want to access the Council. The intention is to build good quality services with those who use and provide them. The additional benefits of using digital technology and innovation will support independence and better-connected communities. Through our customer-centred design approach we will consider each element of a process and how customers use our services. Having the right culture and leadership to drive our digital ambition will support the development of customer-centred services. Improved use of data, better engagement and collaboration will allow us to join up services to remove barriers between organisations so that customers can easily access what they need

2. **A RESILIENT WALES** ... a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change). Think about how your activity will have regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

Considered but no impact identified

3. **A HEALTHIER WALES** ... a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

The strategies will provide our residents with a choice of how they interact with us dependant on the individual circumstances and needs.

4. **A MORE EQUAL WALES** ... A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

The strategies will provide our residents with a choice of how they interact with us dependant on the ondividual circumstances and needs.

5. **A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES** ... attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

We aim to ensure our technology and digital infrastructure is responsive, secure and adaptive to meet changing needs of our customers, business and staff and we will aim to do this by working with communities, developing a digital infrastruture to support 21st century services, collaborating with partners but maintaining our systems so they are always safe and secure

6. **A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING** ... a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

Improving customer digital skills can open many doors to opportunity and skills developme

7. **A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES** ... a nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

The Digital Strategy will contribute towards the requirements and standards set out in the following: > Well-being and Future Generations Act > Digital Strategy for Wales > Digital Service Standards for Wales > Welsh Language Act



Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact that any proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language. [Welsh Language Standards](#))

| Requirement | Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts in regards to the below? | What can be done to mitigate any negative impacts? | Please demonstrate any evidence used to form this opinion. |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>Specifically Standards 88 - 93</i></p> | <p>Positive – the strategies support the Welsh language and support the equalities agenda.</p> | <p>Ensuring the Welsh language standards are adhered to and embedded into every service area.</p> | <p>Customers will be given the choice of communicating in their preferred language of choice.</p> |
| <p>What opportunities are there to promote the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i></p> | <p>Correspondance will be provided in the language of choice.</p> | | |
| <p>What opportunities are there for a person or person to use the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</i></p> | <p>Customers will be able to deal with queries in their preferred language of their choice</p> | <p>Whilst there are already Welsh speakers in the LA, front line customer service staff are currently under-going Welsh language training.</p> | <p>Customers will be able to converse with customer service staff in their preferred choice of language.</p> |

| | | | |
|--|------------|--|--|
| <p>Has the Welsh Language been considered in order to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>Whilst there are already Welsh speakers in the LA, front line customer service staff are currently under-going Welsh language training.</p> | <p>We are currently following an action plan following intervention from the Welsh language Commissioner</p> |
|--|------------|--|--|

| <p>Section 6 – Children’s Rights Approach - The Right Way</p> <p>The Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It places the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrates children’s rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Right Way focuses on three main them Participation, Provision and Protection.</p> | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Protected characteristics</p> | <p>Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?</p> | <p>Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?</p> | <p>Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.</p> |
| <p>Participation (child or young person as someone who actively</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| contributes to society as a citizen) | | | |
| Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop) | Considered but no impact identified | | |
| Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination) | Considered but no impact identified | | |

Section 7– Community Safety

Duty to Consider Crime and Disorder Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the local authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder, anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, re-offending and serious violence.

| | | | |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| Impacts | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on crime and disorder? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on crime and disorder? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
|----------------|---|---|--|

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Crime (consider impact on each: victims, offenders and neighbourhoods)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |
| <p>Anti-Social Behaviour and behaviour adversely affecting the local environment (consider impact on each: victims, offenders, neighbourhoods and green spaces)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |
| <p>Misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances (Think vulnerable children, adults, families and communities)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |
| <p>Re-offending (Think young people and adults, victims, families, communities)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |
| <p>Serious Violence (Think vulnerable young people, vulnerable adults, victims, families, communities)</p> | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Counter Terrorism (People and places that are vulnerable to terrorism or violent extremism) | Considered but no impact identified | | |
| Community Cohesion (Asylum seekers, Migrants, Victims or Hate Crime, Community tensions) | Considered but no impact identified | | |

| Section 8- Armed Forces Covenant Duty AFC Draft Statutory Guidance - Final.pdf | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Impacts | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the armed forces community? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the armed forces community? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
| Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of services • Planning and funding • Co-operation between bodies and professionals | Considered but no impact identified | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>These healthcare functions are within scope of the Duty in the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Primary Care services, including general practice, community pharmacies, NHS dental, NHS optometry services and public health screening services. • NHS Secondary Care services, including urgent and emergency care, hospital and community services, specialist care, mental health services, and additional needs services (as applicable). • Local authority-delivered healthcare services, including sexual health services and drug and alcohol misuse services | | | |
| <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Educational attainment and curriculum • Child wellbeing | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Attendance • Additional needs support • Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (England only) <p>These education functions are within scope of the Duty in compulsory education settings, that is, primary, secondary, and, for England only, compulsory further education. The Duty does not cover nursery (early years education), higher education, or other voluntary adult education settings</p> | | | |
| <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations policy for social housing • Tenancy strategies (England only) • Homelessness • Disabled Facilities Grants | <p>Considered but no impact identified</p> | | |

Section 9-Data-Please outline any data or evidence that has been used to develop the proposal, this can be previous consultations, local/national data, pilot projects, reports, feedback from clients etc.

| Data/evidence –What data/evidence was used? - provide any links. | What were the key findings? | How has the data/evidence informed this proposal? |
|--|---|---|
| <p>The Strategies have been developed with engagement via;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from customers, non-users, learners, businesses, partners, staff and data gathered during various service design projects; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from work undertaken on service design projects, i.e Planning and content design; • Wider CLT session facilitated by Centre of Public Digital Services to understand current position, opportunities, barriers and objectives; • Feedback from elected members, MCS induction session; • Digital self-evaluation, facilitated by WLGA; • Digital Exclusion project across Gwent; • Customer Experience and Access review; • Review of agile working | <p>The external review undertaken in 2022 of customer experience across the Council found;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People value the interaction and the experience of in person customer service channels • There are many access points and it’s confusing people • Some people lack the ability to use digital channels but not all • Customers who are able to self-serve are opting to call for reasons including difficulty in navigating the online experience • Often the content we communicate is misunderstood and causes confusion | <p>All the evidence and data we have gathered has allowed us to consider our position in order to develop these strategies</p> |

- Community feedback on budget proposals – 62% want easy access to digital services

User research will be a key part of the strategy implementation moving forward.

- Closer working between Customer Services officers and service areas could alleviate frustrating and confusing experiences for people.

There will be a set of delivery plans against each priority set out in the strategy and will have a number of key success measures, such as % of customers accessing front facing services rating the service they receive as excellent or good; total number of complaints received per thousand populations (aligned to Council Complaints procedure)

Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?

n/a

Section 10-Consultation. Please provide details of consultation undertaken to support the proposal. Please consider the Gunning Principles: -

Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.

Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?

Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?

Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision

Briefly describe any planned consultations or consultations that have been carried out to date. Please consider the above principles.

Please consider the following questions; -

- 1. Who did you consult?**
- 2. When did the consultation take place and was adequate time given for a response?**
- 3. Was there enough information provided to respond effectively?**
- 4. What were the findings?**
- 5. Have the findings been considered in regards to the decision?**

The Strategy, Standards and Charter has been developed with engagement via;

- An externally facilitated organisational review of the customer experience and access involving a range of service areas and engagement through journey mapping with customers who use our services
- User research with customers including that gained through service re design projects
- Senior management and Elected member feedback

- Undertaking desk top research and,
- Discussions with partner organisations

User research will be a key part of the strategy implementation moving forward

Section 11-Monitoring and Review

| | |
|---|--|
| How will the implementation of the proposal be monitored, including the impacts or changes made? | Information will be included in the quarterly Joint finance and performance report which is part of the committee forward work programme, including an annual quarter 4 position |
| What monitoring tools will be used? | To be considered |
| How will the results be used for future development? | Each year the strategy will have a set of Delivery Plans developed against each priority. A set of key success measures will also be developed. |
| How and when will it be reviewed? | <p>For the Customer Service strategy an annual quarter 4 position but with a mid-point review of the strategies to be undertaken.</p> <p>The Digital strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure we keep pace with ongoing changes to digital innovation, technologies and customer expectation</p> |
| Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? | <p>The Future Working Programme Board chaired by the Chief Executive will receive progress updates on the implementation of the Customer Services strategy.</p> <p>The Service Design and Digital Leadership Board will oversee the delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy.</p> |

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Section 12 - Decision

Using the information you have gathered from sections 1-9 please state in the table below whether you are able to proceed with the proposal.

Continue with the proposal in its current form Yes No

Continue with proposal but take into account reasonable steps to mitigate any negative impacts of the proposal

Yes

No

Name of person completing the IIA

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Name: | Jonathan Morgan | | |
| Job Title: | Team Manager Customer Contact | | |
| Date: | 7/9/2023 | | |

Head of Service Approval

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------|-----------|
| Name: | Leanne Roberts | | |
| Job Title: | Service Manager – Customer Experience & Transformation | | |
| Signature: | L.C.Roberts | Date: | 29/8/2023 |

Please contact Policy & Partnerships should you require any further advice or guidance on completing your assessment via lissa.friel@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or emma.scherptong@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.

Agenda Item 11

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**

Report Subject: **Health & Safety Annual Report - 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member
Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser
Head of Organisational Development**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| X | 10.08.23 | 04.09.23 | | | 14.09.23 | 04.10.23 | | Corporate H&S Group |

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present information on the Authority's Health and Safety and Fire Safety at work performance for 2022/23 and give Members the opportunity to consider and challenge the recommendations to mitigate concerns and risks.

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 It is a requirement of the Health and Safety Executive for Local Authorities such as BGCBC to report on their Health and safety at work performance as an Employer.
 - 2.2 The report attached as appendix 1 includes details of BGCBC's health and safety and fire safety performance. This report is presented every financial year and identifies both good performance and areas of concern with recommendations to address these concerns.
 - 2.3 This report also contains a section of the Health and Safety recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1**
That Cabinet agree the report as presented.
 - 3.2 **Option 2**
That Cabinet make suggestion to further add to the recommendations to mitigate areas of concern prior to approval.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
Proactive activities (e.g. Risk assessments, training) undertaken by the Corporate Health and Safety team support the requirements of the

Corporate plan and statutory responsibilities to ensure that employees and others do not come to harm while undertaking the Authority's business.

Reactive activities (e.g. accident investigations) undertaken by the Corporate Health and Safety team support the requirements of the Corporate plan and statutory responsibilities to ensure that improvements are made to prevent reoccurrence of accidents.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

Good management of Health and Safety at work can reduce the costs of personal claims against the Authority.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Any areas of concern in the report are risks to the Authority and the recommended actions will mitigate the risks.

5.3 ***Legal***

The Authority has statutory duties under both Health and Safety legislation and Fire Safety legislation and a duty of care to employees and others.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no direct HR implications arising from the report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Included within the report.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Managing health and safety and fire safety risks protects employees of the Authority, users of BGCBC facilities and the general public.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The report has been developed by the Health and Safety Officers in consultation with Organisational Development.

The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) reviewed the report on 10th August 2023 and provided the following feedback 'CLT welcomed the report and accepted the recommendations. Health and Safety considerations have been added to the corporate reporting template. CLT requested detail on the outstanding Fire Risk Assessments so that appropriate action is taken.'

The report was also considered at the Corporate Health and Safety group on the 22nd of August 2023 and the recommendations supported.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The recommendations would be of benefit long term in reducing the risk of accidents and ill health. Training would provide assurance of competency in the Authority.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Not applicable

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Not applicable.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Complying with Health and Safety and fire safety legislation involves all service areas working together to manage any risks.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Not applicable.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

Not applicable.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Annual reports will be provided on proactive and reactive performance indicators.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- ***Appendix 1 – Health & Safety Annual Report 2022-2023***

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Health & Safety Annual Report

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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1. Report Summary

The summary of the report for 2022/2023 is as follows:

- The number of employee accidents/incidents has **decreased** from 171 in 2021/2022 to 162 in 2022/2023
- The number of non-employee accidents has **decreased** from 326 in 2021/2022 to 325 in 2022/2023
- The number of employee accidents/incidents and diseases reportable to the HSE has **decreased** from 24 in 2021/2022 to 9 in 2022/2023
- The number of non-employee accidents/incidents reportable to HSE has **increased** marginally from 8 in 2021/22 to 9 in 2022/2023
- There were 4 interventions by the Fire Authority and 0 interventions by the HSE.
- 20 health and safety inspections were carried out between 1.4.22 and 31.3.23.
- 40 statutory Fire Risk Assessments were carried out between 1.4.22 and 31.3.23.
- 46 Health and Safety training sessions were held between 1.4.22 and 31.3.23 with 443 staff trained.
- Staff absence has decreased from last year however is still above target.
- There were no cases of reportable diseases or dangerous occurrences.
- The Health and Safety Advisors investigated 59 accidents/incidents.
- 1 referral from the Occupational Health Department was made to the Health and Safety Advisors. Recommendations were provided to the managers of the referred persons by the Health and Safety Advisors on reasonable adjustments for the affected individuals.
- There were 5 cases investigated following insurance claims being made.
- The specific legislation and guidance on covid 19 was phased out during 2022/2023.
- The departmental referrals to the Occupational Health service fell from 656 to 456.

Key Issues/Risks

- Sickness absence which impacts on the Authority's ability to deliver services
- Training in health and safety which may have been missed due to the pandemic
- Lack of response to Fire Risk Assessments by some responsible persons
- The transfer of silent valley waste services has significantly increased health and safety at work risks for BGCBC as the employer. The waste industry is statistically (fatalities and workplace injuries) one of the highest risk UK industries and this is particularly the case with Waste Transfer Stations and Household Waste Recovery Centres.

2. Introduction

The Health and Safety Executive believe that it is essential that public bodies summarise their health, safety and welfare at work performance (as Employers not Regulators) in the form of an annual report in order to develop a continuing improvement approach to health and safety.

This report details statistics on proactive and reactive health and safety activities that have been undertaken. Proactive indicators include inspections and training. Reactive indicators include accident reporting and investigations.

This report is a summary of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Health and Safety and Fire Safety proactive activities and the incidents and accidents that have occurred between April 1st 2022 and March 31st 2023.

During the year the specific legislation and guidance on Covid 19 was phased out which shifted the priorities for the Health and Safety Team enabling more time/resources for proactive work.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Cabinet and the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive and the Authority's Cabinet has responsibilities as defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The corporate body of the Council is the Employer and the Chief Executive is the individual with the ultimate responsibility for ensuring work related Health, Safety and Welfare and Fire Safety is managed in the Authority.

Health and safety guidance recommends that an individual Cabinet member be given the responsibility for leading on health and safety performance and in BGCBC this role sits with the Leader of the Council.

N.B. the responsibilities of the Cabinet, lead Cabinet member, Chief Executive and all other levels of management are outlined in detail in the Authority's Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

3.2 Corporate Leadership Team

The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) consists of the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, Chief Officer–Resources and the Chief Officer–Commercial. CLT are the driving force for leading and the Management of Health and Safety and Fire Safety at work in the Authority. Whilst the Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility all other members of the CLT have key responsibilities in the organisation's Health and Safety Management structure.

3.3 Departmental Management Teams

Each Directorate has Departmental Management Teams where the various Heads of Service report on a variety of issues. Health and Safety issues regularly form part of the agenda at Departmental Management Team meetings and it is clear that Heads of Service are key to the Health and Safety Management Structure.

3.4 Corporate Health and Safety Advisors

The Authority employs two full time equivalent Corporate Health and Safety Advisors who report to the OD Manager Payroll and Health and Safety. The advisors are the Authority's competent persons as defined in the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.

The advisors guide the whole Authority (including school Governing Bodies who have a Service Level Agreement with the Corporate Health and Safety Advisors) on all aspects of occupational health, safety, welfare and fire safety. The advisors have excellent relationships with key partners such as the Fire Authority and insurers. In particular, the advisors liaise with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on a wide range of issues, including HSE Inspections and accident investigations that are relevant to BGCBC. This relationship has proved invaluable, particularly when the Authority has required advice and guidance from HSE.

The advisors also work closely with Organisational Development/Human Resources colleagues, particularly with regard to Occupational Health issues. There is also a close liaison with the Insurance/Risk Management team on liability issues.

Through the period under consideration the Advisors priorities have shifted from focussing on the pandemic and back to health and safety and fire safety management as the Authority has moved to business as usual.

3.5 Service Level Agreement with Aneurin Leisure Trust

The corporate Health and Safety advisers also support the Aneurin Leisure Trust(ALT) through a Service Level Agreement. This includes:

- Health and Safety advice
- Reporting ALT accidents and incidents under RIDDOR
- Undertaking investigations
- Undertaking health and safety inspections
- Undertaking Fire Risks assessments
- Providing training including Hand Arm Vibration, Manual Handling, Managing Violence and Aggression.

The Service Level Agreement covers all Libraries and Learning Action Centres in the Borough, Leisure Centres, Bryn Bach Park and Bedwellty House. The data for the work by the Health and Safety Advisors for the trust is not included in this report.

3.6 Silent Valley

During the year covered by this report the advisors have been involved with the discussions on the transfer of Silent Valley into the Authority and carried out preliminary proactive work.

3.7 Occupational Health

The Authority uses a contracted service for its Occupational Health Service. An Occupational Health Nurse provides a 2 day per month clinic service for medical referrals, pre-employment screening and health surveillance. An Occupational Health Practitioner provides a 2 day per month clinic service and is also able to provide appointments at alternative locations as and when required.

The breakdown of the departmental referrals to the Occupational Health service can be seen in Table 3.1. The number of referrals has fallen significantly in all departments over the period.

| Directorate | Referrals 21/22 | Referrals 22/23 |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Corporate Services | 59 | 34 |
| Education | 46 | 31 |
| Regeneration & Community Services | 157 | 98 |
| School Based | 163 | 127 |
| Social Services | 225 | 166 |
| Total | 656 | 456 |

Table 3.1: Employee Referrals to Occupational Health 2021/2023

3.8 Safety Committees and Safety Representatives

The various Trade Unions representing employees of the Authority and Schools have accredited Health and Safety Representatives.

The Head of Organisational Development has regular meetings with the various Trade Unions and Health and Safety issues are discussed. A Corporate Health and Safety Group made up of trade unions and senior managers with specific terms of reference meets quarterly.

4. Accident/Incident Statistics

All Services and schools report all accidents and incidents to the Health and Safety Advisors. It is a legal requirement that all incidents and accidents are recorded and that they are reviewed with consideration of action that would reduce the risk of a recurrence.

The Advisors record all these accidents/incidents and then evaluate what needs to be reported to the Health and Safety Enforcing Authority under the requirements of the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Briefly, accidents/incidents are reportable to the Enforcing Authority where:

- an employee has a major injury such as broken bones (not fingers)
- is absent or unfit for their normal work for more than 7 days due to an accident at work, or
- a non-employee requires immediate medical treatment at a hospital following a work related accident.

For detailed information please see [Appendix 1](#) which contains the data relating to the incidents and accidents for the Authority.

59 accidents/incidents were further investigated by the Health and Safety Advisors to ensure that details were correct and/or any required mitigations were carried out.

4.1 Employee Accidents

The 3 year trend for accidents in the Authority by department is shown in Figure 4.1.

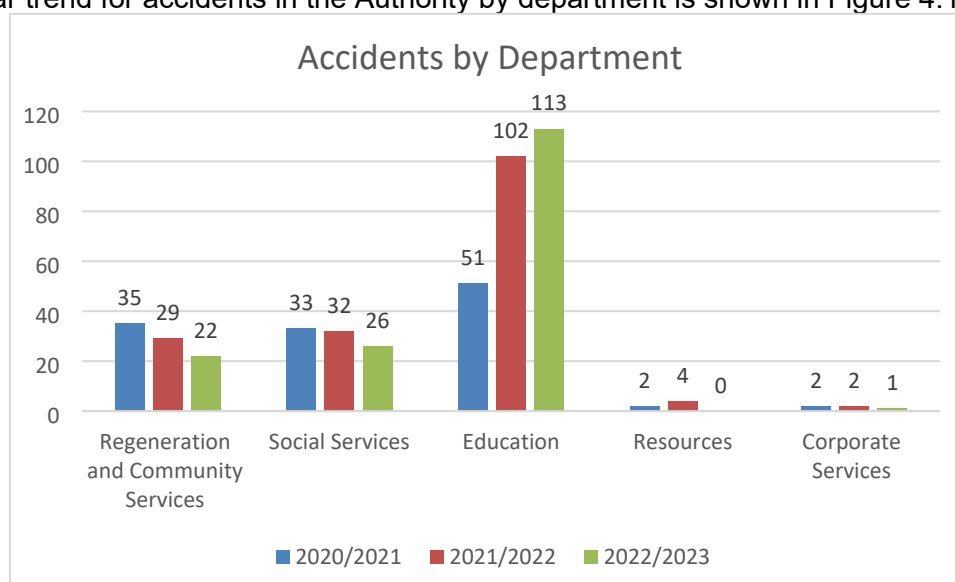


Figure 4.1: Accident by Department – 3 Year Trend

The total number of employee accidents/incidents has decreased from 171 in 2021/2022 to 162 in 2022/23. All departments have had decreasing accident numbers apart from Education where the numbers have increased from slightly from 102 in 2021/22 to 113 in 2022/23.

4.2 Employee Accidents Reportable to HSE

Figure 4.2 shows employee accidents that were reportable to HSE. There was an decrease in employee reportable accidents from 24 in 2021/22 and to 9 in 2022/23. Reportable injuries to employees are similar in all departments in 2022/2023 to those in 2021/2022 apart from those in the Regeneration and Community Services Department where there was a large decrease from 14 to 4.

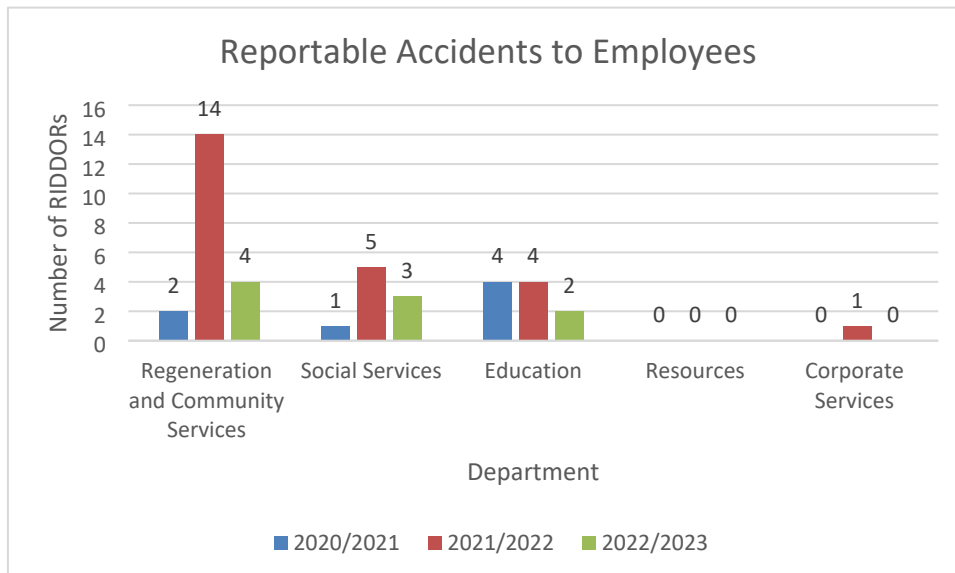


Figure 4.2: Employee Reportable Accidents – 3 Year Trend

4.3 Accidents to Non employees

Figure 4.3 shows the number of accidents to non-employees between 1.4.22 and 31.3.23.

The overall number of accidents is almost identical with 326 accidents in 21/22 and 325 in 22/23. The number of the accidents to non employees have fallen in two of the categories. The significant rise in accidents to pupils in 2022/2023 compared to those in 2020/21 can be attributed to the closure of schools during 2020/2021 however the number of accidents to pupils compared to last year has fallen by almost 17%.

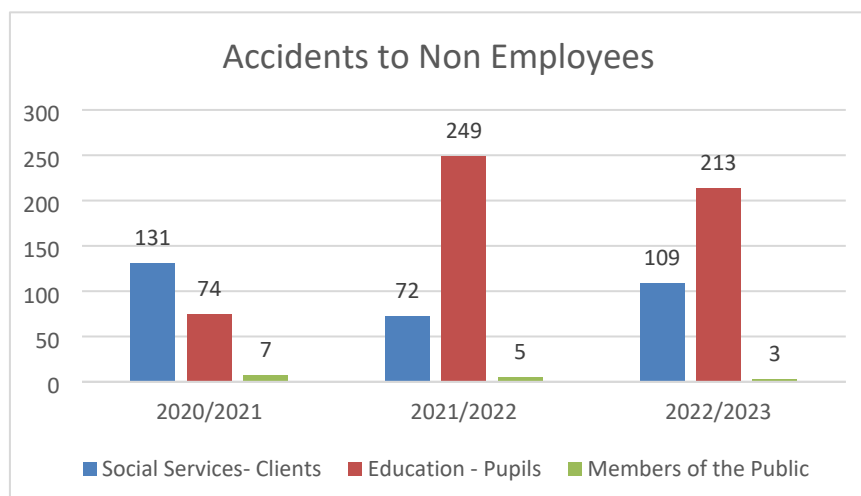


Figure 4.3: Accident by Category for Non employees – 3 Year Trend

It should be noted that there is inconsistency in the reporting of pupil accidents/incidents by schools. For example, some schools of similar size have very different number of accidents/incidents reported and there is a possibility that there may be both under-reporting (not reporting what procedures require) and over-reporting (relatively trivial incidents being reported).

The number of accidents to the clients of social services has risen however the majority of the 109 accidents to clients of the social services can be attributed to clients in care homes and this related to the health of individuals .

4.4 Accidents to Non employees reportable to HSE

Figure 4.4 shows non-employee accidents that were reportable to the HSE.

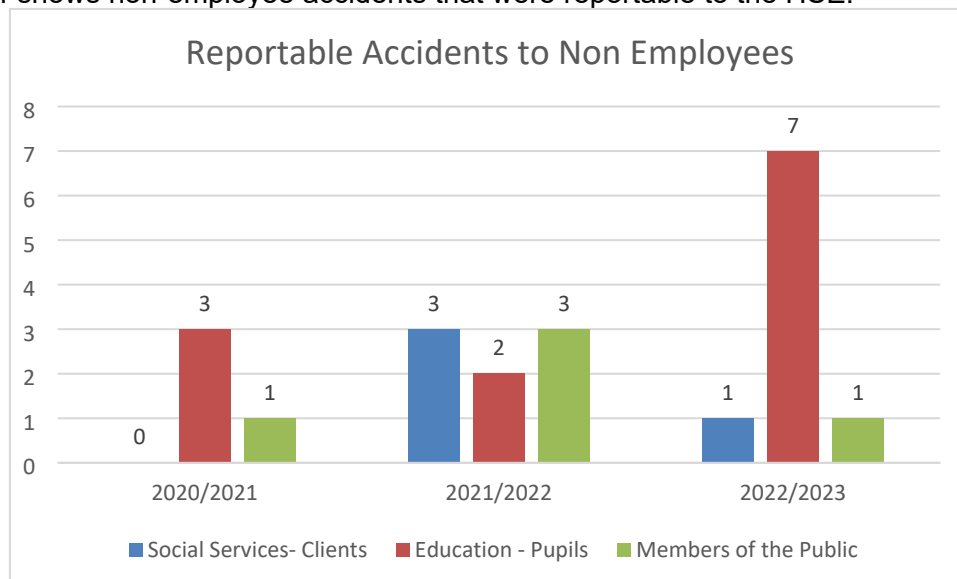


Figure 4.4: Reportable accidents to Members of the Public

The total number of reportable accidents to non employees has increased from 8 to 9. The number of incident to school pupils has seen an increase from 2 to 7. The majority of the reportable incidents to school pupils were falls which resulted in broken bones.

4.5 Reportable diseases and dangerous occurrences

Certain diseases (e.g. hand arm vibration syndrome and occupational dermatitis) and dangerous occurrences (e.g. failure of lifting equipment, exposure to Asbestos Containing Material) are reportable under RIDDOR. There were no reportable diseases in 2022/2023.

During 2021/2022 there were 4 reportable incidents of disease which was Covid 19. The evolution of the guidance from the Welsh Government through 2021/22 concerning the reporting of work related COVID 19 cases the Authority did not report further incidents through RIDDOR 2015 in 2022/2023.

4.6 Covid 19 Cases

Covid 19 cases that were recorded in 2021/22 and 2022/23 are shown in Table 4.1. There were a total of 970 recorded staff absences (confirmed positive or self-isolation as contacts) due to Covid 19. This has increased from 824 employee absences due to Covid 19 during 2021/2022. This represented 27.8% of the workforce.

There were 426 cases of Covid 19 recorded in 2021/22 for school based staff which increased slightly in 2022/23 to 443. This represented 34.23% of the school based staff which represents a less than 1% increase from 21/22 to 22/23.

| Service | Number of cases 21/22 | Percentage of workforce 21/22 | Number of cases 22/23 | Percentage of workforce 22/23 |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Employees in total | 824 | 27.8% | 970 | 30.6% |
| School based employees | 426 | 33.3% | 443 | 34.23% |

Table 4.1: Reported Employee Covid Cases in the Authority 2021/22 and 2022/23

4.7 Cost of Accidents/Incidents

There are no current methods of calculating the cost of accidents within the Authority. However, the Authority will be affected by an invisible cost (in terms of lost wages and basic on-costs such as superannuation and National Insurance) of reportable (over 7 day injury) accidents or any other time lost accidents.

There has to be a significant financial pressure on the Authority as in addition to lost wages the following costs may apply:

- Cost of temporary/seconded employees to cover absences.
- Overtime payments to cover absent employees.
- Administrative costs.
- Insurance costs.
- Possible loss of services/production.
- Investigation costs.

4.8 Incidents of Violence and Aggression

Figure 4.8 shows the numbers of incidents of violence and aggression in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

All of these incidents occurred in two settings which were schools and care homes. The majority of these incidents occurred in educational settings such as special needs schools and resource bases in mainstream schools.

There was an increase in the number of incidents in violence and aggression to employees from 78 to 98.

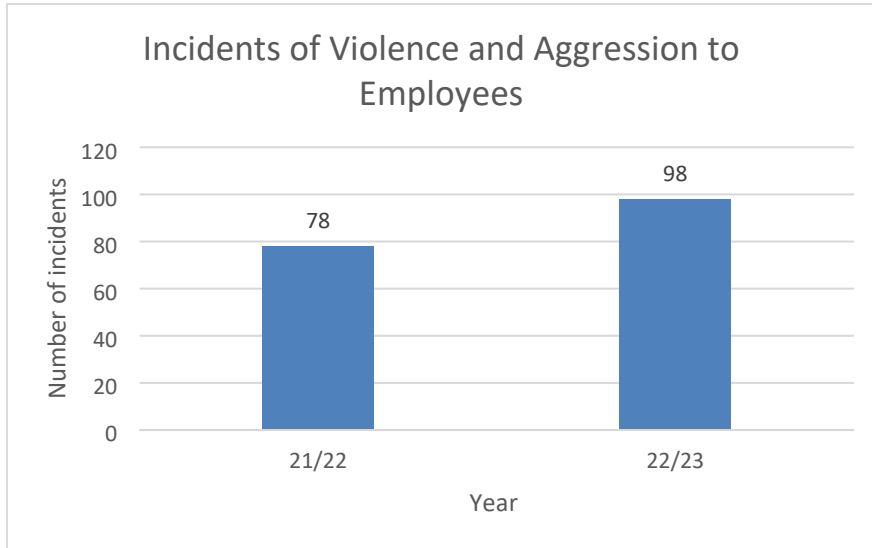


Figure 4.8: Incidents of Violence and Aggression to Employees

5. Specific Issues

5.1 Attendance Management

Improving staff attendance remains a key priority for the Council. The outturn figure for 2022/2023 was 15.45 (which includes Covid cases) which is an improvement on the 2021/2022 value of 16.74 (which is including Covid cases). The outturn figures not including Covid cases are 13.71 in 2022/23 and 10.34 in 2021/22. This is above the annual target which is 10 days.

It should be noted that from 2023/24 onwards absences will no longer be recorded without Covid cases.

These figures give a year on year improvement of 1.29 days.

Table 5.1 shows the top 5 reasons for sickness absence in 2022/2023. The main cause of total days lost was due to psychiatric/mental health illnesses as shown in table 5.1.

30.99% of sickness absence was due to psychiatric/mental health illnesses which was the main cause of sickness absence in the previous year however this figure has risen by 2.98% from 2021/2022.

The other reasons were musculoskeletal issues and injuries, Covid 19 and gastro-intestinal problems. These were similar to last year.

The number of absences due to musculoskeletal issues and injuries has risen from 21.46% to 23.08%.

| Rank 2022/23 | Category | % sickness | | | Rank 2020/21 | Rank 2021/22 |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|------------|---------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| | | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | | |
| 1 | Psychiatric / Mental Health | 38.0% | 28.01% | 30.99% | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Musculoskeletal Issues and Injuries | 16.9% | 21.46% | 23.08% | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | COVID 19 | 14.4% | 12.75% | 9.9% | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | Gastro-intestinal | 5.47% | 6.99% | 6.37% | 5 | 4 |
| 5 | Gynaecological, obstetric, pregnancy | - | 4.74% | - | - | - |

Table 5.1: Percentage Reasons for Employee Absence 2022/2023

5.2 Management of Work Related Stress

It is the expectation that managers refer all employee absences caused by stress to Occupational Health. Departments have been reminded of the need to carry out risk assessments (using a stress management toolkit) and manage work related stress during these challenging times.

The Council has an employee assistance programme and information on resources is published to the workforce on a weekly basis via a Wellbeing Wednesday email. The Workforce Strategy will continue the focus on the wellbeing of the workforce.

With Agile Working it is important that Managers maintain regular contact with staff to ensure that employee mental health is monitored and acted upon. A review of Agile working started last autumn engaging the workforce on views and areas for improvement.

5.3 Updated Legislation

Through the period under consideration the specific Covid 19 related Regulations and guidance provided by the UK and Welsh Government and the HSE were phased out with the last specific guidance (testing care and SEN workers and workforce toolkit) withdrawn in April 2023.

5.4 Review of Policies and Guidelines

The current suite of Policies and guidelines are shown in Table 4. The policies and guidelines that were reviewed in 2022/23 are highlighted in red. New policies are seen in Table 5.2 in Green.

| POLICIES: | |
|--|---|
| Health & Safety Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asbestos Policy Display Screen Equipment Policy Driving at Work Fire Safety at Work Lone Working Policy Smoke Free Policy Statement of Safety Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy on Contractors working on Council Properties & Services Violence & Aggression Policy Work Related Stress Policy OD Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol and Drugs Attendance Management |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction (Design & Management) Regulations Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Control of Contractors Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems Criteria for Eye Protection Fire Safety and Displays First Aid at Work Glazing Gritting of Council Work Places Guidance for Children not yet Toilet Trained Provision and use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 Permits to Work Responsible Person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Voluntary Workers Working Time Regulations Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) Managing the Risk of Ice and Snow in Workplaces Risk Assessment Guidelines Young People at Work Immunisations Hand/arm vibration Noise School caretakers Preventing Finger Entrapment Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Prevention of Arson in Schools New and Expectant Mothers at Work Special Educational Needs (SEN) Working at Heights Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare |
| PROCEDURES: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accident/incident Reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generic Fire Drill (to be adapted by each premises Responsible Person) |

Table 5.2: Policies and Guidelines

5.5 Interventions by Enforcing Authorities

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

There were no visits to Blaenau Gwent premises during 2022/2023 by the Health and Safety Executive.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service(SWFRS)

There were 4 interventions in the form of audits in Blaenau Gwent care premises by the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) in 2022/2023. Any issues raised were all very minor and the Authority responded and complied

Premises audited by SWFRS:

- Ty-lelog supported living
- Ty Rhosyn supported living
- Augusta House
- Cwrt Mytton

5.6 Fire Risk Assessments

The Corporate Health and Safety Advisors carried out 40 statutory Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) in 2022/2023. There were 31 replies to the FRAs and the outstanding responses were from:

- Augusta House Respite Centre
- Bert Denning Centre
- Tredegar Day Centre – The Promenade
- Unit 28 - BG Community Meals (was Pond Road Day Services - Ceramics)
- Ebbw Vale Family Resource Centre (HUGS)
- Energy Centre (Works Site)
- Beechwood House
- Weighbridge
- Silent Valley Canteen/Welfare Building

5.7 Health and Safety Inspections

The Corporate Health and Safety Advisors carried out 20 inspections in 2022/2023. Written replies were received to all of these inspections.

5.8 Health and Safety Training

The need for health and safety/fire safety training is a legal requirement and is identified in the risk assessment process, and as and when refresher training is required (generally at a minimum of 3 year intervals).

All Services are committed to ensuring training is provided to comply with legislation and individual training needs. Examples of the training provided to BGCBC staff from all sources are:

- Risk assessment
- General health and safety
- Fire safety
- First aid
- Manual handling
- Evacuation chair
- Ladder safety
- Managing violence/restrictive intervention
- Banksman training
- Responsible person
- Asbestos awareness
- Hand/arm vibration and noise
- Stress awareness
- Legionella

The ability to provide training during the pandemic was enormously impacted by alteration of service delivery, physical distancing requirements, staff working from home, absenteeism of

staff etc. Therefore, the ability to deliver statutory or advisory training was difficult and in some cases impossible.

During 2022/23 with there was the opportunity to catch up on outstanding training needs but further catch up is required in 2023/2024.

Whilst departments and schools externally source training and Social Services have the dedicated workforce development team (provides both in –house and externally sourced training) the health and safety advisors also provide in-house training. During 2022/23 there was a significant amount of training delivered by the health and safety advisors as shown in table 5.4.

| Training | Number | Type of Staff |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Evacuation chair | 13 | BGCBC and school staff |
| Ladder safety | 7 | School staff |
| Fire safety | 240 | BGCBC and school staff |
| Manual handling | 96 | BGCC and school staff |
| Hand/arm vibration | 6 | BGCBC staff |
| Violence and Aggression | 20 | BGCBC staff |
| Responsible Person | 47 | BGCBC and school staff |
| Leadership in Health and Safety | 10 | Cabinet Members |
| Stress awareness | 4 | BGCBC staff |

Table 5.4: Training during 2022/23

5.9 Insurance

During 2022/2023 the number of Insurance claims received by the Authority in respect of all types of incidents involving employees and the public was 109 which is an increase from 97 claims which were received in 2021/2022. It is also an increase in the levels of claims received in the last 4 years. 7 of these claims related to Employers’ Liability. It is important to note that the claims received for public and employers liability in 2022/2023 include claims relating to incidents in previous years as there is often a delay in claims being brought.

With regards to the 7 Employers’ Liability claims received in 2022/2023, 1 has an incident date in the 2022/2023 policy year with 4 relating to policy years 2021/2022 and the remaining 2 relating to the policy years 2020/2021.

Figure 5.1 shows the costs incurred for Employers' Liability(EL) claims over the 5 year period 2015/16 to 2020/21. Data is shown for this period as generally there will be no further claims covering this period as the majority of claims have to be within 3 years of the incident. Hence there is always a lag in this information as claims can take upto 3 years to be submitted and time to be closed.

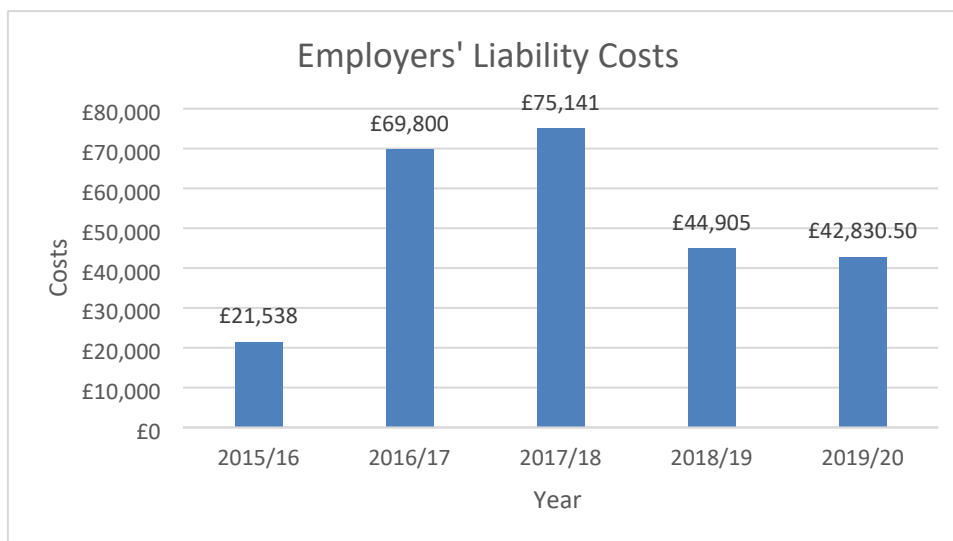


Figure 5.1: Employers' Liability Costs

Table 5.5 details the insurance claims against the Authority over the last 6 years. The number of Public Liability(PL) claims against the Council significantly increased from 54 to 80 with the vast majority being claims relating to alleged accidents on the Highway. Breaking this down further shows almost exclusively, vehicle damage as a result of potholes in the carriageway or personal injury due to trips on defective paving. The reason for this noticeable increase in claims, we believe, is due to the introduction of an online claim form allowing members of the public to claim for damage or injury in a simpler, more efficient and customer friendly way.

Motor claims have significantly decreased in 2022/23 to 22 claims. An analysis of these show a large percentage were as a result of a reversing manoeuvre (8), hitting a stationary vehicle (7) or colliding with a fixed object (3). Out of these 22 claims, 5 were paid at a total cost of £11,486.02.

| | Employer's Liability | Motor Vehicle | Public Liability | Total |
|-----------|----------------------|---------------|------------------|-------|
| 2017/2018 | 10 | 36 | 64 | 110 |
| 2018/2019 | 4 | 26 | 75 | 105 |
| 2019/2020 | 6 | 21 | 56 | 83 |
| 2020/2021 | 4 | 39 | 53 | 96 |
| 2021/2022 | 6 | 37 | 54 | 97 |
| 2022/2023 | 7 | 22 | 80 | 109 |

Table 5.5: Number of Insurance Claims

Motor claims are the only class of cover where there is less likely to be a delay between the incident and the claim being brought and therefore the most likely of the policies to show accurate settlements in the same year. EL and PL claims are less likely to be settled in the same year due to their more complex nature. Whilst a claim reserve can be allocated, this, together with payments made, can fluctuate as more detail is established during investigation of the claim.

The Insurance team invest significant effort into defending claims and relies on the cooperation of colleagues on the front line to maintain the policies and practices which allow claims to be defended. In the current legal environment the financial burden of defending claims rests with the Authority unless Fundamental Dishonesty is proven (the burden of proof being extremely high) against the Claimant. This results in a financial cost to the Council even when a claim is successfully defended.

5.10 Capacity and Competency

As with previous years it is clear that there are capacity issues for some department's/services to carry out all the required Health and Safety and Fire Safety management regimes and this has been further impacted by the "catch up" required due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Health and Safety advisors, Human Resources advisors and sometimes the Insurance Team have regularly reported non-compliance to managers. One of the often cited reasons for any non-compliance is capacity.

Departments and services should regularly review their compliance standards and ensure any gaps in capacity are addressed. Corporate Health and Safety and HR can advise where possible but ultimately managers are responsible for managing any risks.

It is also important to note that the Health and Safety advisors are there to support managers and staff however it is vital that managers and supervisors have a consistent and appropriate level of training with regard to health and safety. This would include managers and staff having appropriate training and refresher training with regard to health and safety responsibilities.

6. Conclusions

The headline positive features for the Authority's health and safety performance in 2022/2023 were: for discussion

- A recovery from the effects of the pandemic has started to be implemented with the development and delivery of training across the Authority
- The 4 interventions by the SWFRS only identified minor issues.
- No interventions by HSE
- 100% response to the health and safety inspections
- The significant reduction in reportable accidents to employees particularly in the high risk Regeneration and Community Services Department

The headline areas of concern in the Authority's health and safety performance in 2022/2023 were: for discussion

- The numbers of accidents has decreased but very marginally
- The amount of regular Health and Safety activities and training required from the change of activities during the pandemic such as agile working and missed training
- The lack of response to the statutory Fire Risk Assessments

7. Recommendations

Recommendations for discussion:

1. That this report is reviewed by the Corporate Health and Safety Group and CLT.
2. Each Directorate Management Team to continue to review their health and safety management arrangements and ensure they have the capacity to comply with statutory duties. Also to ensure that the individuals that are aware of their responsibilities and have received the appropriate information and training.
3. It is recommended that any strategic/operational decisions taken by services must be subject to a health and safety risk assessment within the wider impact assessments. This would include change of use of buildings, additions to building and purchases. Any identified risks should be managed through an implementation plan and identified leads. If there are capacity and/or competency issues identified by service directorates that put the authority at risk, then this may need escalation to the Corporate Risk Register and review at the Corporate Leadership Team to take action.
4. Each Corporate Director to review and put in place appropriate training requirements for staff. A training needs analysis of all departments and schools should be undertaken by the management of the relevant departments and schools to identify required training (including refresher training not delivered during the pandemic) and prioritise a calendar of training for 2022/23. Identified training may be undertaken by the Health and Safety Advisors or external providers as required.
5. Inconsistencies in school pupil accident/incident reporting to be addressed by the Corporate Health and Safety Advisors and the Education Directorate through directing the Heads to the Accident reporting policy and encouraging the use of the online reporting system.
6. Health and safety/fire safety should continue to be a key consideration and included in corporate templates such as programme, project and Financial Efficiency Projects etc. to ensure risks are identified and that compliance is considered throughout the project.
7. Departments must yet again review the lack of response to statutory fire risk assessments.

Appendix 1: Corporate Health and Safety Management Information Report (1 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2023)

| | APR | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | TOTAL | |
|---|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Accidents – BGCBC Employees | 6 | 18 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 17 | 29 | 11 | 5 | 24 | 10 | 15 | 162 | |
| Number of Accidents – Pupils | 6 | 21 | 29 | 13 | 0 | 26 | 28 | 19 | 15 | 25 | 16 | 15 | 213 | |
| Number of Accidents – Members of the Public in BGCBC premises | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| Number of Accidents – Service Users (Social Services) | 10 | 15 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 3 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 11 | 5 | 13 | 109 | |
| Total No. of Accidents | 22 | 54 | 48 | 35 | 19 | 46 | 66 | 40 | 23 | 60 | 31 | 43 | 487 | |
| No. of Reportable Accidents to BGCBC Employees | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 9 | |
| No. of Reportable Accident to Non – Employees | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 9 | |
| Total No. of Reportable Accidents | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 18 | |
| No. of Reportable Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Accidents/Incidents Investigated | Non Employee | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 36 |
| | Employee | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 23 |
| Incidents of Violence and Aggression | Non Employee | 4 | 11 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 51 |
| | Employee | 3 | 12 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 9 | 4 | 16 | 4 | 9 | 98 |
| No. of Interventions by HSE | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | |
| Interventions by the Fire Authority | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | |
| BGCBC Premises Health & Safety Inspections | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 20 | |
| BGCBC Fire Risk Assessments | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 40 | |
| No. of health & safety/fire safety training Sessions | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 46 | |
| No. of Persons Given Health & Safety Training(Not inc education) | 19 | 21 | 8 | 15 | 23 | 28 | 17 | 46 | 0 | 22 | 40 | 52 | 291 | |

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Agenda Item 12

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**
Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**
Report Subject: **Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/2024 Forecast
Outturn to 31 March 2024 (As at 30 June 2023)**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr S Thomas – Leader of the Council & Cabinet
Member Corporate Overview & Performance**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 3/8/23 | | | | 4/9/23 (briefing) | 04.10.23 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2023/2024 (as forecast at 30th June 2023).

2. Scope and Background

2.1 This report provides details on the following:

- Forecast financial position to the end of March 2024 across all portfolios
- Budget virements actioned during the period April to June 2023
- Forecast of Reserves to be applied during the period.

2.2 This report forms part of the Council's financial reporting framework to members.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (Recommended Option)

- Members to consider and provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report.
- Approve the budget virements detailed in paragraph 5.1.18 in excess of £250,000 in line with the constitution.
- Note the application of reserves.

3.2 Option 2

Members do not accept the report and do not approve the budget virements.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1 This report supports the Council Corporate Plan high level priority "An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place".

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

For 2023/24, the Council agreed an overall budget of £184.28m which included a planned draw from Specific reserves of £4.2m. Subsequently in July 2023, Council approved a supplementary budget of £0.3m to continue with the free school meals direct payment for eligible learners through the 6 weeks summer holiday. A contribution from the Council's General reserve will fund these costs.

5.1.1 The overall forecast outturn across all portfolios as at 30th June 2023, is a favourable variance of £0.2m before an expected transfer from specific reserves of £0.47m and £0.3m from the general reserve. This expected use of reserves will result in an increased favourable variance against budget of £0.97m. As a consequence, the £4.2m planned use of Specific Reserves originally agreed by Council is now forecast to be £3.23m.

5.1.2 The forecast overall financial position across all portfolios at 30th June 2023 is shown in the table below:

5.1.3 **Table 1 – Portfolio Summary**

| Portfolio/ Committee | 2023/2024 Revised Revenue Budget | 2023/2024 Forecast Outturn @ 30 June 2023 | Favourable / (Adverse) Variance | Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance (after Net transfers to Reserves) | Append ref: |
|--|---|--|--|---|------------------------|
| | £m | £m | £m | £m | |
| Corporate Services & Financial Management & Strategy | 18.07 | 17.10 | 0.97 | 1.11 | 1a |
| Social Services | 54.40 | 54.92 | (0.52) | (0.36) | 1b |
| Education & Leisure | 73.57 | 73.51 | 0.06 | 0.13 | 1c |
| Economy | 1.98 | 2.10 | (0.12) | (0.12) | 1d |
| Environment | 34.57 | 34.31 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 1e |
| Planning | 1.54 | 1.69 | (0.15) | (0.05) | 1f |
| Licensing | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0 | 0 | 1f |

| | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| Sub-Total | 184.28 | 183.78 | 0.50 | 0.97 | |
| Free School Meals Direct Payment – School Holidays | 0 | 0.30 | (0.30) | 0 | |
| Total | 184.28 | 184.08 | 0.20 | 0.97 | |

5.1.4 The overall forecast favourable variance is mainly due to the forecast underspend against a number of budget areas within Corporate Services:

5.1.5 Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) / Surplus on Collection – Overall forecast favourable variance of £0.4m

The number of residents claiming CTRS has reduced by 10% since July 2020 from 9,356 to 8,376 and is now lower than pre covid levels. As a result, forecasts for the CTRS budget is indicating a forecast favourable variance of £0.66m. This may be having an impact on Council Tax collection which is predicting an adverse variance of £0.25m.

5.1.6 Cross Cutting Inflation Budget – Forecast favourable variance of £0.56m

A contingency within the overall Council budget was established to mitigate in year cost pressures arising from inflationary increases which could not be managed from within existing budgets. A virement of £620,000 to Street lighting is proposed within this report to mitigate the in year cost pressure arising from increased energy costs, however currently there is no further request to utilise the remaining budget.

5.1.7 Offsetting the favourable forecasts above are:

5.1.8 ***Pay Award 2023/2024***

5.1.9 The current local government employers pay proposal for 2023/24 is a £1,925 increase on all NJC pay scales. If agreed this will result in pay increases ranging from 3.88% to 9.42% (depending on salary levels). The average increase will be 6.4%

5.1.10 When compared to the Council's agreed budget of an assumed 5% increase there is an estimated cost pressure of £0.6m relating to pay.

5.1.11 ***Utility Costs***

5.1.12 Energy costs are forecast to increase by around £2m for 2023/2024 (based on costs incurred April to June) compared to 2022/2023, averaging 125% increase for electricity and 138% for gas. With the exception of street lighting (see 5.1.6), the cost pressure awarded as part of the budget setting process, appears to be sufficient to fund these additional costs. Whilst utility prices are starting to reduce, it is unlikely that the Council will see reduced costs until April 2024 due to purchasing energy in advance.

5.1.13 **Use of Reserves**

5.1.14 The draw from specific reserves total £4m and this includes:

- £3.23m - In agreeing the 2023/2024 budget, Members agreed to utilise £4.2m of specific reserves (Financial Resilience Reserve, Future Interest Rates Reserve and Inflation & Service Cost Pressures Reserve) to balance the budget. Based on the current forecast, the draw from reserves will be £3.23m after taking into consideration the draw from alternative specific reserves (as detailed below).
- £300,000 from General Reserves for Free School Meals direct payment for the summer holidays
- £102,000 contribution from South East Wales Collaboration reserve
- £102,000 – displaced grant funding from 2022/2023
- £150,000 contribution from Supporting Capacity, Community Safety and Resettlement Reserve
- £64,000 – ICT Reserve towards costs for software for Planning
- £30,000 contribution from the Building Control Reserve

5.1.15 Except for the use of reserves identified in 5.1.14, as the overall forecast is a favourable variance, it has been assumed that the additional costs, related to the pay award (in excess of the agreed budget), is funded from within underspending budgets, and not specific reserves.

5.1.16 **Budget Virements**

5.1.17 Budget virements are actioned to address in year overspends, cost pressures or to realign budgets to reflect service needs.

5.1.18 The Constitution requires budget virements in excess of £250,000 between portfolios to be approved by Cabinet and the following table details the budget virements that have been actioned during the period April to June 2023 subject to approval.

5.1.19 **Table 2 – Budget Virements**

| Portfolio | Virement from £ | Virement to £ | Reason |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Corporate Services – Contingency for in year Inflationary increases | 620,000 | | To fund the cost pressure of £620,000 arising from increased energy costs. |
| Environment – Street Lighting | | 620,000 | |
| Social Services – Various budget headings | 274,020 | 274,020 | To realign a number of budgets to reflect planned spend within the portfolio |

5.1.20 **In Year Cost Pressures**

5.1.21 Appendix 1a to 1f provides details of the favourable and adverse variances across services within each portfolio.

Where a portfolio is reporting an overall adverse variance and where a service is forecasting an adverse variance in excess of £50,000, Action Plans have been developed providing reasons and mitigating actions and these are attached at Appendix 2.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 There is a risk that Action Plans will not address the cost pressures identified.

Action Plans will be monitored as part of the Budget Monitoring and Reporting framework and the impact reported to Cabinet. Continuing, new and emerging Cost Pressures will be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Budget Setting process.

5.2.2 There is a risk that continued high inflation, the pay award and energy costs will be higher than the current forecast, increasing the cost pressures facing the Council.

Costs will continue to be monitored and reported and Action Plans developed to address the cost pressure in year.

5.3 ***Legal***

N/A

5.4 ***Human Resources***

N/A

5.5 ***Health and Safety***

N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Performance information is detailed throughout this report and a summary page for each portfolio is attached at Appendices 1a to 1f.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The report details the financial implications for the Council in providing services to the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

CLT have considered the forecast financial position for 2023/2024 (as at 30 June 2023).

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

6.4.1 For new and emerging cost pressures identified during the financial year, budget holders will produce Action Plans to address the cost pressure during the year.

- 6.4.2 Cost Pressures are also considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
Existing, new and emerging cost pressures are considered as part of the annual budget setting process and additional funding awarded where it is likely that the cost pressure will continue into future years.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
Accountancy works closely with budget holders during the financial year in producing the financial forecast, identifying cost pressures and in developing Action Plans.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
N/A
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
The Council is committed to the Decarbonisation Plan to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030.
- 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***
N/A
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 Financial reporting is carried out on a quarterly basis. Where services are reporting significant cost pressures, there will be a requirement for Budget Holders to develop and implement Action Plans these will be reported on a quarterly basis.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Portfolio Summaries
Appendix 2 – Action Plans

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| SUMMARY | | | |
| <u>DEPARTMENTAL AND OTHER RECHARGEABLE SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Corporate Services Department | 6,845 | 124,717 | (117,872) |
| Resources Department | 42,215 | (53,850) | 96,065 |
| Sub Total | 49,060 | 70,867 | (21,807) |
| <u>COMMERCIAL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Archives | 156,710 | 156,710 | 0 |
| Festival Park | 114,630 | 114,630 | 0 |
| Housing Benefit | (116,270) | (98,542) | (17,728) |
| ICT Service | (103,630) | (43,280) | (60,350) |
| Cross Cutting | (107,310) | (55,876) | (51,434) |
| Community Hubs | 222,190 | 228,422 | (6,232) |
| Sub Total | 166,320 | 302,064 | (135,744) |
| <u>LEGAL & CORPORATE COMPLIANCE SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Registration of Electors | 20,820 | 1,749 | 19,071 |
| Conducting Elections | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths | 58,860 | 83,299 | (24,439) |
| Sub Total | 79,680 | 85,048 | (5,368) |
| <u>GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Corporate Management (inc Audit Fees) | 109,510 | 110,856 | (1,346) |
| Democratic Representation and Management | 1,349,180 | 1,298,793 | 50,387 |
| CCTV Cameras | 208,680 | 171,190 | 37,490 |
| Civil Contingencies | 114,110 | 69,283 | 44,827 |
| Sub Total | 1,781,480 | 1,650,122 | 131,358 |
| <u>RESOURCES SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Corporate Management | 355,790 | 351,410 | 4,380 |
| Non Distributed Costs | 695,000 | 512,660 | 182,340 |
| Apprenticeship Levy | 358,430 | 388,238 | (29,808) |
| Council Tax Collection | (1,304,930) | (1,053,729) | (251,201) |
| Council Tax Reduction Scheme | 10,404,540 | 9,748,982 | 655,558 |
| N.N.D.R. Collection | (106,820) | (110,817) | 3,997 |
| Grants and Subscriptions | 79,500 | 79,500 | 0 |
| Cross Cutting Budget | 847,940 | 270,990 | 576,950 |
| Sub Total | 11,329,450 | 10,187,234 | 1,142,216 |
| <u>CORPORATE CHARGES</u> | | | |
| Corporate Recharges | 4,658,340 | 4,658,340 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 4,658,340 | 4,658,340 | 0 |
| CORPORATE SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 18,064,330 | 16,953,675 | 1,110,655 |

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| SUMMARY | | | |
| SOCIAL SERVICES | | | |
| Children's Services - Commissioning and Social Work | 4,247,760 | 4,303,111 | (55,351) |
| Looked After Children | 7,314,350 | 8,343,555 | (1,029,205) |
| Family Support Services | 203,070 | 203,071 | (1) |
| Youth Justice | 276,080 | 276,023 | 57 |
| Other Children's and Family Services | 2,537,840 | 2,576,805 | (38,965) |
| Older People Aged 65 or Over | 7,968,630 | 7,884,403 | 84,227 |
| Adults Aged Under 65 with a Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment | 18,290 | 18,290 | 0 |
| Adults Aged Under 65 with Learning Disabilities | 3,933,640 | 3,905,548 | 28,092 |
| Adults Aged Under 65 with Mental Health Needs | 582,840 | 614,095 | (31,255) |
| Other Adult Services | 434,760 | 434,573 | 187 |
| Community Care | 20,132,770 | 19,513,473 | 619,297 |
| Support Service and Management Costs | 948,740 | 887,096 | 61,644 |
| Corporate Recharges | 5,803,660 | 5,803,659 | 1 |
| SOCIAL SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 54,402,430 | 54,763,703 | (361,273) |

EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|---|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| SUMMARY | | | |
| SCHOOLS BUDGET | | | |
| Individual Schools Budget | 52,562,420 | 52,562,420 | 0 |
| Education Improvement Grant | 272,910 | 272,910 | (0) |
| Other Costs | 676,210 | 675,509 | 701 |
| Supporting Special Education Needs | 1,759,140 | 1,681,887 | 77,253 |
| Schools Budget Total Expenditure | 55,270,680 | 55,192,725 | 77,955 |
| LEA BUDGET | | | |
| Strategic Management | 2,446,040 | 2,445,990 | 50 |
| Assuring Access to Schools | 3,573,710 | 3,573,270 | 440 |
| Facilitating School Improvement | 376,350 | 376,753 | (403) |
| Supporting Special Education Needs | 332,460 | 296,813 | 35,647 |
| LEA Budget Total Expenditure | 6,728,560 | 6,692,825 | 35,735 |
| OTHER EDUCATION SERVICES | | | |
| Further Education and Training | 146,840 | 138,284 | 8,556 |
| Youth Service | 380,940 | 380,812 | 128 |
| Other Expenditure | 143,850 | 132,682 | 11,168 |
| Education Departmental Budget | 0 | 2,845 | (2,845) |
| Other Education Services Total Expenditure | 671,630 | 654,622 | 17,008 |
| CORPORATE CHARGES | | | |
| Corporate Support Recharges | 6,251,110 | 6,251,110 | 0 |
| Corporate Charges Total Expenditure | 6,251,110 | 6,251,110 | 0 |
| Education Total Expenditure | 68,921,980 | 68,791,282 | 130,698 |
| LEISURE TRUSTS | | | |
| LEISURE TRUSTS | | | |
| Aneurin Leisure Trust | 3,170,640 | 3,170,641 | (1) |
| Awen Leisure Trust | 221,000 | 220,998 | 2 |
| Sub Total | 3,391,640 | 3,391,639 | 1 |
| RETAINED SERVICES | | | |
| Corporate Recharges | 1,259,190 | 1,259,190 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 1,259,190 | 1,259,190 | 0 |
| Lesire Trusts Total Expenditure | 4,650,830 | 4,650,829 | 1 |
| EDUCATION PORTFOLIO TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 73,572,810 | 73,442,111 | 130,699 |

ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|---|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| SUMMARY | | | |
| <u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Economic Strategy and Development - Departmental Budget | 6,600 | 21,727 | (15,127) |
| Estates Management - Rechargeable | 0 | 78,462 | (78,462) |
| <i>Sub Total</i> | <u>6,600</u> | <u>100,189</u> | <u>(93,589)</u> |
| <u>ECONOMY SERVICES</u> | | | |
| CSCS | (10,200) | 115 | (10,315) |
| Destination Management | 10,200 | 9,953 | 247 |
| Financial Support to Business | 4,410 | 4,410 | 0 |
| General Offices | (84,360) | (84,415) | 55 |
| Industrial Land | 7,390 | 2,020 | 5,370 |
| Inspire | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nursery Units/Misc. Industrial Premises | (893,750) | (839,525) | (54,225) |
| Pentagon | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Regeneration Projects | 5,100 | 6,179 | (1,079) |
| Estates Management Non Rechargeable | (96,600) | (124,049) | 27,449 |
| <i>Sub Total</i> | <u>(1,057,810)</u> | <u>(1,025,312)</u> | <u>(32,498)</u> |
| Corporate Recharges | 3,030,620 | 3,030,620 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | <u><u>1,979,410</u></u> | <u><u>2,105,497</u></u> | <u><u>(126,087)</u></u> |

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| SUMMARY | | | |
| <u>COMMUNITY SERVICES</u> | | | |
| <u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Environment Department - Corporate Division | 0 | (139,993) | 139,993 |
| Environmental Services Division | 0 | (21,290) | 21,290 |
| Technical Services - Engineering & Property Management | (107) | (51,121) | 51,014 |
| Enforcement | 40,000 | 35,894 | 4,106 |
| Sub Total | 39,893 | (176,510) | 216,403 |
| <u>WASTE COLLECTION</u> | | | |
| Household and Trade Waste Collection | 705,840 | 742,347 | (36,507) |
| Recycling Collection | 3,256,940 | 3,242,182 | 14,758 |
| Bulky Waste Collection | 25,880 | 24,762 | 1,118 |
| Sub Total | 3,988,660 | 4,009,291 | (20,631) |
| <u>WASTE TRANSFER</u> | | | |
| Civic Amenity Sites | 57,400 | 54,116 | 3,284 |
| HWRC Roseheyworth | 118,550 | 105,496 | 13,054 |
| Transfer Station | 224,530 | 135,684 | 88,846 |
| Sub Total | 400,480 | 295,296 | 105,184 |
| <u>SILENT VALLEY TRANSFER</u> | | | |
| Combined Waste Services | 1,690,663 | 1,571,077 | 119,586 |
| Sub Total | 1,690,663 | 1,571,077 | 119,586 |
| <u>WASTE DISPOSAL</u> | | | |
| Disposal Of Waste | 1,360,380 | 1,360,546 | (166) |
| Recycling Disposal | 130,080 | 83,138 | 46,942 |
| Trade Waste Collection, Transfer & Disposal | (20,170) | (40,022) | 19,852 |
| Sub Total | 1,470,290 | 1,403,662 | 66,628 |
| Sub Total - WASTE SERVICES | 7,550,093 | 7,279,326 | 270,767 |
| <u>PUBLIC SERVICES</u> | | | |
| County Borough Cleansing | 1,222,290 | 1,198,372 | 23,918 |
| Cemeteries / Crematorium | (147,440) | (142,106) | (5,334) |
| Grounds Maintenance | 1,181,760 | 1,125,106 | 56,654 |
| Countryside Recreation Sites | 37,420 | 33,125 | 4,295 |
| General Entertainment | 2,690 | 3,654 | (964) |
| Sub Total | 2,296,720 | 2,218,152 | 78,568 |
| <u>FACILITIES MANAGEMENT</u> | | | |
| Corporate Landlord | 2,012,382 | 2,205,534 | (193,152) |
| Corporate Property | 43,260 | 43,260 | 0 |
| Building Cleaning | 463,982 | 537,677 | (73,695) |
| Catering Account | 1,066,520 | 1,008,987 | 57,533 |
| Appetite For Life | 44,585 | 44,585 | 0 |
| School Breakfast Club | 471,678 | 435,811 | 35,867 |
| Sub Total | 4,102,407 | 4,275,855 | (173,448) |
| <u>HIGHWAYS & ROADS SERVICES</u> | | | |

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Highways - Street Care Team | 0 | (4,139) | 4,139 |
| Non Operational Land | 1,487 | 1,487 | 0 |
| Licensing (Highway Permits) | (52,211) | (52,211) | 0 |
| Shopping Arcade, Abertillery | 2,834 | 2,834 | 0 |
| Road and Street Works Acts | (16,589) | (13,576) | (3,013) |
| Multi-Storey Car Parks | 258,120 | 301,543 | (43,423) |
| On Street Parking | 1,122 | 1,122 | 0 |
| Surface Car Parks | 32,421 | 32,421 | 0 |
| Public Transport Co-Ordination | 924 | 924 | 0 |
| Bridges | 79,145 | 79,145 | 0 |
| Structural Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads) | 197,851 | 206,010 | (8,159) |
| Environmental Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads) | 19,831 | 19,831 | 0 |
| Safety Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads) | 75,452 | 74,501 | 951 |
| Routine Repairs (Principal and Other Roads) | 933,193 | 997,253 | (64,060) |
| Street Lighting | 1,984,051 | 1,984,051 | 0 |
| Winter Maintenance | 416,529 | 393,154 | 23,375 |
| Sub Total | 3,934,160 | 4,024,350 | (90,190) |
| <u>TRANSPORT SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Traffic Orders | (16,841) | (24,820) | 7,979 |
| Highways Adoptions | (9,950) | (29,960) | 20,010 |
| Traffic / Accident Research | 16,001 | 13,700 | 2,301 |
| Traffic Management | 6,895 | 6,895 | 0 |
| Civil Parking Enforcement | 2,100 | (6,841) | 8,941 |
| Road Safety Education | 25,645 | 26,275 | (630) |
| Crossing Patrols | 182,415 | 189,323 | (6,908) |
| Concessionary fares and Support to Operators | 284,395 | 251,549 | 32,846 |
| Local Transport Plans | 2,677 | 2,463 | 214 |
| Home to School Transport | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Transport and Heavy Plant | 240,760 | 260,392 | (19,632) |
| Sub Total | 734,097 | 688,976 | 45,121 |
| <u>CULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| General Administration and Markets | (25,868) | (12,149) | (13,719) |
| Countryside Programme and Management | 1,717 | 1,717 | 0 |
| Landscaping and Afforestation | 20,716 | 20,716 | 0 |
| Reservoirs, Tips, Quarries and Mines | 10,333 | 29,464 | (19,131) |
| Flood Defence And Land Drainage | 56,488 | 56,488 | 0 |
| ENRaW | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| City Deal | 99,150 | 99,150 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 162,536 | 195,386 | (32,850) |
| COMMUNITY SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 18,819,906 | 18,505,535 | 314,372 |

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| <u>PUBLIC PROTECTION</u> | | | |
| <u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Environmental Health | 0 | (11,322) | 11,322 |
| <i>Sub Total</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>(11,322)</i> | <i>11,322</i> |
| <u>CARAVAN SITES</u> | | | |
| Cwmcrachen Caravan Site | (41,092) | (1,154) | (39,938) |
| <i>Sub Total</i> | <i>(41,092)</i> | <i>(1,154)</i> | <i>(39,938)</i> |
| <u>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</u> | | | |
| Food Safety | 6,395 | 1,004 | 5,392 |
| Control of Pollution | 9,578 | 14,662 | (5,084) |
| Dog Wardens | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Animal Health and Welfare | 23,827 | 23,827 | 0 |
| Pest Control | 63,240 | 48,489 | 14,751 |
| Littering and Dog Control Orders | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Health and Safety at Work (Commercial Prem.) | 1,540 | (770) | 2,310 |
| <i>Sub Total</i> | <i>104,581</i> | <i>87,212</i> | <i>17,369</i> |
| <u>HOUSING SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Homelessness | 269,121 | 301,437 | (32,317) |
| 20 Church Street | 16,116 | 17,523 | (1,407) |
| General Properties | (8,160) | (6,326) | (1,834) |
| Housing Access | 76,954 | 60,745 | 16,209 |
| Works in Default | (255) | (3,510) | 3,255 |
| Disabled Facilities Grants | 1,061 | 0 | 1,061 |
| <i>Sub Total</i> | <i>354,836</i> | <i>369,870</i> | <i>(15,034)</i> |
| <u>TRADING STANDARDS</u> | | | |
| Trading Standards | (0) | 9,957 | (9,958) |
| Inspection and Enforcement | 4,437 | 981 | 3,456 |
| <i>Sub Total</i> | <i>4,437</i> | <i>10,938</i> | <i>(6,502)</i> |
| PUBLIC PROTECTION TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 422,761 | 455,544 | (32,783) |
| <u>CORPORATE CHARGES</u> | | | |
| Fire Service | 3,932,600 | 3,953,469 | (20,869) |
| Coroner's Court | 152,010 | 152,010 | 0 |
| Corporate Recharges | 11,244,666 | 11,244,666 | 0 |
| CORPORATE CHARGES TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 15,329,276 | 15,350,145 | (20,869) |
| Overall Portfolio Total | 34,571,943 | 34,311,224 | 260,719 |

PLANNING COMMITTEE AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|---|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| PLANNING COMMITTEE SUMMARY | | | |
| <u>BUILDING CONTROL</u> | | | |
| <u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Building Control | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <u>BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Building Regulations | 35,870 | 35,870 | 0 |
| Dangerous Structures | 23,100 | 10,179 | 12,921 |
| <i>Building Control Total Expenditure</i> | <u>58,970</u> | <u>46,049</u> | <u>12,921</u> |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT</u> | | | |
| <u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Development Management | 0 | 10,382 | (10,382) |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Dealing with Applications | (202,311) | (148,447) | (53,864) |
| Planning Appeals | 3,320 | 0 | 3,320 |
| Enforcement | (10) | 39 | (49) |
| <i>Development Management Total Expenditure</i> | <u>(199,001)</u> | <u>(138,026)</u> | <u>(60,975)</u> |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT PLANS</u> | | | |
| <u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Development Plans | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT PLANS SERVICES</u> | | | |
| Development Plans | 100,460 | 100,460 | 0 |
| <i>Development Plans Total Expenditure</i> | <u>100,460</u> | <u>100,460</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Corporate Recharges | 1,582,760 | 1,582,760 | 0 |
| PLANNING COMMITTEE TOTAL EXPENDITURE | <u><u>1,543,189</u></u> | <u><u>1,591,243</u></u> | <u><u>(48,054)</u></u> |

PLANNING COMMITTEE AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

| Item | Revised Estimate 2023/2024 | Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2024 | Variance Favourable / (Adverse) |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| LICENSING COMMITTEE SUMMARY | | | |
| Licensing | | | 0 |
| Internal Recharges | 94,646 | 99,548 | (4,902) |
| | 55,207 | 55,207 | 0 |
| LICENSING COMMITTEE TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 149,853 | 154,755 | (4,902) |

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Action Plan
Social Services
2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 June 2023)

Appendix 2a

| Service Area | 2022/2023 Variance at Outturn 2023 £ | 2023/2024 Variance at June 2023 Forecast £ | Action Required & Timescale | Financial Impact £ | Responsible Officer |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Children Looked After | | | | | |
| Children's Home | (816,202) | (646,761) | <p><u>Reason for Adverse Variance</u></p> <p>The reason for the adverse variance is due to the cost of placements exceeding the budget. However, the number of placements have reduced by 2 from 13 to 11 since March 2023, one of which was the secure accommodation placement.</p> | | Loredana Moruz |
| Independent Fostering Agencies | (1,846) | (221,796) | <p>The reason for the increase in the adverse variance is due to the number of placements increasing from 25 at the end of March to 29 at the end of June 23 and the budget being insufficient to meet these costs.</p> <p>The projected underspend within adults is partially offsetting this cost pressure.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement from the Head of Service (HOS) is required for all residential placements. | | |

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 June 2023)

Appendix 2a

| Service Area | 2022/2023 Variance at Outturn 2023 £ | 2023/2024 Variance at June 2023 Forecast £ | Action Required & Timescale | Financial Impact £ | Responsible Officer |
|---------------------|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each placement is being reviewed on a monthly basis by the Head of Service with Team Managers.• There are a number of preventative services in place, which include the Supporting Change Team and MYST, both initiatives will potentially reduce the number of children within residential placements in the long term.• In house provision of a Children's Residential Home and a multi-use provision is currently in the development stage, identified savings will be built into Bridging the Gap to support the Council's budget pressures in 2024/25 and future years. | | |

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 June 2023)

Appendix 2a

| Service Area | 2022/2023 Variance at Outturn 2023 £ | 2023/2024 Variance at June 2023 Forecast £ | Action Required & Timescale | Financial Impact £ | Responsible Officer |
|--------------|--|--|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Legal Fees | (335,729) | (200,000) | <p><u>Reason for Adverse Variance</u></p> <p>The reason for the adverse variance is due to the requirement of using the external provider to finalise existing cases.</p> <p>The projected underspend within adults is currently mitigating this cost pressure.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGCBC has entered an SLA with Caerphilly CBC to provide Children's legal services. This arrangement commenced on 1st April 2022 and will mitigate this cost pressure for future years. • A two-tier system will remain in place for the current financial year 2023/24 until the existing cases have been finalised by the external provider. All new cases will be dealt with by Caerphilly CBC and will be funded through the SLA. | | Rachel Price / Andrea Jones |

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 June 2023)

Appendix 2a

| Service Area | 2022/2023 Variance at Outturn 2023 £ | 2023/2024 Variance at June 2023 Forecast £ | Action Required & Timescale | Financial Impact £ | Responsible Officer |
|--|--|--|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Older People (Aged 65 and Over) | | | | | |
| Cwrt Mytton | (437,937) | (113,115) | <p><u>Reason for Adverse Variance</u></p> <p>The reason for the adverse variance is due to an increase in staffing costs, in relation to the use of agency staff to cover vacant posts, sickness absences and the pay award.</p> <p>However, the projected underspend within in adults is completing mitigating this cost pressure.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A staff restructure and recruitment drive has been undertaken to address the staffing issues currently encountered, these actions have improved the financial position to date. | | Hannah Baulch / Joanne Hawkins |

Action Plan

Planning

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 June 2023)

Appendix 2b

| Service Area | 2022/2023 Provisional Outturn Variance £ | 2023/2024 Variance at June 2023 Forecast £ | Action Required & Timescale | Financial Impact £ | Responsible Officer |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------|---|
| Dealing with Applications | 53,326 | (53,866) | <p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a result of the implementation of a much-needed new back-office software system, a planning officer has been diverted 100% to data migration and project management duties. To fulfil our statutory obligations and provide acceptable service performance we are employing a Consultancy to pick up the officer's caseload. These ongoing consultancy costs are causing an adverse variance against the available budget. 2. Potential £29K application fees had to be surrendered by the Authority as it related to a quarry application and these are dealt with by Carmarthenshire CC. Minerals planning is a specialist role and we have no inhouse expertise. Whilst this was not an additional cost to the authority, the application fee was passported to Carmarthenshire CC for their officer (who deals with many such applications for South Wales LPA's) to do the work. This would have mitigated some of the adverse variance. There were no alternative options available that would not have cost the authority significantly more to deal with the application directly. | | Service Manager – Development & Estates |

Action Plan

Planning

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 June 2023)

Appendix 2b

| Service Area | 2022/2023 Provisional Outturn Variance £ | 2023/2024 Variance at June 2023 Forecast £ | Action Required & Timescale | Financial Impact £ | Responsible Officer |
|---------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | | <p><u>Actions</u></p> <p>In order to continue meeting statutory obligations the need to utilise the Consultancy will remain, however this will only be for the migration and implementation period, after which the officer will return to their substantive role. The migration and implementation processes will be completed in the most efficient and effective manner to allow the officer to return to their normal caseload but to also achieve the benefits of a more effective and efficient planning software system for staff and the public. The progress of the system implementation and the use of consultancy will be kept under close review and the utilisation of consultancy will cease as soon as reasonably practicable, this could mitigate some of the forecast overspend.</p> | | |

Action Plan

Economy

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 June 2023)

Appendix 2c

| Service Area | 2022/2023 Provisional Outturn Variance £ | 2023/2024 Variance at June 2023 Forecast £ | Action Required & Timescale | Financial Impact £ | Responsible Officer |
|----------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Estates Rechargeable | (56,643) | (78,453) | <p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <p>The use of Agency staff for 2 Solicitors.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <p>There is limited scope for dealing with the overspend. We have faced recruitment difficulties resulting in employing agency staff in the legal and surveying areas which comes at a premium. Salaries in the private sector in these areas far outstrip Blaenau Gwent rates and agency is the only option in the short term. We could terminate the contracts but this will result in ongoing vacancies in key areas such as managing the industrial portfolio and legal support. With the latter, this will impact on many other service areas such as Social Services and Public Protection, impact on key council projects and bridging the gap. This will result in other services having to procure external legal support which will likely increase costs to the Council.</p> | | Ellie Fry |

Action Plan

Economy

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 June 2023)

Appendix 2c

| Service Area | 2022/2023 Provisional Outturn Variance £ | 2023/2024 Variance at June 2023 Forecast £ | Action Required & Timescale | Financial Impact £ | Responsible Officer |
|--|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Nursery Units Industrial Premises | 73,679 | (54,225) | <p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <p>Whilst the rental income target is being achieved, an element is remitted back to Welsh Government in accordance with the joint Venture Agreement, resulting in a shortfall against the budget.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>A risk factor has been built into the financial forecast to allow for the risk of businesses ending their tenancy during the year and voids. Voids will be monitored during the year and working closely with businesses to ensure units are occupied.</p> | | Ellie Fry |

Agenda Item 13

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 4th October 2023
Report Subject: Capital Budget Monitoring, Forecast For 2023/2024 Financial Year (As at 30 June 2023)
Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Thomas – Leader & Cabinet Member Corporate Overview & Performance
Report Submitted by: Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance & Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 17/08/2023 | | | | 04.09.23 (Briefing) | 04.10.23 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2023/2024 financial year, as at 30th June 2023.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides details on the following:

- Forecast financial position to 31st March 2024 across all portfolios.
- Details of any significant adverse and/or favourable variances

- 2.2 This report forms part of the councils financial reporting framework.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (Recommended Option)

Members to consider the report and

- Provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report.
- Continue to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council.
- To note the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding.

3.2 Option 2

Do not accept the report.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

- 4.1 This report supports the Forward-Looking Corporate Plan 2022/27 as it ensures effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience. This is a key element to achieving "An ambitious and

innovative council delivering the quality services at the right time and in the right place”.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.1.1 The current capital programme is approximately £110m and is funded by: -

WG Grant - £77m

Other grant funding - £12m

Council Resources - £21m

It is forecast that expenditure of £63.89m will be incurred on capital projects / schemes during 2023/24, with the remainder allocated for use in future years.

The overall financial position as forecast at 30th June 2023 indicates a breakeven position against a total in year capital budget of £63.89m.

The overall position across all Portfolios is shown below: -

| Total Approvals Q1 (June 2023) | Future funding | In year funding | Forecast Expenditure to 31/03/2024 | Actual Expenditure to 30/06/2023 (Month 3) | Forecast Variance underspent / (overspent) |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| 110,310 | 46,421 | 63,890 | 63,890 | 10,379 | - |

5.1.2 Previous reports have identified overspends against the Childcare Offer – Swffryd Scheme project, totalling £72,248. A variation request has been submitted to Welsh Government for virement of funding from an existing approved scheme, that no longer requires the funding. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by Welsh Government Panel in July 2023. In anticipation of the variation request being approved, the project has been shown as fully funded. Officers will update members of the outcome in due course.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

5.2.1 Expenditure against external funding approvals needs to be maximised in order to avoid loss of funding. If significant delays in capital expenditure are anticipated or contract costs rise due to inflation pressures and the cost of living crisis, liaison with funding bodies will be required at the earliest opportunity in order to secure approval for funding re-profile.

5.2.2 If funding re-profile cannot be agreed and capital schemes are not kept within budget, then capital reserves may be committed beyond affordable levels, with the

consequence that projects that have not yet commenced may be deferred or not undertaken, so impacting upon future Capital Programmes.

- 5.2.3 If capital schemes do not achieve the required level of expenditure within the correct financial year and project face significant delays, funding may be lost to the Authority and be detrimental to the Authority's chances of securing future funding.
- 5.2.4 The aforementioned risks are mitigated as far as possible through close working relationship with Budget Holders, Technical Services and external funding bodies such as Welsh Government. This ensures that where possible, funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise
- 5.2.5 Where overall funding approvals are likely to be exceeded and additional compensatory funding sources cannot be identified, budget holders will initially report the consequences to the Corporate Leadership Team, including proposals to defer/delete other approved schemes.

5.3 **Legal**
N/A

5.4 **Human Resources**
N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.2 The Capital Expenditure Report is attached at Appendix 1.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

6.2.1 The report details the financial implications for the Council in providing capital investment for the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

6.2.2 All forecast overspends and underspends are managed in order that secured funding approvals are not lost and to mitigate any potential adverse impact upon future Capital investment in Blaenau Gwent.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Capital Programme is developed to support the Council's strategic priorities and is considered and agreed by full Council. Cabinet consider the budget monitoring reports on a quarterly basis and provide challenge as appropriate.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

It is essential that all forecast overspends and underspends are managed in order that secured funding approvals are not lost and to mitigate any potential adverse impact upon the future capital programme.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Capital Services Team will continue their close working relationship with budget holders and external funding bodies to ensure that funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured in future financial years.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Capital Services Team works closely with budget holders in producing the financial forecast and with external funding bodies to ensure that where possible funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

N/A

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The Council is committed to the Decarbonisation Plan to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. The Capital Programme currently contains schemes which promote the reduction of carbon emissions such as ReFIT, Electric Vehicle Charge Points, Innovation for Decarbonisation - WBRID and the purchase of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles. New Council buildings should be designed to the latest energy efficiency standards.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

N/A

7. ***Monitoring Arrangements***

7.1 The Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet consider the budget monitoring reports on a quarterly basis and provide challenge as appropriate.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Capital Programme Expenditure – Quarter 1

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates Summary

| <i>Portfolio</i> | <i>Total Funding</i> | <i>In Year Budget</i> | <i>Future Funding</i> | <i>Expenditure To: June 2023</i> | <i>Remaining in Year Budget</i> | <i>Forecast Expenditure</i> | <i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i> |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Corporate Services Portfolio | 1,153,624 | 469,513 | 684,111 | 39,442 | 430,071 | 469,513 | 0 |
| Social Services Portfolio | 5,175,751 | 3,580,574 | 1,595,177 | 64,210 | 3,516,364 | 3,580,574 | 0 |
| Economy Portfolio | 20,944,702 | 10,002,367 | 10,942,335 | 1,153,914 | 8,848,453 | 10,002,367 | 0 |
| Education and Active Living | 32,243,606 | 18,226,789 | 14,016,817 | 1,223,525 | 17,003,264 | 18,226,789 | 0 |
| Environment Portfolio | 4,183,663 | 782,861 | 3,400,802 | 272,772 | 510,089 | 782,861 | 0 |
| Environment - Infrastructure Portfolio | 42,272,197 | 30,350,962 | 11,921,235 | 7,622,660 | 22,728,302 | 30,350,962 | 0 |
| All Portfolios | 4,336,048 | 476,384 | 3,859,664 | 2,384 | 474,000 | 476,384 | 0 |
| Total Capital Funding | 110,309,591 | 63,889,450 | 46,420,141 | 10,378,906 | 53,510,544 | 63,889,450 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| <i>Code</i> | <i>Scheme</i> | <i>Total Funding</i> | <i>In Year Budget</i> | <i>Future Funding</i> | <i>Expenditure to: June 2023</i> | <i>Remaining in Year Budget</i> | <i>Forecast Expenditure</i> | <i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Corporate Services Portfolio | | | | | | | | |
| Corporate Services | | | | | | | | |
| 327102 | Corporate Properties H&S and Capital Wo | 277,616 | 277,616 | 0 | 0 | 277,616 | 277,616 | 0 |
| 327103 | Civic Centre Decommissioning | 60,000 | 60,000 | 0 | 39,442 | 20,558 | 60,000 | 0 |
| 327106 | ICT Roadmap | 501,111 | 0 | 501,111 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327107 | Data Centre Move | 244,000 | 61,000 | 183,000 | 0 | 61,000 | 61,000 | 0 |
| 328090 | CCTV Upgrade | 70,897 | 70,897 | 0 | 0 | 70,897 | 70,897 | 0 |
| Corporate Services | | 1,153,624 | 469,513 | 684,111 | 39,442 | 430,071 | 469,513 | 0 |
| Corporate Services Portfolio | | 1,153,624 | 469,513 | 684,111 | 39,442 | 430,071 | 469,513 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates

Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|------|--------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
|------|--------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|

Social Services Portfolio

Childrens Services

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|----------|
| 323152 | Beaufort Road - Extension Training Flat | 5,574 | 5,574 | 0 | 1,479 | 4,095 | 5,574 | 0 |
| 323155 | Childrens Residential Home - Mons Calpe | 432,775 | 432,775 | 0 | 1,100 | 431,675 | 432,775 | 0 |
| 323156 | Childrens Residential Home - Madison Ho | 432,775 | 432,775 | 0 | 0 | 432,775 | 432,775 | 0 |
| 324719 | Flying Start - Cwm 2 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 0 | 22,850 | 7,150 | 30,000 | 0 |
| 324721 | Flying Start - Ebbw Vale North | 1,531 | 0 | 1,531 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324724 | Flying Start - Sirhowy Primary | 3,503 | 0 | 3,503 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324728 | Flying Start - Blaina ICC | 235,000 | 0 | 235,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324735 | Flying Start Brynithel FS Centre | 606 | 0 | 606 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324736 | Flying Start Additional Works | 24,883 | 24,883 | 0 | 20,864 | 4,019 | 24,883 | 0 |
| 324737 | Flying Start Capital (Covid-funding) | 12,863 | 0 | 12,863 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324738 | FS Covid Recovery - Cwm Dev. Garden S | 108,630 | 0 | 108,630 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324739 | FS Covid Recovery - Scout Hall | 49,178 | 0 | 49,178 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324771 | Childcare Offer - Badminton Scheme | 1,962,500 | 1,140,444 | 822,056 | 922 | 1,139,522 | 1,140,444 | 0 |
| 324772 | Childcare Offer - Blaina ICC Scheme | 909,819 | 619,080 | 290,739 | 10,812 | 608,268 | 619,080 | 0 |
| 324773 | Childcare Offer - Swfryd Scheme | 94,110 | 94,110 | 0 | 1,616 | 92,494 | 94,110 | 0 |
| 324774 | Childcare Offer - Small Grants Scheme | 346,636 | 346,636 | 0 | 2,356 | 344,280 | 346,636 | 0 |
| Childrens Services | | 4,650,383 | 3,126,277 | 1,524,106 | 61,999 | 3,064,278 | 3,126,277 | 0 |

Adult Services

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|-------|---------|---------|---|
| 323005 | Tackling Food Poverty - WLGA | 26,405 | 1,682 | 24,723 | 1,682 | 0 | 1,682 | 0 |
| 323120 | Disabled equipment | 285,000 | 285,000 | 0 | 354 | 284,646 | 285,000 | 0 |

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Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| <i>Code</i> | <i>Scheme</i> | <i>Total Funding</i> | <i>In Year Budget</i> | <i>Future Funding</i> | <i>Expenditure to: June 2023</i> | <i>Remaining in Year Budget</i> | <i>Forecast Expenditure</i> | <i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i> |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 323144 | ICF Main Capital Programme | 73,584 | 73,584 | 0 | 0 | 73,584 | 73,584 | 0 |
| 323147 | Intermediate Care Fund | 3,133 | 3,133 | 0 | 0 | 3,133 | 3,133 | 0 |
| 323149 | Better Care Capital Project | 1,347 | 0 | 1,347 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 323151 | Augusta House - Enablement Pods | 45,898 | 45,898 | 0 | 176 | 45,722 | 45,898 | 0 |
| 323165 | Community Meals Electric Vehicles | 90,001 | 45,000 | 45,001 | 0 | 45,000 | 45,000 | 0 |
| | Adult Services | 525,368 | 454,297 | 71,071 | 2,211 | 452,086 | 454,297 | 0 |
| | Social Services Portfolio | 5,175,751 | 3,580,574 | 1,595,177 | 64,210 | 3,516,364 | 3,580,574 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates

Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|------------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Economy Portfolio | | | | | | | | |
| Tredegar Regeneration | | | | | | | | |
| 326163 | Tredegar HLF | 680,123 | 96,032 | 584,091 | 0 | 96,032 | 96,032 | 0 |
| | Tredegar Regeneration | 680,123 | 96,032 | 584,091 | 0 | 96,032 | 96,032 | 0 |
| Ebbw Vale Town Centre | | | | | | | | |
| 326191 | TRI - Urban Centre Commercial Property I | 345,002 | 345,002 | 0 | 61,788 | 283,214 | 345,002 | 0 |
| | Ebbw Vale Town Centre | 345,002 | 345,002 | 0 | 61,788 | 283,214 | 345,002 | 0 |
| Valleys Regional Park | | | | | | | | |
| 326200 | VRP Ebbw Fach Trail | 899 | 0 | 899 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 326205 | VRP - Discovery Gateway | 21,950 | 21,950 | 0 | 21,950 | 0 | 21,950 | 0 |
| 326207 | Parc Bryn Bach - Co Working Space | 298 | 0 | 298 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Valleys Regional Park | 23,147 | 21,950 | 1,197 | 21,950 | 0 | 21,950 | 0 |
| The Works Site | | | | | | | | |
| 325097 | Big Arch | 46,279 | 0 | 46,279 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 325220 | Site Investigation Works | 19,001 | 0 | 19,001 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | The Works Site | 65,280 | 0 | 65,280 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other Regeneration | | | | | | | | |
| 326006 | Tech Valley s Initiative | 390,980 | 0 | 390,980 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 326180 | Lime Avenue Business Park | 368,655 | 1,243 | 367,412 | 1,243 | 1 | 1,243 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates

Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 326183 | Regain 2 | 3,758,789 | 3,100,000 | 658,789 | 1,006,867 | 2,093,133 | 3,100,000 | 0 |
| 326184 | Brexit Schemes | 210,831 | 0 | 210,831 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 326193 | TRI - Town Centre COVID-19 recovery ad: | 482,204 | 0 | 482,204 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 326194 | TT - Trinity Chapel & Abertillery Librar | 1,083,394 | 0 | 1,083,394 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 326225 | Heat Networks Project | 17,385 | 0 | 17,385 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 326227 | Innovation for Decarbonisation - WBRID | 20,586 | 5,704 | 14,882 | 5,704 | 0 | 5,704 | 0 |
| 326251 | Constrained Units | 155,763 | 19,222 | 136,541 | 19,221 | 1 | 19,222 | 0 |
| 326252 | Constrained Units - Roseheyworth | 151,369 | 149,309 | 2,060 | 0 | 149,309 | 149,309 | 0 |
| 326253 | Constrained Units - Blaenant Industrial | 3,076 | 3,076 | 0 | 3,076 | 0 | 3,076 | 0 |
| 326254 | Constrained Units - Cwm SBC | 2,039 | 2,039 | 0 | 2,039 | 0 | 2,039 | 0 |
| 326265 | Victoria Business Park - Development | 8,734 | 0 | 8,734 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 326266 | Brynmawr Retail Development | 747,720 | 0 | 747,720 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 326268 | Covid Recovery for Town Centres | 15,285 | 1,400 | 13,885 | 1,400 | 0 | 1,400 | 0 |
| 326269 | HiVE – Hi Value Engineering Centre - Mor | 12,183,100 | 6,240,000 | 5,943,100 | 13,237 | 6,226,763 | 6,240,000 | 0 |
| 326271 | Land Release Fund - Pithead Baths | 214,419 | 569 | 213,850 | 569 | 0 | 569 | 0 |
| 327050 | Constrained Units - Pond Road Industrial | 16,821 | 16,821 | 0 | 16,820 | 1 | 16,821 | 0 |
| Other Regeneration | | 19,831,150 | 9,539,383 | 10,291,767 | 1,070,175 | 8,469,208 | 9,539,383 | 0 |
| Economy Portfolio | | 20,944,702 | 10,002,367 | 10,942,335 | 1,153,914 | 8,848,453 | 10,002,367 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Education and Active Living | | | | | | | | |
| Education Services | | | | | | | | |
| 324125 | Education Minor Works | 379 | 0 | 379 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324138 | Education Capital Maintenance | 18,359 | 0 | 18,359 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324144 | St Marys - Refurbishment | 188,419 | 188,419 | 0 | 3,382 | 185,037 | 188,419 | 0 |
| 324145 | Tredegar Comp - Food & Technology | 21,520 | 0 | 21,520 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324147 | Tredegar Comp Upgrade Services and Ac | 3,450 | 0 | 3,450 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324148 | Coed y Garn Roof & Remedial Works | 28,950 | 0 | 28,950 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324149 | Brynbach Primary Disabled Adaptations | 8,663 | 0 | 8,663 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324151 | Tredegar Comp Upgrade Electrical Supply | 34,275 | 0 | 34,275 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324152 | Brynmawr Refurbishment | 45,306 | 2,005 | 43,301 | 2,005 | 0 | 2,005 | 0 |
| 324156 | River Centre Boiler | 3,367 | 0 | 3,367 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324157 | Tredegar Comprehensive Kitchen Electric | 31,944 | 0 | 31,944 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324161 | Pen Y Cwm - Refurbishment Works | 167,758 | 0 | 167,758 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324166 | Beaufort Hill Boiler | 12,262 | 12,262 | 0 | 0 | 12,262 | 12,262 | 0 |
| 324167 | Soffryd Boiler | 17,331 | 0 | 17,331 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324168 | St Marys Boiler | 44,138 | 44,138 | 0 | 0 | 44,138 | 44,138 | 0 |
| 324175 | River Centre Classroom and Toilets | 12,834 | 12,834 | 0 | 12,834 | 0 | 12,834 | 0 |
| 324179 | Ebbw Fawr Internal Remodelling | 29,137 | 29,137 | 0 | 836 | 28,301 | 29,137 | 0 |
| 324182 | CFS - Brynmawr Running Track | 125,000 | 125,000 | 0 | 0 | 125,000 | 125,000 | 0 |
| 324183 | Swffryd | 25,000 | 25,000 | 0 | 6,781 | 18,219 | 25,000 | 0 |
| 324187 | CFS - Pen y Cwm - Outdoor Provision | 8,555 | 8,555 | 0 | 5,050 | 3,505 | 8,555 | 0 |
| 324188 | Ebbw Fawr Primary CFS | 1,215 | 1,215 | 0 | 604 | 611 | 1,215 | 0 |

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Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|-------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 324189 | St Josephs Boiler | 130,000 | 130,000 | 0 | 0 | 130,000 | 130,000 | 0 |
| 324190 | Tredegar Caretakers House | 50,000 | 50,000 | 0 | 12,960 | 37,040 | 50,000 | 0 |
| 324191 | Schools Toilet Upgrades | 60,000 | 60,000 | 0 | 12,946 | 47,054 | 60,000 | 0 |
| 324192 | Bryn Bach Primary Boiler | 110,000 | 110,000 | 0 | 0 | 110,000 | 110,000 | 0 |
| 324193 | All Saints Fire Alarm, Water Heater plus | 49,731 | 49,731 | 0 | 0 | 49,731 | 49,731 | 0 |
| 324194 | School Estate Fencing - Safeguarding | 45,000 | 45,000 | 0 | 0 | 45,000 | 45,000 | 0 |
| 324195 | Schools Lighting Upgrades | 50,000 | 50,000 | 0 | 0 | 50,000 | 50,000 | 0 |
| 324196 | CCTV - Replacement columns | 50,000 | 50,000 | 0 | 0 | 50,000 | 50,000 | 0 |
| 324197 | Bryn Bach Nursery Demountable | 50,000 | 50,000 | 0 | 0 | 50,000 | 50,000 | 0 |
| 324198 | Abertillery Campus - Canopies | 100,000 | 100,000 | 0 | 0 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 0 |
| 324199 | Tredegar Comprehensive - Toilet Refurbis | 100,000 | 100,000 | 0 | 0 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 0 |
| 324201 | Class Size - Willowtown | 9,738 | 6,249 | 3,489 | 6,249 | 0 | 6,249 | 0 |
| 324202 | Class Size - St. Illtyd s | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,440 | (2,440) | 0 | 0 |
| 324203 | Period Poverty | 5,028 | 0 | 5,028 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324207 | St. Josephs s106 | 13,439 | 942 | 12,497 | 942 | 0 | 942 | 0 |
| 324250 | Electrical Upgrade - Blaen y Cwm | 12,246 | 12,246 | 0 | 5,994 | 6,252 | 12,246 | 0 |
| 324251 | Electrical Upgrade - Georgetown | 23,272 | 23,272 | 0 | 580 | 22,692 | 23,272 | 0 |
| 324252 | Electrical Upgrade - Glanhwy | 4,156 | 0 | 4,156 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324253 | Universal Free School Meals Equipment | 33,879 | 1,634 | 32,245 | 1,634 | 0 | 1,634 | 0 |
| 324254 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Beaufort Hill | 59,710 | 0 | 59,710 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324255 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Brynmawr RC | 120,029 | 0 | 120,029 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324256 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Ystruth Prima | 71,225 | 61,342 | 9,883 | 61,342 | 0 | 61,342 | 0 |
| 324257 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Roseheyworth | 14,410 | 10,966 | 3,444 | 10,966 | 0 | 10,966 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates

Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|--------|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 324258 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Willowtown Pr | 13,280 | 391 | 12,889 | 391 | 0 | 391 | 0 |
| 324259 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-St Illtydds P | 14,795 | 14,795 | 0 | 2,935 | 11,860 | 14,795 | 0 |
| 324260 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Sofrydd Prima | 80,689 | 80,689 | 0 | 1,856 | 78,833 | 80,689 | 0 |
| 324261 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Tillery Campu | 14,934 | 14,795 | 139 | 0 | 14,795 | 14,795 | 0 |
| 324262 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-St Marys CIW | 9,683 | 9,683 | 0 | 0 | 9,683 | 9,683 | 0 |
| 324263 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-St Josephs Pr | 10,125 | 10,125 | 0 | 0 | 10,125 | 10,125 | 0 |
| 324264 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Ysgol Bro Hel | 3,745 | 3,745 | 0 | 3,745 | 0 | 3,745 | 0 |
| 324265 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Coed y Garn P | 15,000 | 3,695 | 11,305 | 3,695 | 0 | 3,695 | 0 |
| 324266 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Deighton Prim | 76,621 | 76,621 | 0 | 0 | 76,621 | 76,621 | 0 |
| 324267 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-All saints RC | 1,362 | 1,362 | 0 | 96 | 1,266 | 1,362 | 0 |
| 324268 | Electrical Kitchen Upgrade-Rhosyfedwen I | 8,057 | 8,057 | 0 | 0 | 8,057 | 8,057 | 0 |
| 324519 | Digital 2030 Capital Grant - Post 16 | 4,621 | 0 | 4,621 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324530 | ALN | 373,023 | 350,724 | 22,299 | 0 | 350,724 | 350,724 | 0 |
| 324532 | Ebbw Fawr ASD | 3,890 | 0 | 3,890 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324534 | ALN - Penycwm | 7,100 | 7,100 | 0 | 7,100 | 0 | 7,100 | 0 |
| 324535 | ALN - River Centre | 23,998 | 23,998 | 0 | 23,998 | 0 | 23,998 | 0 |
| 324580 | Brynmaur 3G Pitch | 31,833 | 31,833 | 0 | 29,266 | 2,567 | 31,833 | 0 |
| 324743 | 21st Century Schools Six Bells Project | 138,924 | 68,563 | 70,361 | 17,349 | 51,214 | 68,563 | 0 |
| 324750 | Band B - Welsh Medium New Build | 13,079,655 | 9,784,345 | 3,295,310 | 0 | 9,784,345 | 9,784,345 | 0 |
| 324751 | Band B - New Primary Ebbw Fawr Valley | 6,259,952 | 6,259,952 | 0 | 933,682 | 5,326,270 | 6,259,952 | 0 |
| 324752 | Band B - Secondary Remodelling Brynma | 3,142,917 | 0 | 3,142,917 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324753 | Band B - Secondary Remodelling Abertille | 3,197,316 | 0 | 3,197,316 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 324754 | Band B - Secondary Remodelling Tredega | 3,196,970 | 0 | 3,196,970 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates

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Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 324755 | Band B - Welsh Medium Remodelling Bro | 382,070 | 62,017 | 320,053 | 0 | 62,017 | 62,017 | 0 |
| 324756 | Band B - Rhosyfedwen | 200 | 200 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 200 | 0 |
| 324760 | Band B - Ebbw Fawr Secondary Extensior | 2,300 | 2,300 | 0 | 2,300 | 0 | 2,300 | 0 |
| Education Services | | 32,082,785 | 18,174,937 | 13,907,848 | 1,174,157 | 17,000,780 | 18,174,937 | 0 |
| Active Living Services | | | | | | | | |
| 329088 | Bryn Bach Park Roof | 12,439 | 0 | 12,439 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 329089 | Abertillery LC Demolition | 952 | 0 | 952 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 329092 | ALC - Changing Room Refurbishment | 11,048 | 0 | 11,048 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 329095 | AWPOG - Play Equipment | 14,928 | 0 | 14,928 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 329097 | Play Equipment | 3,243 | 0 | 3,243 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 329100 | Six Bells Tennis Court Refurbishment | 6,923 | 6,923 | 0 | 4,439 | 2,484 | 6,923 | 0 |
| 329101 | Brynmawr LAC - PV & Battery Storage Sy | 61,288 | 11,293 | 49,995 | 11,293 | 0 | 11,293 | 0 |
| 329102 | Ebbw Vale LAC - PV & Battery Storage Sy | 50,000 | 33,636 | 16,364 | 33,636 | 0 | 33,636 | 0 |
| Active Living Services | | 160,821 | 51,852 | 108,969 | 49,368 | 2,484 | 51,852 | 0 |
| Education and Active Living | | 32,243,606 | 18,226,789 | 14,016,817 | 1,223,525 | 17,003,264 | 18,226,789 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
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Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Environment Portfolio | | | | | | | | |
| Environmental Services | | | | | | | | |
| 327035 | Central Depot - New Fire Escape | 48,194 | 48,194 | 0 | 0 | 48,194 | 48,194 | 0 |
| 327039 | Kerbside Collections | 2,052 | 0 | 2,052 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327044 | AHP Waste Collections | 52,380 | 0 | 52,380 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327045 | BRC Decommissioning Project | 191,777 | 0 | 191,777 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327046 | Repair Cafe | 1,066 | 0 | 1,066 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327061 | CATS | 64,189 | 0 | 64,189 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327065 | Re:Fit | 2,034,917 | 24,327 | 2,010,590 | 24,327 | 0 | 24,327 | 0 |
| 327067 | Market Hall - Asbestos Removal | 18,606 | 0 | 18,606 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327068 | Cemeteries Investment Programme | 9,137 | 0 | 9,137 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327070 | WRAP Cymru Capital Funding | 3,792 | 0 | 3,792 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327071 | Education Centre | 57,065 | 57,065 | 0 | 0 | 57,065 | 57,065 | 0 |
| 327074 | New Vale HWRC Refurbishment Works | 145,439 | 43,430 | 102,009 | 43,430 | 0 | 43,430 | 0 |
| 327080 | Cemetery Capacity - Cefn Golau Tredegar | 322,237 | 0 | 322,237 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327081 | Cemetery Capacity - Dukestown Tredegar | 216,055 | 0 | 216,055 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327082 | Cemetery Capacity - Brynmawr | 131,285 | 0 | 131,285 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327083 | Cemetery Capacity - Brynithel Abertiller | 93,084 | 0 | 93,084 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327090 | Fly Tipping CCTV | 961 | 0 | 961 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 327110 | Allotment Support Grant | 7,894 | 7,894 | 0 | 5,860 | 2,034 | 7,894 | 0 |
| Environmental Services | | 3,400,130 | 180,910 | 3,219,220 | 73,617 | 107,293 | 180,910 | 0 |

Housing Environmental Health

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

| | |
|---|--|
| Management Reports | Capital Programme Funding Estimates |
| <i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3</i> | |

| <i>Code</i> | <i>Scheme</i> | <i>Total Funding</i> | <i>In Year Budget</i> | <i>Future Funding</i> | <i>Expenditure to: June 2023</i> | <i>Remaining in Year Budget</i> | <i>Forecast Expenditure</i> | <i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i> |
|-------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 328221 | Remediation of Contaminated Land/Dereli | 102,564 | 0 | 102,564 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 350510 | Improvement grants - new scheme | 509,142 | 509,142 | 0 | 199,146 | 309,996 | 509,142 | 0 |
| 350550 | Support for Independent Living | 112,897 | 92,800 | 20,097 | 0 | 92,800 | 92,800 | 0 |
| 350560 | Empty Property Grants | 58,930 | 9 | 58,921 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| | Housing Environmental Health | 783,533 | 601,951 | 181,582 | 199,155 | 402,796 | 601,951 | 0 |
| | Environment Portfolio | 4,183,663 | 782,861 | 3,400,802 | 272,772 | 510,089 | 782,861 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| Code | Scheme | Total Funding | In Year Budget | Future Funding | Expenditure to: June 2023 | Remaining in Year Budget | Forecast Expenditure | Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav |
|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Environment - Infrastructure Portfolio | | | | | | | | |
| Engineering Services | | | | | | | | |
| 328280 | Coal Tip Safety | 735,002 | 405,077 | 329,925 | 88,261 | 316,816 | 405,077 | 0 |
| 328315 | Local Transport Fund - Project Retention | 9,309 | 0 | 9,309 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 328318 | Active Travel Fund | 1,029,386 | 1,029,261 | 125 | 232,308 | 796,953 | 1,029,261 | 0 |
| 328319 | Active Travel Fund 2020/21 | 8,812 | 8,812 | 0 | 8,812 | 0 | 8,812 | 0 |
| 328323 | Resilient Roads Fund | 7,673 | 0 | 7,673 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 328328 | Aberbeeg Road - Resilient Roads Fund | 830,000 | 830,000 | 0 | 0 | 830,000 | 830,000 | 0 |
| 328340 | LTF Metro Plus | 1,498,785 | 1,466,470 | 32,315 | 1,466,470 | 0 | 1,466,470 | 0 |
| 328344 | LTF Bus Stop Infrastructure | 2,958 | 2,958 | 0 | 0 | 2,958 | 2,958 | 0 |
| 328346 | Bus Infrastructure Fund | 83,867 | 83,867 | 0 | 0 | 83,867 | 83,867 | 0 |
| 328360 | Rail Infrastructure Programme | 37,328,363 | 26,000,000 | 11,328,363 | 5,751,520 | 20,248,480 | 26,000,000 | 0 |
| 328370 | 20mph Core Allocation | 521,424 | 521,424 | 0 | 72,197 | 449,227 | 521,424 | 0 |
| Engineering Services | | 42,055,579 | 30,347,869 | 11,707,710 | 7,619,567 | 22,728,302 | 30,347,869 | 0 |
| Highways Network Management | | | | | | | | |
| 328063 | Bridge Strengthening Works | 1,857 | 0 | 1,857 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 328270 | Highways Improvement Works | 122,484 | 3,093 | 119,391 | 3,093 | 1 | 3,093 | 0 |
| 328334 | LGBI - Trinant Hall | 8,735 | 0 | 8,735 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 328404 | Flood Damage - Emergency Repairs | 828 | 0 | 828 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 328405 | Aberbeeg Road Repairs | 82,714 | 0 | 82,714 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Highways Network Management | | 216,618 | 3,093 | 213,525 | 3,093 | 1 | 3,093 | 0 |

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Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Management Reports | | Capital Programme Funding Estimates | | | | | | |
| <i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3</i> | | | | | | | | |

| <i>Code</i> | <i>Scheme</i> | <i>Total Funding</i> | <i>In Year Budget</i> | <i>Future Funding</i> | <i>Expenditure to: June 2023</i> | <i>Remaining in Year Budget</i> | <i>Forecast Expenditure</i> | <i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i> |
|-------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Environment - Infrastructure Portfolio | 42,272,197 | 30,350,962 | 11,921,235 | 7,622,660 | 22,728,302 | 30,350,962 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

| <i>Code</i> | <i>Scheme</i> | <i>Total Funding</i> | <i>In Year Budget</i> | <i>Future Funding</i> | <i>Expenditure to: June 2023</i> | <i>Remaining in Year Budget</i> | <i>Forecast Expenditure</i> | <i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| All Portfolios | | | | | | | | |
| All Portfolios | | | | | | | | |
| 300300 | City Deal | 3,662,700 | 0 | 3,662,700 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 303990 | OS Capital Admin/Design & Supervision | 474,000 | 474,000 | 0 | 0 | 474,000 | 474,000 | 0 |
| 321112 | Disabled Access - Special Programme | 2,384 | 2,384 | 0 | 2,384 | 0 | 2,384 | 0 |
| 324672 | The Company Shop - Tred | 196,964 | 0 | 196,964 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| All Portfolios | | 4,336,048 | 476,384 | 3,859,664 | 2,384 | 474,000 | 476,384 | 0 |
| All Portfolios | | 4,336,048 | 476,384 | 3,859,664 | 2,384 | 474,000 | 476,384 | 0 |

Capital Programme - 2023/24 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2023/24

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Management Reports | | Capital Programme Funding Estimates | | | | | | |
| <i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2024/3</i> | | | | | | | | |

| <i>Code</i> | <i>Scheme</i> | <i>Total Funding</i> | <i>In Year Budget</i> | <i>Future Funding</i> | <i>Expenditure to: June 2023</i> | <i>Remaining in Year Budget</i> | <i>Forecast Expenditure</i> | <i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i> |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Total Capital Funding | 110,309,591 | 63,889,450 | 46,420,141 | 10,378,906 | 53,510,544 | 63,889,450 | 0 |

End of Report

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Agenda Item 14

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**

Report Subject: **Regeneration and Community Services Performance Report**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member, Place and Environment**
Cllr John Morgan, Cabinet Member, Regeneration and Economic Development

Report Submitted by: **Ellie Fry, Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance and Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 24.8.23 | | | | 05.09.23 | 04.10.23 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the performance activity for the full year from April 2022 to March 2023 and highlight how the Department is contributing to four of the Council's Corporate priorities:

- Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent
- Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place
- Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient

1.2 Plus, contributing towards the Council's overall aim of delivering all seven national well-being goals:

- Prosperous Wales
- Resilient Wales
- Healthier Wales
- More equal Wales
- Globally responsible Wales, and
- A Wales of more cohesive communities.

2. Scope and Background

2.1. The Regeneration and Community Services Directorate continue to focus on delivering a structured programme of work based around the priority areas identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2022/27. The performance of the department is monitored throughout the financial year from April to March, with six monthly reports presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committee covering the following areas:

- Housing Development
- Employment and Skills
- Destination Management and Tourism
- Energy and Digital
- Town centres
- Improving the Local Environment;
- Managing Our Estate;
- Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities;
- Healthy and Safe Communities; and
- Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure.

2.2. The annual performance report makes reference to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which not only underpins the Council's aims, but also guides the ways in which our actions to realise sustainable development can be delivered. This is through:

- Collaboration
- Integration
- Involvement
- Long term
- Prevention

2.3 A series of case studies are also included to highlight some of the work that has been delivered over the 12 month period.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5th September 2023, supported Option 2.

3.2 Option 1:

That Members consider the information provided within the appendix and make specific recommendations prior to approval.

Option 2:

That Members accept the report as provided.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

This proposal supports the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan. Corporate Plan 2022/27 Outcome Statements:

- Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent Support a fairer sustainable economy and community
- Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities
- Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place

5. **Implications Against Each Option**
Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)
 - 5.1 The portfolio has an annual revenue budget that it invests into the services it provides to the Communities in Blaenau Gwent. Capital investment is also available for specific projects through various grants or funding from the Council. The Directorate has some income generating capability and examines all practical forms of funding to support service delivery.
 - 5.2 In most cases the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate is the channel through which Welsh and UK Government make domestic funding available for regeneration projects whether they are social, economic, or physical in outcome.
- 5.1. ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
There are no risks directly associated with this report
- 5.2. ***Legal***
There are no legal implications associated with this report.
- 5.3. ***Human Resources***
There are no additional implications for human resources.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
 - 6.1. ***Performance Information and Data***
The Performance report is attached at Appendix 1.
 - 6.2. ***Expected outcome for the public***
Improved economy and community benefits from the work undertaken in the last 12 months
 - 6.3. ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
The strategy and action plan is designed to be a method to organise support, target areas of need identified, and take account of changing and future business needs of Blaenau Gwent.
 - 6.4. ***Collaboration / partnership working***
The areas of collaboration are outlined in the performance report.
 - 6.5. ***Integration (across service areas)***
Integration is outlined in the performance report
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
Monitoring will be done through the Council's Corporate Plan and Service business plan and through Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Regeneration & Community Services Performance Report as at March 2023

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Local Regeneration & Community Services

Performance Report

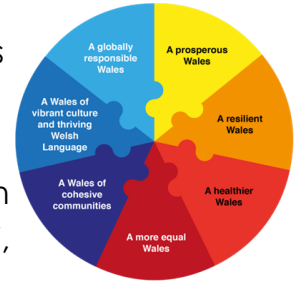


March 2023

Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities

Foreword

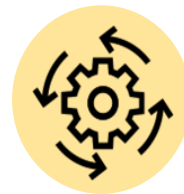
The purpose of this report is to present service activity which highlights how we are contributing to the Council's overall aim of delivering all seven national well-being goals.



The following overview pages set out Regeneration & Community Services performance for the period along with some associated achievements and challenges aligned to the priority areas identified in the Corporate Plan 2022/27, which are to :



Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent



An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place



Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities



Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient

This report is broken down into the themes below which have been identified for the Environment Services area and support delivery of the priority areas above:

- Town Centres;
- Energy and Digital;
- Destination Management and Tourism;
- Employment and Skills;
- Housing Development;
- Improving the Local Environment;
- Healthy and Safe Communities;
- Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities;
- Managing Our Estate; and
- Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure.

Blaenau Gwent has a rich heritage and our buildings and countryside are part of Blaenau Gwent's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. Our local environment should be used to help improve the health and well-being of our families and communities and be enhanced for future generations to continue to enjoy. There is also a real desire to see the communities where people live kept clean, tidy and useable, creating areas that people can be proud of.



We will continue to invest in our neighbourhoods so that they are places where people are proud to live. We have prioritised economic development and regeneration in order to bring jobs, growth and opportunity to local people and businesses.

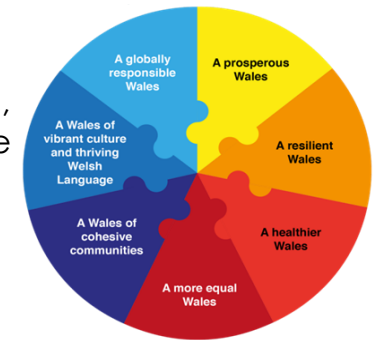


Increasing employability makes a fundamental contribution to reducing and tackling poverty and the economic status of the area. Supporting people to obtain and retain employment reduces reliance upon support services aligned to social well-being and poverty.



Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the seven National well-being goals.



The Act also puts a duty on public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle which states they 'must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

The sustainable development principle is made up of the following five ways of working, pictured below:



Collaboration



Integration



Involvement



Long Term



Prevention

Throughout this report some areas of performance that meet these ways of working are demonstrated by the above images.



Town Centres



Welsh Government has asked authorities to produce **Placemaking Plans** where the authority wants to access a **Placemaking Grant** for those towns.

Trinity Chapel, Abertillery - Funding is being sought from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme for an internal refit of the landmark building, turning it into a new home for the **town's Library and Adult Education Courses**. If the funding application is successful it is expected that works will begin in 2023.



Work on **Ebbw Vale Placemaking Delivery Plan** has continued during 2022/23 and further stakeholder engagement has been held on potential projects that can be taken forward for implementation. Some work on development options for key sites has commenced. Further engagement with Design Commission for Wales to be undertaken.

The **Brynmawr Placemaking Plan** has also been progressed and builds upon the Brynmawr and Nantyglo Masterplan that was approved in late 2020. The placemaking plan will seek to recognise the commercial developments that have taken place on the periphery of the Town Centre and consider how these developments can become better connected and support the long term viability of Brynmawr Town Centre. A draft of the placemaking plan has been prepared. Engagement took place with Elected Members in advance of it being submitted to Scrutiny for approval in March 2023.

Funding was secured to undertake a **Placemaking Plan** for **Abertillery** and consultants have been appointed to help with its development. Initial stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to start to shape the placemaking plan and based on lessons learned for the other placemaking plans earlier stakeholder consultation has taken place along with work on the vision, ambition and strategy. Public consultation took place in January 2023.

The **Tredegar Placemaking Plan was approved in 2022**. Work continues on development of a delivery plan that will list the projects that need to be done to achieve the overall vision for the town.

Funding application has been prepared to cover costs of developing a **Blaina Placemaking Plan**.



Welsh Government Placemaking Grant for 2022/23 has been fully claimed.

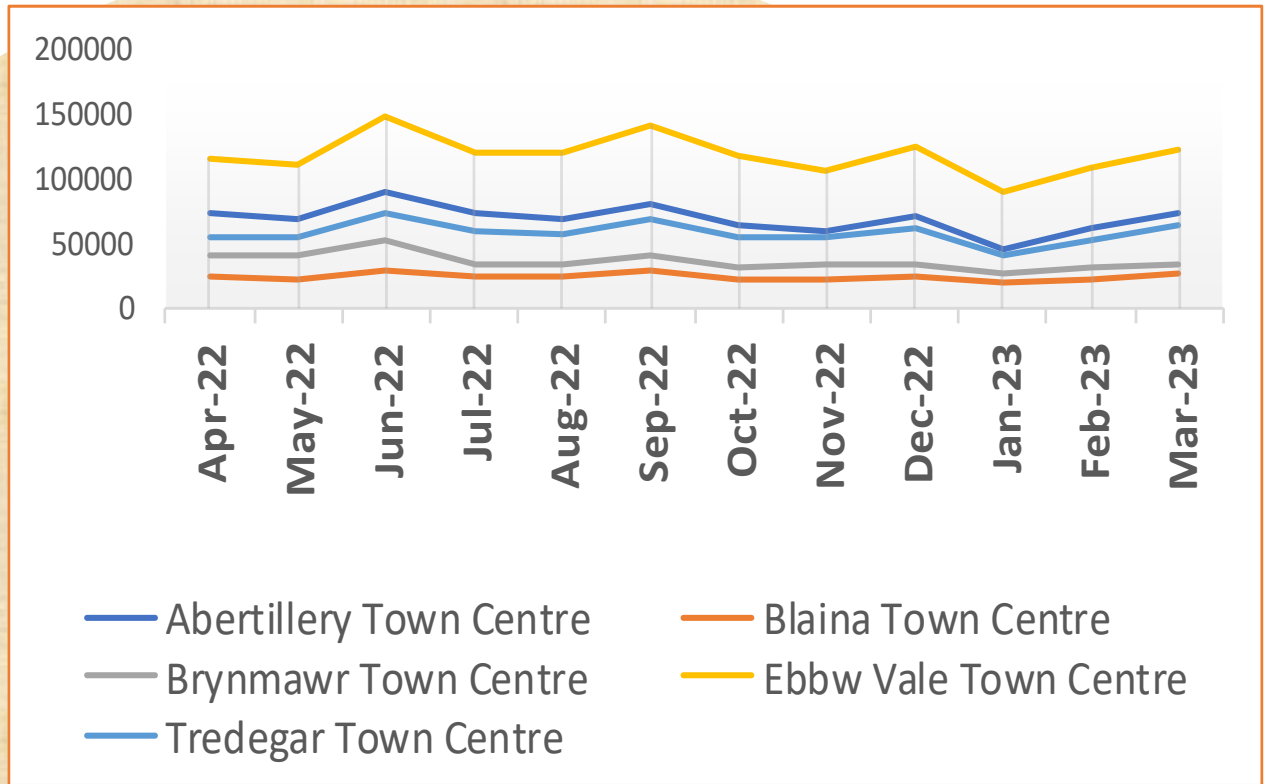


Town Centres



Footfall is an important factor influencing our town centre vitality and viability. Sensors count the number of shoppers visiting our town centres and provide analytical data on how individual town centres are performing and how shoppers are using them.

The data from footfall monitoring allows the Council to be better equipped to make evidenced based decisions on the popularity and effectiveness of current and future projects in Town Centres.



During the year footfall has fluctuated each month with the **busiest month in all towns being June.**

There was a **total Blaenau Gwent town centre footfall of 3,648,028 people** over the year (April 22—March 23).

An SLA is now in place between Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynan Taff County Borough Council as the Lead Authority for the Shared Prosperity Funding within the Cardiff Capital Region. Shared Prosperity Funding is now available to support projects under the Support for Local Business, People and Skills, and Community and Place themes.

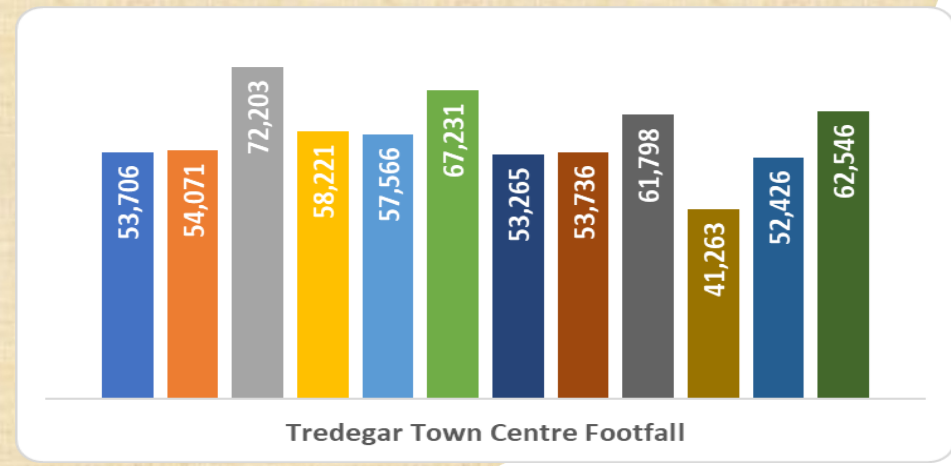
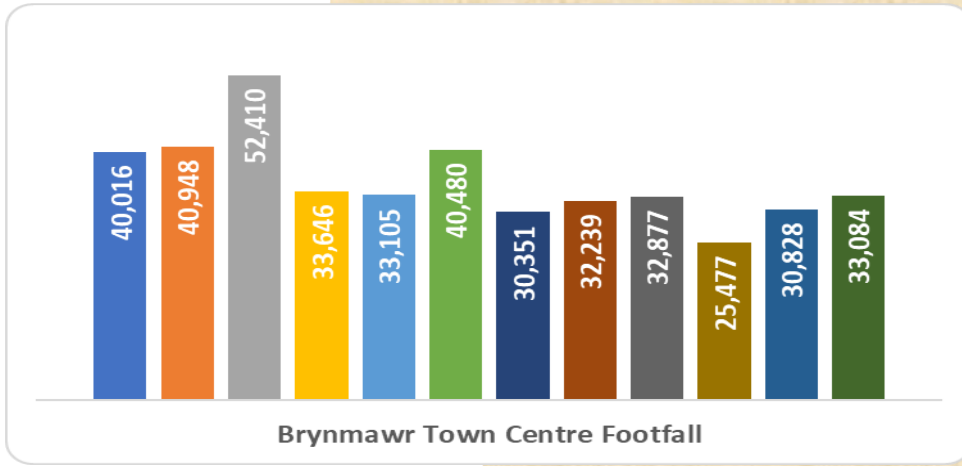
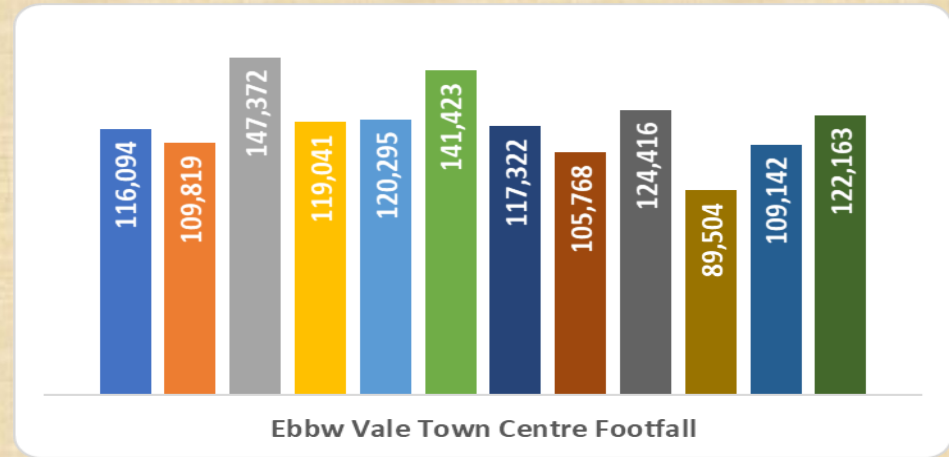
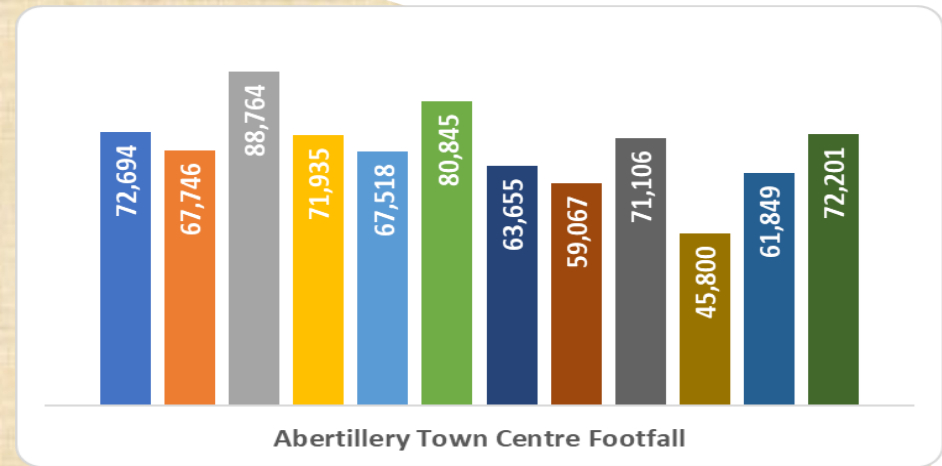
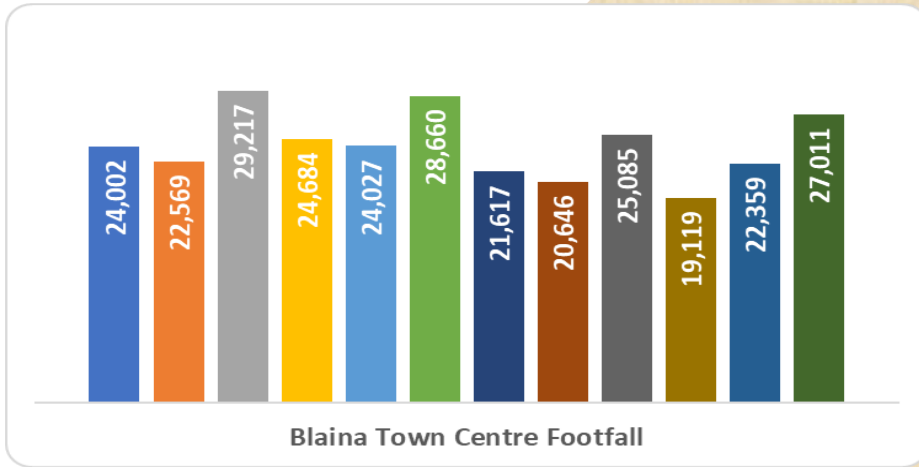
Our Shared Prosperity Fund aim is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK.



Town Centres



The following graphs show the amount of footfall in each of our towns each month....



■ Apr-22
 ■ May-22
 ■ Jun-22
 ■ Jul-22
 ■ Aug-22
 ■ Sep-22
■ Oct-22
 ■ Nov-22
 ■ Dec-22
 ■ Jan-23
 ■ Feb-23
 ■ Mar-23



Energy and Digital



LONG TERM - As a council we aim to develop effective digital infrastructure and improve connectivity within the borough by promoting digital participation. Within Planning Services we are looking to improve and streamline processes and data storage/accessibility resulting in a more efficient and effective way of working.

Idox has now been procured and we are currently cleansing data ready for migration. This new planning system will enable us to have a web presence where the public can view and comment on planning applications online. Customers can also book Building Regulations appointments on line. By having a web presence we improve our customer services and can streamline processes more effectively. Training of system has started to be rolled out within the team and work has commenced identifying quantum of data to be cleansed and migrated.



Wind Generation Projects are ongoing.

- An application has been submitted for planning consent for the development of a **wind turbine at Silent Valley** and we are awaiting a planning determination.



Hydro Generation -

Consultants Dulas have carried out a feasibility study to utilise hydro generation to power electric pumps at Silent Valley. This will be taken to a draft planning stage where the case for investment is determined.

Initial scoping study started for potential solar scheme at Parc Bryn Bach .

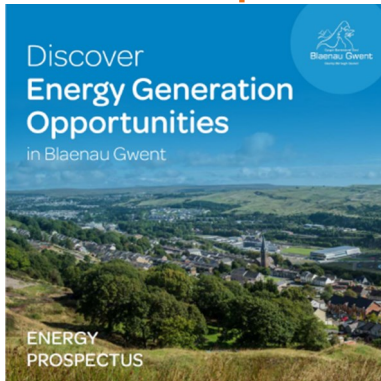
Grid application submitted jointly with Caerphilly County Borough Council before taking the work on the project any further. This is being delivered by Welsh Government Energy Service.



Measurement and verification activity for the **REFIT** project is ongoing.



Energy and Digital

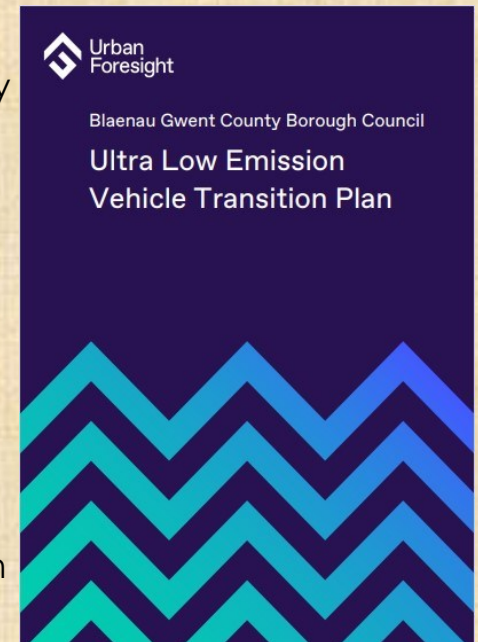


Cardiff Capital Region City Deal secured funding from Welsh Government to install **rapid charge points for taxi ranks and to purchase 44 wheelchair accessible electric taxis for trials** to take place across the region. The taxis were to be offered under a 30 day free trial for taxi drivers. Two of the 44 taxis have been made available for Blaenau Gwent and the **trial will run until 30th November 2023.**

Funding to deliver projects is limited - funding options are explored for all projects.

The Council received a **£300,000 grant** from the Welsh Government towards the costs of **increasing Council electric vehicle charging infrastructure.** The scheme administered by Welsh Local Government Association requires a Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transition Plan to be developed and during the period Urban Foresight completed the draft ULEV transition plan for the whole of Blaenau Gwent, which is due to be taken through the scrutiny and political approval process shortly.

Work is continuing on development of infrastructure for Blaenau Gwent fleet, schools and Council buildings. Funding will be utilised to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support the running of new electric vans that are being procured for the Community Meals service. Chargers have been installed to support with transitioning these community meals vehicles to electric vehicles but we are awaiting metering installation before they can be commissioned.





Energy and Digital



Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure – Close working with Cardiff Capital Region to provide public charge points continues, with further funding being secured for a phase 2 rollout that will provide **electric vehicle charge points at an additional 9 sites** across Blaenau Gwent for which works are due to be completed in the next 2 months. This is in **addition to the 11 sites delivered under phase 1 which are now live and available for the public.** The charge points that have been installed will be maintained by Cardiff Capital Region's appointed contractor Connected Kerb. The contract has provided a Frequently Asked Questions page about their EV charging points – ranging from how to charge a vehicle, length of time it takes and the price of use. The FAQs can be accessed here: <https://www.connectedkerb.com/charge-your-car/drivers/>



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We have also installed charge points at the following locations with Silverstone:

- Depot – two wall mounted charge points
- Coed y Garn Primary School
- Glanhwy Primary School
- Pen Y Cwm
- Willowtown Primary School
- Deighton Primary School
- Georgetown Primary School
- Ystruth Primary School
- Augusta House

A further regional funding bid is due to be submitted shortly to OZEV and if approved will provide charge points at a further 11 sites across Blaenau Gwent.




Destination Management & Tourism



The **Destination Management Plan 2020-25** is the strategic document that sets out our vision for a visitor-focussed way forward for tourism development in the area. It's main output is a Destination Action Plan which sets out practical steps that if taken forward jointly by all stakeholders, can make a positive difference; improving the quality of the visitor experience and growing the visitor economy.

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Japanese Familiarisation visit with Visit Wales, took place on Monday 27th March 2023 in glorious spring sunshine. The visit was with MIKKI the top inbound company visiting UK from Japan hosting small to large groups, fully inclusive tours and educational groups. They visited The Aneurin Bevan Trail, Tredegar Medical Aid Heritage Centre, Tredegar Arms and Bedwellty House and Park. They loved the cultural element of the visit. The superb afternoon tea in Bedwellty ended a perfect visit. The MIKKI group were accompanied by experienced Blue Badge Guide, Stella Thomas who was able learn more about Nye Bevan and the home of the NHS. These will be included in her Cardiff tours.





Railway extension to Abertillery at design stage. Works to extend the platform at Llanhilleth well underway.

From couch to Blaenau Gwent

JANNE PRICE
Born in Blaenau Gwent, she is a local business woman who loves adventures, sunsets and photography. Co-founder of Blaenau Gwent Solo Sisters, she is a proud advocate of her local area.

Where: SOUTH WALES
Tag: WELLNESS ACTIVITIES MOUNTAINS MY PLACE CAMPING / CAMPSITE




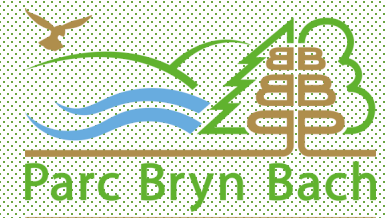
[Blaenau Gwent | Walking, running, cycling | Visit Wales](#)

Final building regulations being implemented to enable the Bunkhouse to open at Park Brynbach (anticipated June 2023) [Bunkhouse — Parc Bryn Bach](#)

HOME DESTINATIONS SOUTH WALES SOUTH WALES VALLEYS

Out and about in the bountiful valleys of Blaenau Gwent

[Things to do in Blaenau Gwent | Visit Wales](#)

WELLBEING WORKHUB

New remote working hubs have been opened at Parc Bryn Bach to provide the local community with facilities where they can work closer to home, while enjoying the calming beauty of a glorious local nature reserve



Welcome to Parc Bryn Bach's Wellbeing Workhubs



Destination Management & Tourism



We aim to bring community and business tourism to Blaenau Gwent - meetings, incentives, conferences and events. Improvements to the transport network give the ideal platform to fully embrace the opportunities that exist.

The 2021 STEAM report received with data showing huge annual increases across all key performance indicators, however, this should be taken with caution as they are compared with the 2020 figures that were heavily impacted by Covid 19. It does show a steady recovery across day and stay visitors and the revenue they generate:-



The Blaenau Gwent Destination Vision - "Visitors will be attracted to a destination where vibrant businesses work together to provide a warm welcome to everyone exploring the rich heritage, dramatic landscape, captivating towns and wide range of events and activities that Blaenau Gwent has to offer".



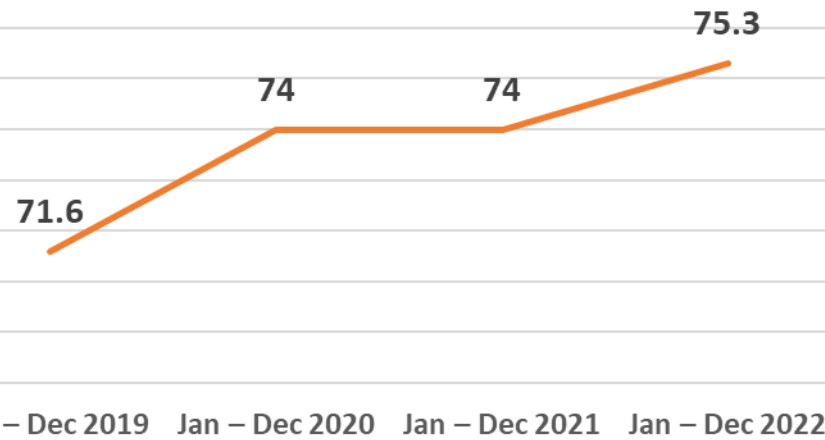
Employment and Skills



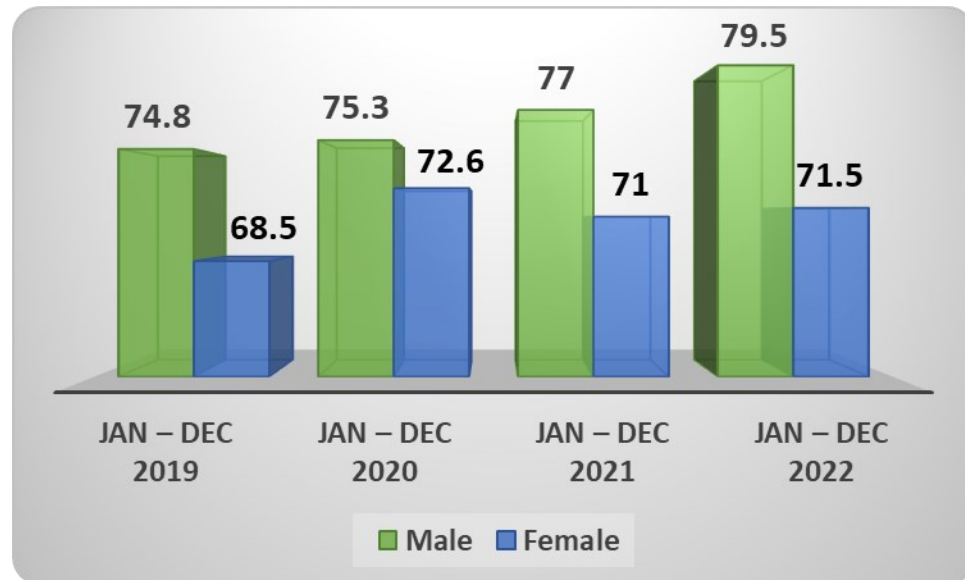
The Shared Prosperity **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth. Blaenau Gwent's funding allocation over the 3 year delivery programme against this investment priority is **£8,599,836**.



Percentage of working age people who are economically active



% of working age people who are employed (males, females)



Employment and Skills



Kick Start

NUMBER OF KICKSTART PARTICIPANTS

Outcomes following placement

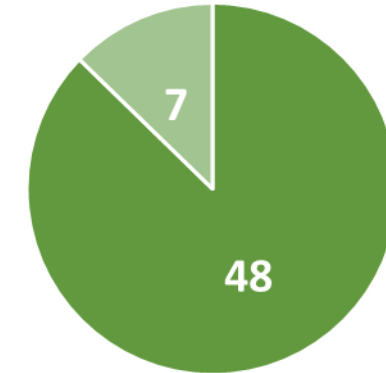
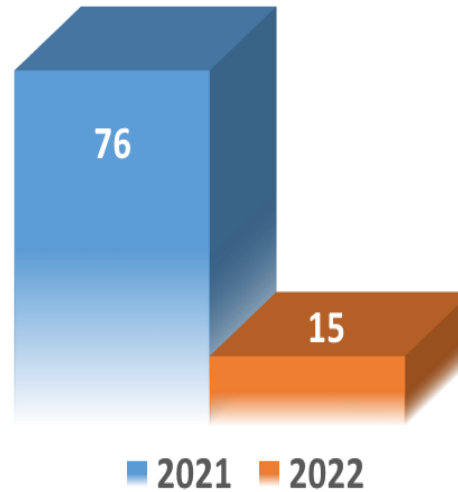
■ Employed ■ Training / Education



was a 2 year programme (2021 & 2022) which was aimed at supporting new businesses from 6 months up to 3 years old, to help them develop and expand.

The implementation of the programme has been very successful with

21 Blaenau Gwent businesses receiving this funding to support work placements



This scheme will be replaced with the **Quickstart** Programme from April 2023



The Environmental Assessment as part of the Ciner Glass Manufacturing Plant Planning Application has been completed.

Community Benefits

Once operational the Ciner plant would help provide a range of long-term benefits to the local community, including:

- A £390m investment in a state-of-the-art glass recycling manufacturing plant.
- Up to 600 jobs when the plant is operational plus an additional 400 jobs during the construction phase.
- Create a centre of engineering excellence in glass technology for Wales, which can compete with the best in the world.
- Provide thousands of new job opportunities for young people over several decades.
- Contribute to both Blaenau Gwent and the Welsh Government's net-zero ambitions by drastically reducing the levels of glass imported.



Employment and Skills



The Tech Valleys programme has a vision; ***"In 2027 the South Wales Valleys and Blaenau Gwent in particular, will be a globally recognised centre for the development of new technologies, to support cutting edge industry"***

In support of this vision BGCBC and Coleg Gwent are developing an Advanced Engineering Centre which will create an environment that will attract hi-tech inward investors within the Advanced Manufacturing sector.

Funding to deliver this project is broken down as follows:-

| | |
|---|---|
| Welsh Government Pre Approval 1 (Money to develop scheme prior to Tender): £200K | Welsh Government Pre Approval 2 (Money to develop scheme prior to Tender): £160K |
| Welsh Government Tech Valleys: £2,989,082 | Levelling Up Funding: £9,360,000 |

Progress so far.....

- Levelling Up Funding (LUF) has been awarded;
- Contracts with the preferred contractor ISG, are in the process of being signed with the aim of being on site towards the end of July 2023 and contract completed end of May 2024. The contract period is 42 weeks;
- The date the campus will be open and welcoming students is anticipated to be **September 2024.**
- Contract sum **£12,709,082**



Refurbishment of the Monwell Building into a New High Value Engineering Centre (HiVE)





Housing Development



We are committed to the regeneration and economic future of Blaenau Gwent and to working with partners to bring disused sites in the county borough back into use.

The Social Housing

Grant Programme

supports delivery of affordable housing provision. In 2022/23 an increased Social Housing Grant award of **£7m** has been allocated to Blaenau Gwent to support delivery of social housing. This will be maintained at this rate until 2024/25.

Six Bells Colliery - Following consultation in 2021, site was considered for various options including a Social Services project. A partner Registered Social Landlord (RSL) have expressed developing the site as a mixed tenure development.

Ashvale - Cardiff Region City Deal, Housing Viability Gap Funds of £1.7M, have recently been secured in order to remediate a site in Ashvale, Tredegar. The site will bring much needed homes, to the area, comprising of **54 open market and 6 affordable, homes.**

An application has been made to Welsh Government for Social Housing Grant, to bring forward **22 homes**, to a **brown field site in the lower Ebbw Fach Valley**, which we are supporting. The planning application has recently been lodged, with the hope of gaining planning to commence construction early 2024/2025.

Abertillery Leisure Centre - Social Housing Grant allocated to the project for 2023/24, with partner RSL Melin. **Circa 18 affordable homes**, being worked up.

Former Nantyglo School - Options to ensure that the former Nantyglo School is brought forward for residential development are currently being formulated.





Housing Development



Work continues to identify and prioritise future housing opportunities (mix of tenure) working with Tai Calon and partners to identify schemes.

- ◆ A Local Housing Market Assessment is underway in order to inform a revised Housing Strategy and Local Development Plan.
- ◆ A cross cutting Housing Strategy Group has recently been set up to take forward the revised Housing Strategy.

- ▶ Tai Calon now have one new residential development under construction, with another about to be submitted for planning. With the aim to formulate an ongoing future programme of development.
- ▶ Constant review with all registered social landlord partners is undertaken to ensure a pipeline of residential development is identified and brought forward.



Tai Calon, Glanffrwyd site





Housing Development



The Council works to improve homes across Blaenau Gwent with the aim of increasing energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty.

The following scheme targets improvements to social rented homes, bringing together home improvements and clever technologies to make these homes as easy and cheap to heat as possible.

Making homes more energy efficient helps to tackle the climate emergency and also helps people living in poverty save money on energy bills.



► **The Optimised Retrofit Programme**, funded by Welsh Government, was introduced this year as part of the Innovative Housing Programme – Funding, direct to registered social landlords, is there to **improve the energy efficiency and reduction of fuel poverty of social rented homes in Blaenau Gwent**. All 4 partner registered social landlords in Blaenau Gwent are taking part. (Tai Calon, Linc Cymru, United Welsh and Melin).

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During the financial year 2022 -23, 5 units were delivered via the Social Housing Grant and occupied by customers.



33 homes, consisting of 46 units (32 single properties and one with 14 units), were **brought back into use** via action by the local authority during the reporting period.

Work has continued delivering **61 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)** this year. This work provides major home adaptations for disabled people for the purpose of providing access into and around their homes.

The **average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant in private homes** to support independent living this year was **334 days**.

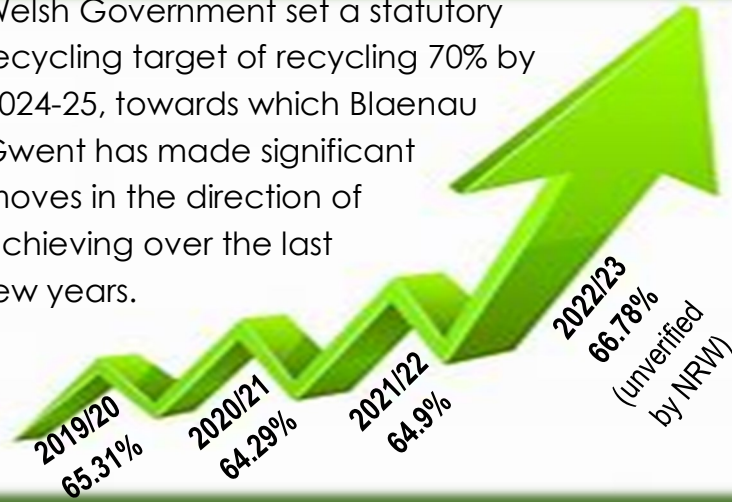




Improving the Local Environment



Welsh Government set a statutory recycling target of recycling 70% by 2024-25, towards which Blaenau Gwent has made significant moves in the direction of achieving over the last few years.



In order to achieve the 70% target, further work will be needed including enforcement, behaviour change campaigns and a review of kerbside collections.

The **Communities and Place investment priority** of the Shared Prosperity Fund will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level.



The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place. Blaenau Gwent's SPF funding allocation over the 3 year delivery programme against this investment priority is **£7,837,618**



Following analysis of waste composition where 23% of residual waste was identified as food, an engagement campaign with all of the residents of Blaenau Gwent will begin in June 2023. Keeping up with the Joneses campaign will be suspended on round 3 until the food campaign is complete.

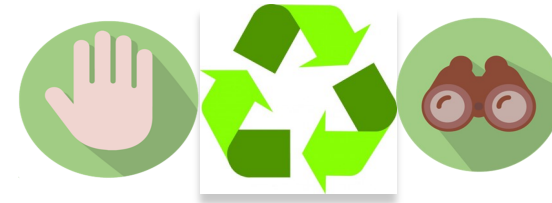
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Unfortunately **Keep Wales Tidy's** "Caru Cymru" scheme came to an end on March 31st 2023. Although KWT continue to provide resource support the funding for the proactive officer engagement ceased. However, a successful application for SPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) funding has meant the council could employ a dedicated full time LEQ Officer. The role of the LEQ Officer is to continue and increase the engagement programme within schools, the community and businesses. As engagement forms only one element of the strategy objectives, the officer will also deliver the other specific objectives of the strategy being, raise awareness, community empowerment and education. As part of the education programme the officer also works closely with the Waste Strategy team to support the delivery of the Waste Strategy to promote and encourage recycling behaviours within schools, workplaces and communities. The officer continues to work in collaboration with KWT along with other internal and external agencies to create an environment that is clean and attractive for current and future generations.



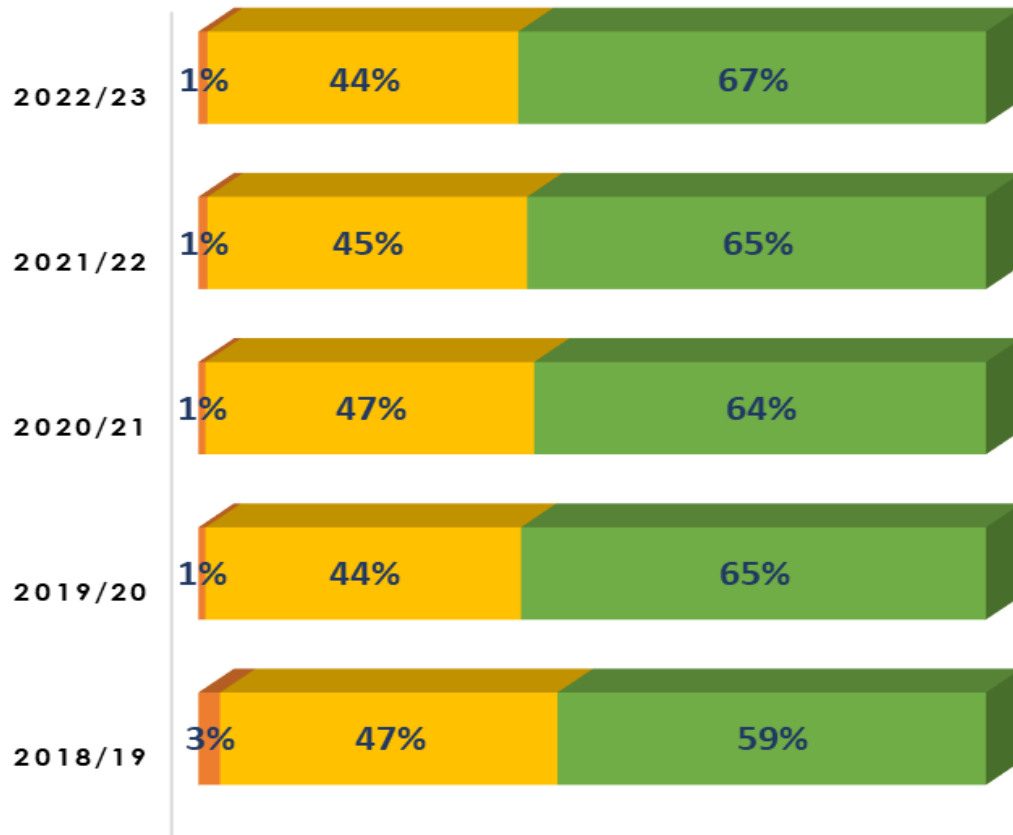


Improving the Local Environment



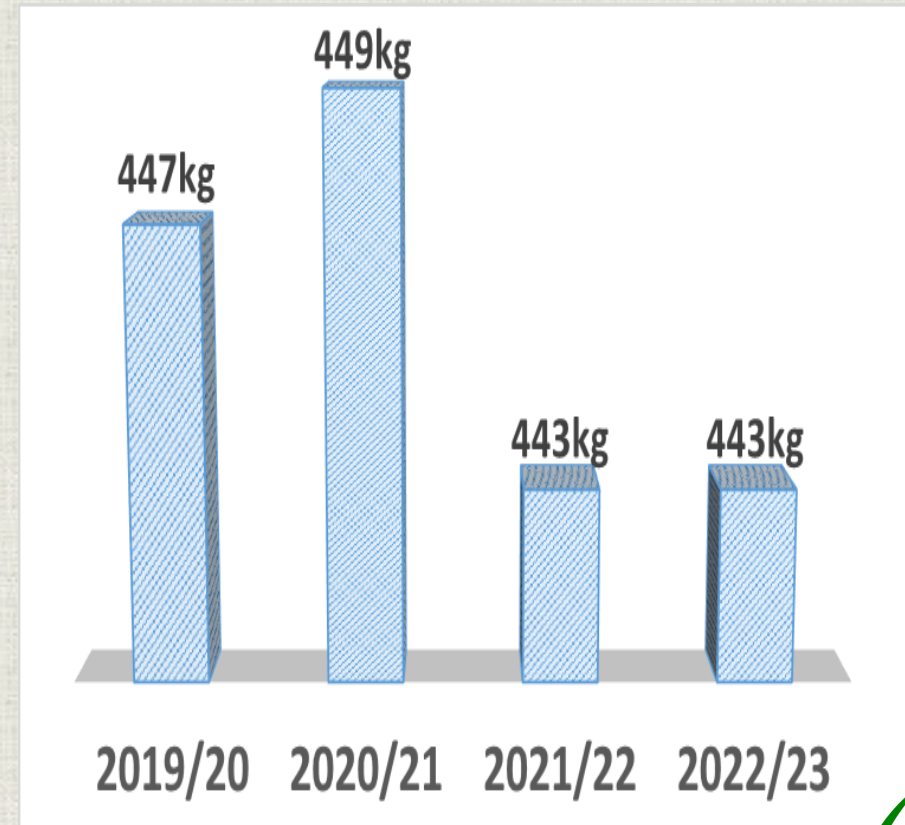
WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR WASTE?

- Municipal waste sent to landfill
- Municipal waste sent to Energy from Waste
- Waste reused, recycled or composted



- 2022/23 Data unverified by Natural Resources Wales
- The Energy from Waste indicator is based on collected waste and we claim a % back from the Incinerator Bottom Ash which also contributes to our recycling rate.

Average amount of waste produced per resident during a financial year (kg)





Improving the Local Environment



For the 3rd year, funding was secured for town centre clean-ups through the Caru Cymru programme and Keep Britain Tidy.

Clean-ups were completed across 5 town centres



Work continues with WRAP on the Battery Trail / campaign with the aim to increase tonnage of batteries collected at the kerbside - Baseline data is being gathered with roll out of campaign on 17th April 2023.



LONG TERM - Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

The decarbonisation agenda is considered when putting individual projects together. Some of the interventions in the Community and Place investment priority of the SPF Fund support work within the community around decarbonisation and could support locally owned renewable energy projects to come forward. Likewise, the support for local business will look to help them in decarbonising their activities.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to delivering front line services in an effective and efficient manner.

A new Centre of Operations form part of this and is also integral to Blaenau Gwent transitioning to a low carbon fleet.

Ground Investigation (GI) works of the Cwm Colliery site are scheduled to be carried out in the new financial year which will then allow us to progress the project to planning stage.



New Centre of Operations Plan Image



Improving the Local Environment



By utilising in cab devices, refuse and recycling crews are now electronically recording excess side waste and recycling contamination issues for referral to the Authority's Enforcement Wardens, who are following up these referrals with enforcement action or advice visits as appropriate. This is freeing up officer time to allow more proactive initiatives to be conducted such as the current Food Campaign.

Involvement / Engagement—

There was an increase in wardens enquiries in 2022/23 as a result of the introduction of engagement with residents for issues identified by recycling crews with recycling presented for collection.

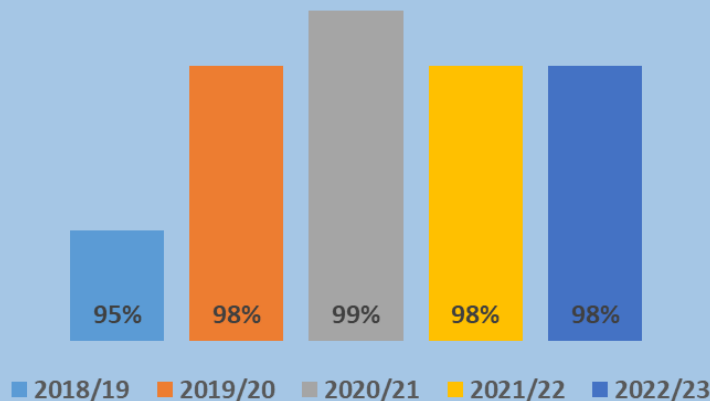


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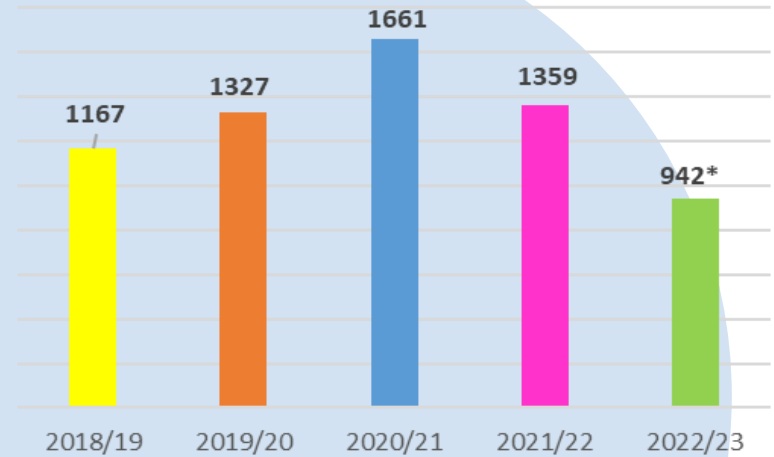


During the period April to March 2023, **180 streets** were inspected by Blaenau Gwent Officers / Keep Wales Tidy.

Of these **98%** were rated **at a high or acceptable standard on cleanliness.**



Total recorded fly-tipping incidents



* 2022/23 Data unverified by Natural Resources Wales

942 Fly-tipping incidents were reported during the year, the average number of days taken to clear was **4.3 days**

28% reduction in fly tipping since 2020/21- lowest level of fly tipping recorded in 2022/23 for 4 years.

During the year (April 22 to March 2023) there were **79 £400 fixed penalty notices** issued for Fly Tipping

Over 400% increase in fly tipping fixed penalty notices issued since 2021/22 to 2022/23



Healthy and Safe Communities



Our Transitional Capital Funding Programme involves working with Registered Social Landlords to identify properties for homelessness/resettlement schemes. During the year 8 additional properties have been included and a further 3 properties have been identified in partnership with Tai Calon for inclusion in the scheme for which a bid was submitted to Welsh Government for funding.

HOMELESSNESS - During the reporting period, 288 households met the threshold for being threatened with homelessness. Of these, 183 were successfully prevented from losing their accommodation - 64%. This high prevention rate has been achieved by targeting early intervention initiatives to prevent homelessness at a very early stage.



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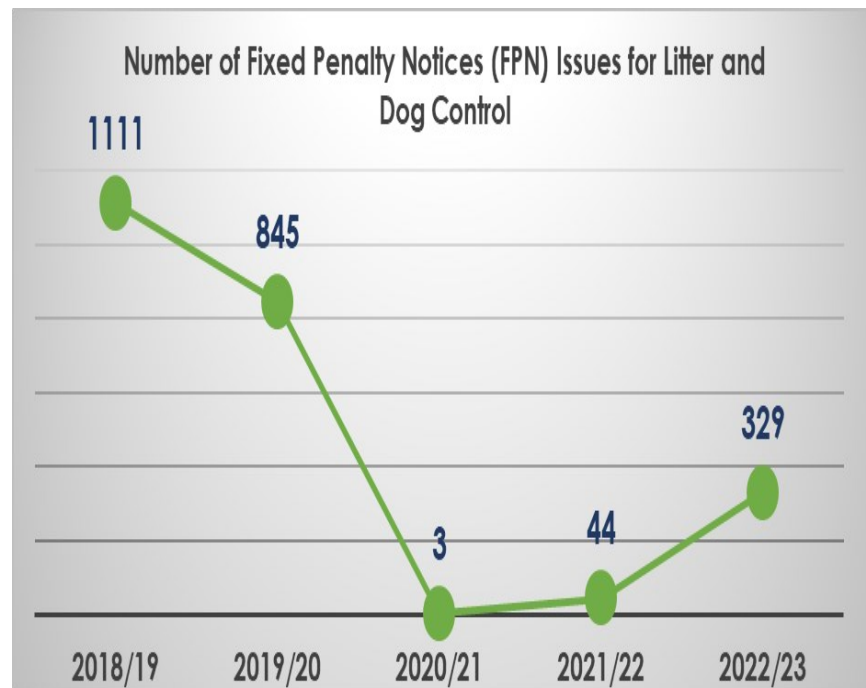


LONG TERM - It is a priority for us to raise the profile of Play by improving the quality and equity of play provision throughout the Borough for all our children and young people. To achieve this we are looking to refurbish and maintain existing play provision to acceptable levels and develop new initiatives based on identified need within the Borough.

Chartist way play area has been confirmed as needing to be relocated and the contract for this work has been let, meeting with contractor will be held shortly to develop programme of installation.

Discussions are ongoing regarding **Garnlydan play area**. - Progression is reliant on funding.

On the 26th October 2022 Blaenau Gwent CBC met and discussed the introduction of a new public space protection order for dog controls and the specific locations affected. The public space protection order for dog controls was approved by Blaenau Gwent CBC with a start date of the 1st November 2022.



During the year

there were

310 fixed penalty notices issued for litter and **19** for dog control.





Healthy and Safe Communities



Environmental Health responded to **316 Housing Safety/Standards service requests** relating to sub-standard Privately Rented Sector accommodation, damp nuisance, Warm Home Nest Inspections, including the **approval of 4 New Landlord loans. (total £160k).**

In addition, Housing Solutions dealt **with 9 owner occupier loans (£61,500) and 20 empty property grants (£600,000).**

Pest Control was delivered in partnership with Rentokil. 1,946 free rat treatments were completed along with 75 treatments for other pests. The contract with Rentokil has been renewed.

Environmental Health responded to:

358 service requests related to **accumulations of waste in gardens – mostly household waste**

95 related to **smoke from domestic fires/bonfires**

22 service requests relating to **alleged filthy and verminous premises**

417 Noise Nuisance Complaints

52 Other Nuisance Complaints

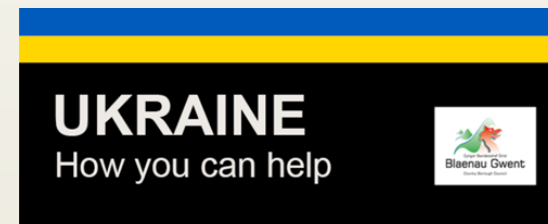
297 Planning Consultations

74 Licensing/Temporary Event Notice Consultations

5 high risk premises with Private Water Supplies were subject to **statutory inspection**



Support has been provided for the local response relating to the resettlement scheme for Ukrainian people by **inspecting 41 properties** to ensure they are **safe and suitable.**





Healthy and Safe Communities



Blaenau Gwent's **Food Hygiene** Service continue to deliver interventions at food businesses within the Borough. During 2022/23 a **total of 218 interventions**

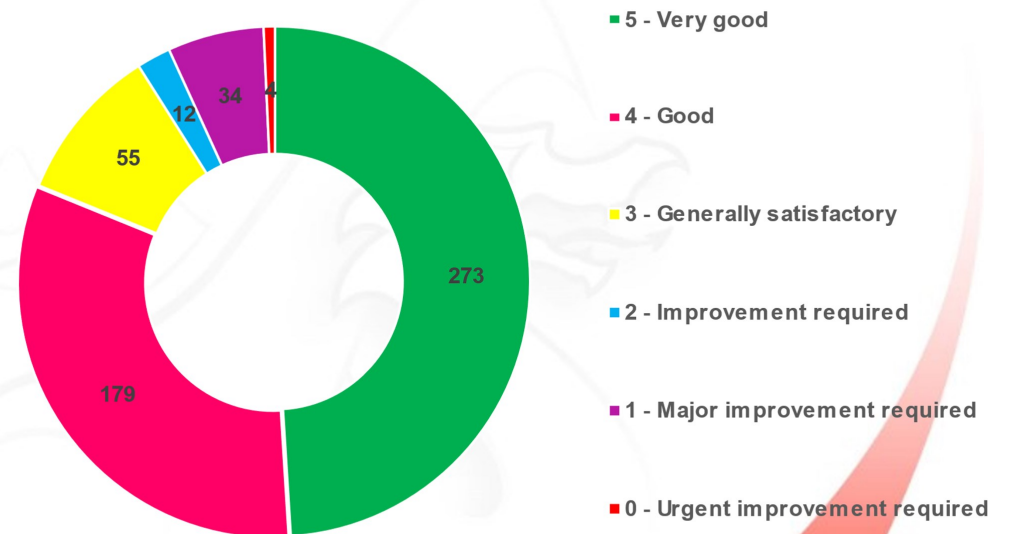
were completed at high risk premises meeting one of the challenging targets that was set in the Food Standards Agency recovery plan. This work has been completed alongside our other continuing programmed and reactive workload. We still have a significant backlog of food hygiene interventions to deliver which are a legacy of the impact of the COVID pandemic. We are continuing to work through these. At present we have a backlog of 225 D and E rated premises that are overdue an inspection. We are currently considering options to address this backlog. This figure does not include new businesses.

During 2022/23 we saw **98 new food businesses open** in the Borough. We continue to prioritise for inspection those that are likely to present a higher risk in terms of food safety in-line with guidance from the Food Standards Agency. Of those that opened during and prior to the 31st March 2023 we still have **46 new businesses which require inspection.**



At the close of the reporting year 2022/23 **92.6% of food premises were broadly compliant with food hygiene standards** with an increase in the number of re-rating requests.

Total Number Of Premises By Food Hygiene Rating





Healthy and Safe Communities



Case Study—E.coli 0157 in a Nursery

- September 2022, 1 case of E. coli 0157 reported in a resident of BG
- Case interview revealed they attended a children's nursery out of area
- Investigations found there were a number of cases identified within the setting and may be linked to a variety of sources including: holidays, environmental exposure (Farm) and an ongoing national E.coli incident
- Partnership working with other neighbouring L.A's to identify sources of the infection and support the affected families
- Resulted in the whole nursery including staff being screened (faecal posts - 100 samples)
- Multiple Incident Management Meetings held with Public Health Wales, Food Standards Agency and Local Authorities (Blaenau Gwent and LA where nursery was based)

During the reporting period there was only 1 E. coli 0157 disease notification. This was responded to within one working day



Infectious Disease:

We responded to **155 notifications of infectious disease and 5 infectious disease incidents (outbreaks / clusters) during 2022/23.**

These figures do not include notifications of COVID-19 cases or clusters and do not include clusters of other infectious diseases that we have responded to with advice / guidance but which did not reach incident criteria stage.

Case Study - Legionnaires Disease Case

- October 2022, 1 case of Legionnaires Disease in BG resident reported
- Case interview revealed they worked in a meat packing factory outside of our area
- Investigations found they had an Evaporative Condenser on site, which had isolated Legionella bacteria in a recent sample
- Contact made with other nearby English LA's to find out current Legionella cases (South Gloucester, Herefordshire, Gloucester) - no links identified
- Multiple Incident Management Meetings held with Public Health Wales, Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities (Blaenau Gwent and LA where factory was based)





Healthy and Safe Communities



Trading Standards aims to ensure a fair, safe and equitable environment for all who purchase and sell goods and services in Blaenau Gwent. This is undertaken through a range of intervention, advice and enforcement activities with businesses and consumers. The Team works closely with partner agencies in order to gather intelligence and enforce the legislation covering areas such as Weights and Measures / Food Labelling and composition / Counterfeit Goods/ Product Safety / Pricing/ Rogue Trading and Doorstep Crime /Consumer Credit/ Misdescribed Goods /Scams and Age Restricted Sales. More information on the work of Trading Standards can be obtained at

[:About Trading Standards | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/about-trading-standards)

<https://tradingstandards.gov.wales/>

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PREVENTION — Trading Standards activity contributes to crime reduction and protection of vulnerable people from scams and rogue traders. Intervention visits were made to **100%** (15) of identified vulnerable potential scam victims during the period.

Closure Order- Abertillery Mini Market

A shop in Abertillery was ordered to close by a Judge sitting in Newport Magistrates Court following a Trading Standards investigation that revealed the

sales of illegal cigarette and tobacco.

Abertillery Mini Market, Somerset Street, was served a Closure Notice by Blaenau Gwent Council following a prolonged period of intelligence gathering, inspections of the premises and test purchases which supported concerns raised by the public about the sales of illegal cigarettes and tobacco from the store.

Despite the owner of the store contesting the notice the Court accepted the evidence. The Council utilised statutory powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to issue a Closure Notice and the court granted a **closure order** for three months until 2 August 2023, or until a further order is made.



Licensing Prosecution

The Council's Licensing Team prosecuted an individual for driving a Hackney Carriage vehicle without the requisite Hackney Carriage driver's licence and without the appropriate insurance.

The individual pleaded guilty to the offences and was sentenced as follows :

- **Licence offence - £180 fine, reduced to £120 for the early plea;**
- **Insurance offence - £180 fine, reduced to £120 for the early play;**
- **Victim surcharge applied of £34.**
- **Costs in the sum of £300. TOTAL £574**

in addition to the sentence above, 6 points were also endorsed on the individuals licence



Healthy and Safe Communities



The Environmental Health Section is responsible for monitoring **air quality within Blaenau Gwent**. Air Quality is the term used to describe and classify the concentration of certain pollutants in the air. These pollutants have the potential to adversely affect human health at elevated concentrations.

An air quality management is declared when there is an exceedance of air quality standards and the local authority must take legal steps to improve the situation.

In Blaenau Gwent we have good levels of air quality so we have not declared any air quality management areas.

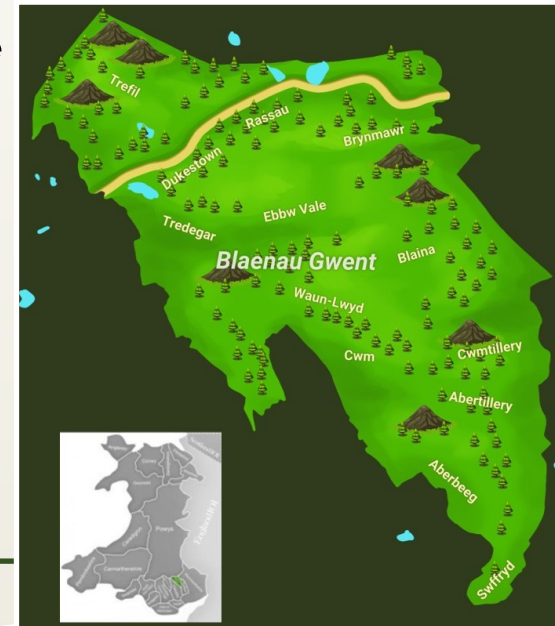


Blaenau Gwent CBC 2022 Air Quality Progress Report
In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995
Local Air Quality Management
Date: September 2022

The completion of the 2022 Air Quality Assessment has been completed and submitted to Welsh Government

We currently carry out **air quality monitoring at 28 locations** within the borough at residential properties and schools.

These locations are selected by officers **due to them being in close proximity to busy roads, industrial estates and specifically at schools due to the school run effect.**



Environmental Health **successfully regulated 22 industrial processes to minimise pollution** without the need for any formal enforcement





Managing Our Estate



A long term programme of work continues across the Blaenau Gwent estate to reduce the annual carbon emissions and energy costs of our buildings.

Increased installation of PV systems to existing and new builds:

Ebbw Vale Learning Action Centre - So far in five months Ebbw Vale LAC CO2 Emission saved is 600.1kg which is equivalent to 36 trees planted.



Any general maintenance throughout the year included upgrades to improved energy efficient parts.

Brynmawr Learning Action Centre
Brynmawr LAC CO2 emission saved is 698.2kg which is equivalent to 42 trees planted.





Managing Our Estate

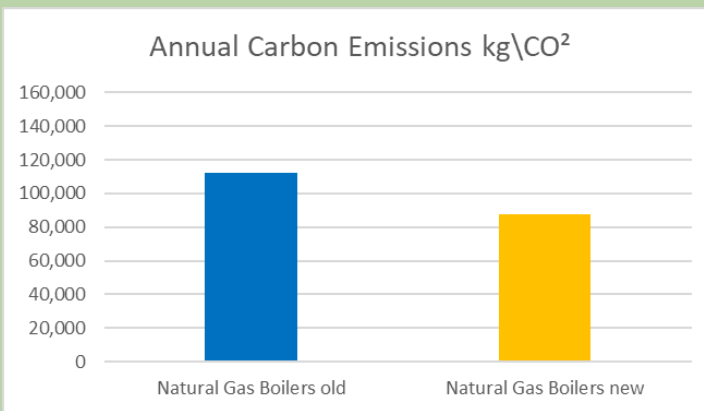
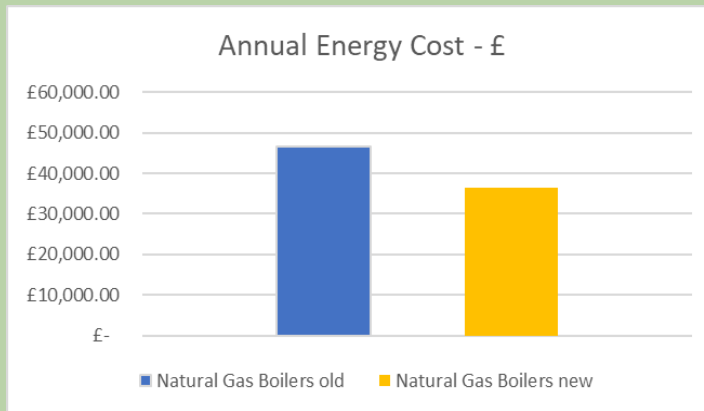


Beaufort Hill Primary School Gas Boiler Upgrade

The original heating system comprised of two gas boilers with a seasonal efficiency of approximately 75% (E Rated). These old boilers were replaced with two new high efficiency condensing gas boilers with a seasonal efficiency of approximately 96% (A Rated)



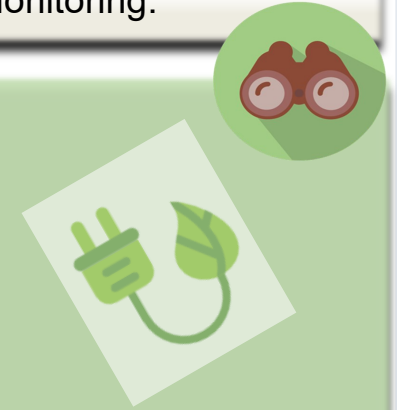
The average differences in running costs and annual carbon emissions using the predicted pence per kw for gas at £0.09p for 2023 -2024 can be seen in the charts :-



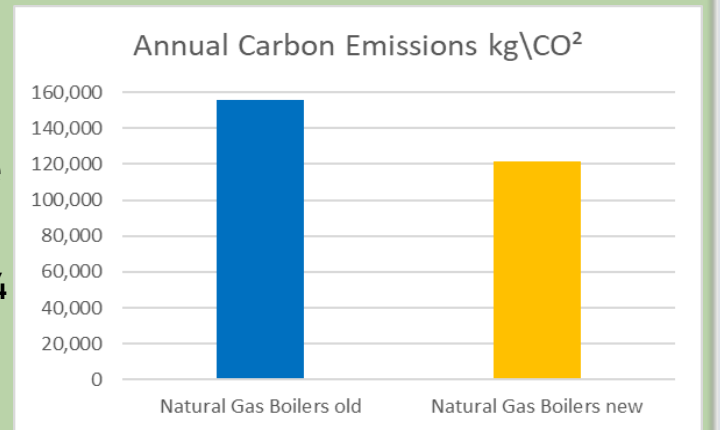
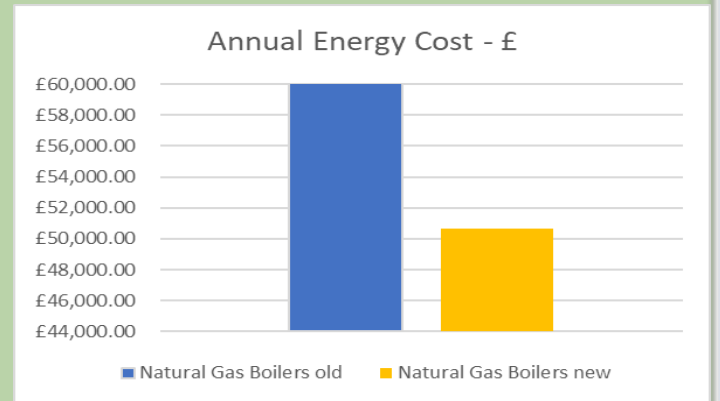
2022-23 saw the start of a **school kitchen upgrade programme** and the decommissioning of gas powered appliances. With all new sites added to the estates Building Management System (BMS) for efficient energy adjustment and monitoring.

Sofrydd Primary School Gas Boiler Upgrade

The original heating system comprised of two gas boilers with a seasonal efficiency of approximately 75% (E Rated). These old boilers were replaced with two new high efficiency condensing gas boilers with a seasonal efficiency of approximately 96% (A Rated)

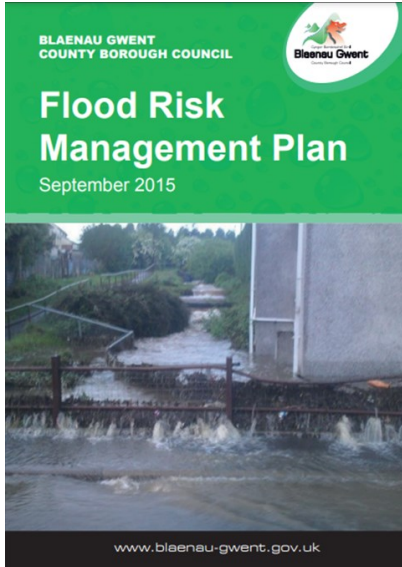


The average differences in running costs and annual carbon emissions using the predicted pence per kw for gas at £0.09p for 2023-2024 can be seen in the charts :-





Managing Our Estate




Progress continues to deliver the Councils

Flood Management Plan

and natural flood risk management continues .

Other works to support this during the period include:-



PREVENTION - We continue to manage Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to deal with stormwater locally (as close its source as possible), to mimic natural drainage and encourage its infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment . **All SuDS applications, enquiry responses and inspections are ongoing throughout the borough. Various meetings with developers to discuss regulations and options available to developers.**

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Capacity issues within Caerphilly have led to delays in administration of SuDS applications. Changes in legislation from Natural Resources Wales / Welsh Government have led to additional requirements and regular inspections of more of the water bodies in Blaenau Gwent, This has not been accompanied by any increase in budget from Welsh Government so has resulted in a budget pressure to undertake the work in compliance with the legislation.



Enforcement cases progressed at George Street and Princess Street.

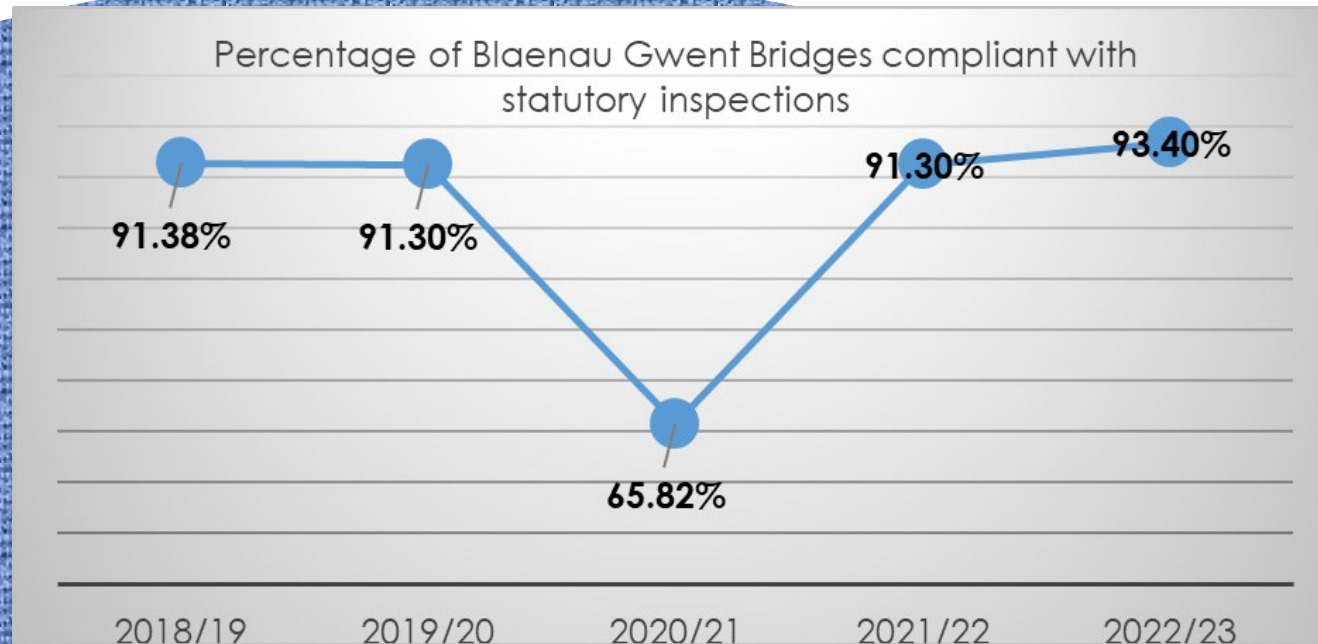
Natural flood risk management investigations relating to flood incidents and requests for assistance are ongoing at Pantypwlyn Rd, Reservoir Rd, and Brynithel Estate.

Contracts for renewal of culverts & ditches completed at Glanffrwd Court, Attlee Avenue and Yard Row Ebbw Vale and trash screen renewal at Newchurch Rd.

New Trash Screen installed at Blaencuffin.



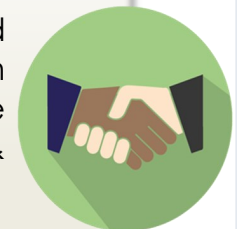
Managing Our Estate



The **Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP)** sets out how the Council manages and treats its property and land, ensuring that it is well placed to manage expectations, budgets and services going forward.

Audit Wales has recently carried out a 'Springing Forward' review which included the Council's arrangements for managing its assets and resulted in recommendations being identified covering a few areas including developing a longer-term asset strategy.

It was agreed at the Corporate Asset Management Working Group (CAMWG) that a revised SAMP would commence with recommendations coming back to CAMWG for review. Corporate Leadership Team is leading on a review of accommodation, and the demand for buildings, the findings of which will be incorporated into the SAMP. Meetings have been arranged with Service Heads to discuss accommodation needs and corporate Asset & Property Meetings are convened on a monthly basis to review property needs.





Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities



Work to **build a 52,582 sq. ft. manufacturing unit at the Rhyd y Blew industrial site at Ebbw Vale** is underway and is **on target for completion Autumn 2023.**

The **£8.5m** Welsh Government **Investment** forms the first phase of a wider site masterplan, and helps satisfy huge demand for such industrial space in the South East Wales area.

Companies in the automotive and food sector have already expressed an interest in the development, which also sits within the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone.



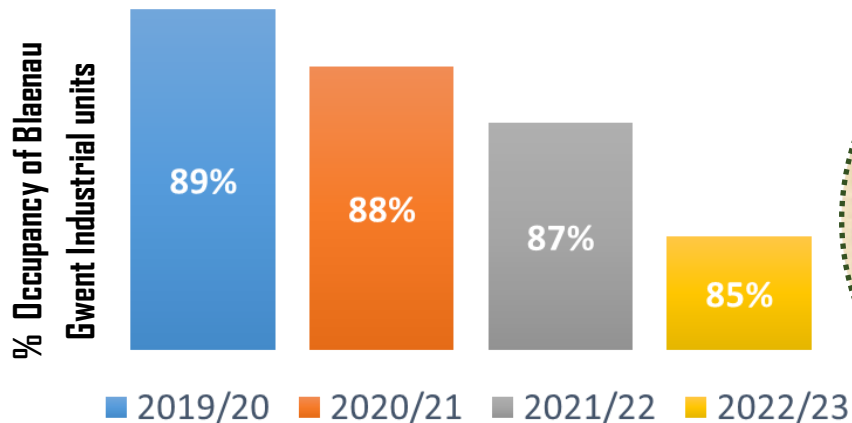
REGAIN2 works are ongoing and on target for completion September 2023 with the anticipated contract sum being £5,484,996.99

The Box Hub
The site remains with the contractors and is expected to be handed over for management by the Business & Innovation team at the end of Summer 2023.

Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities

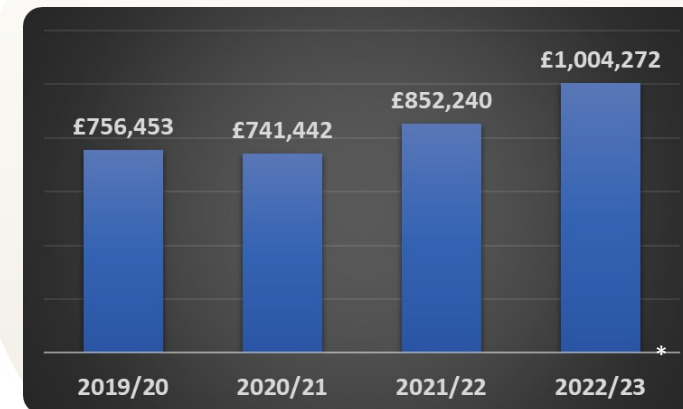


In order to enhance and stimulate economic development within the Borough it has been identified as a priority to support the Industrial portfolio management and development and in turn support inward investment, business start-up, retention and growth.



The Council's business units remain in demand - Stock in general remains an issue. The most unmet demand are for units of 300—3000sq.ft. high., which remains an issue

Financial income received from the rental of Blaenau Gwent Industrial Units



*Including Welsh Government JVA Payment (Hybrid Units)

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The Lime Avenue Business Unit development is now nearing full occupancy with work progressing to fill the remaining units .

The development comprises of 8 modern and high quality hybrid style business units to support the development of small and medium enterprise (SMEs). The units provide an open workspace arrangement on the ground floor with a mezzanine floor providing associated office provision.





Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities



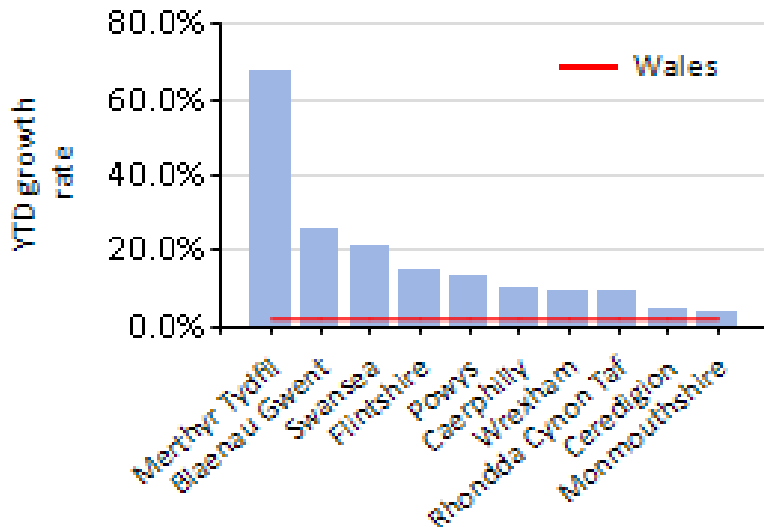
Small business start-ups Blaenau Gwent - March 2023



25.8% more businesses start-ups in Blaenau Gwent during the first three months of this year compared with the corresponding period of last year, according to latest data from BankSearch. This growth rate ranks Blaenau Gwent at 2 out of the 22 Welsh districts.

Growth in the number of start-ups across Wales has risen. So far this year Merthyr Tydfil (67.4%), **Blaenau Gwent (25.8%)** and Swansea (21.3%) have seen the strongest growth compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

Top 10 Welsh Districts YTD Growth



The make up of start-ups is **Limited Companies 67.6%, Sole Traders 29.4%, Other For Profit Start-ups (mainly Partnerships) 2.9% and Not For Profit 0.0%.**

The top 3 industries account for 70.6% of the starts.

The types of Areas that start-ups were established include; **Hard-Pressed Living 67.6%, Constrained City Dwellers 23.5%, Suburbanites 5.9%, Rural Residents 2.9%, Cosmopolitans 0.0%, Ethnicity Central 0.0%, and Multicultural Metropolitans 0.0%.**

| Small Business Start-ups | March 2023 |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Blaenau Gwent | 34 |
| Wales | 1,478 |

| Legal Status Start-ups | March 2023 |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Limited Companies | 23 |
| Sole Traders | 10 |
| Other For Profit Start-ups | 1 |
| Commercial Enterprises | 34 |
| Not For Profit | |
| Total | 34 |

| Top 3 Industries | March 2023 |
|---|------------|
| Real estate, professional services & support activities | 12 |
| Wholesale & retail trade | 8 |
| Manufacturing | 4 |

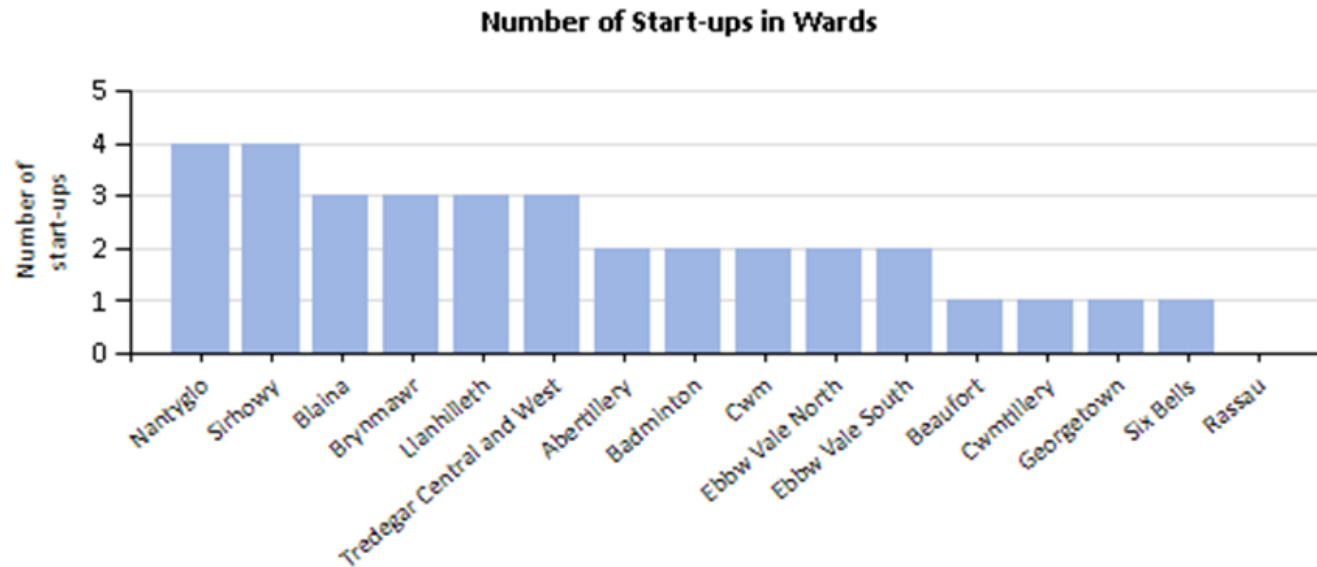
| Top 3 Area Classification | March 2023 |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Hard-Pressed Living | 23 |
| Constrained City Dwellers | 8 |
| Suburbanites | 2 |



Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities



- In Blaenau Gwent **34 new businesses started up in March 2023**, 15 more than the previous month and 7 more than in March 2022. Nantyglo saw the most start-ups; Rassau saw the least.



- Blaenau Gwent accounted for 2.3% of all start-ups across the Wales.
- There are an estimated **43.6 thousand people of working age in Blaenau Gwent**; 2.3% of Wales working age population.
- In March 2023 there were **7.8 start-ups for every 10,000 working age in Blaenau Gwent** and this compares with a business start-up rate of 7.6 for the whole of Wales



The Shared Prosperity Fund **Supporting Local Business** investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow. Blaenau Gwent's funding allocation over the 3 year delivery programme against this investment priority is **£6,682,246**

As part of the People and Skills priority there is a dedicated and ring-fenced element of the UKSPF called **Multiply** which seeks to improve adult numeracy skills and has a 3 year fund allocation of **£3,874,171**





Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities



Location of ash trees have been mapped and 60% of surveys in respect of Ash Dieback (a fungal disease that affects ash trees) has been carried out along A and B roads. Tenders have been received for roadside clearance.

The final full month of the Welsh Government ENRAW funded Resilient Greater Gwent project saw actions associated with the Nature Recovery Action Plan being implemented in addition to coordination of Gwent wide activities on urban biodiversity, sustainable communities, rivers and invasive non native species.



Resilient Greater Gwent - Gwent wide collaborative project supporting Ecology, Invasive Species & Sustainable Communities which Blaenau Gwent acted as lead authority, on concluded in July and project monitoring and evaluation was collaborated upon.



A Resilient Greater Gwent

The **Active Travel grant programme 22/23 has been awarded and progressed** - We received confirmation of a successful Active Travel Fund 2023/24 bid. In total, we have been awarded £802,000, which is a slight increase on the previous year.

We have been awarded £302,000 for our Main Scheme bids:

| Scheme Name | Scheme Description | ATF Allocation (£) | Town |
|---|---|--------------------|------------|
| Ystruth Primary School AT Route Upgrade | Widening of existing route, street lighting, fencing | £247,000.00 | Blaina |
| Cwmtillery Active Travel Links | Feasibility and design of new active travel links in Cwmtillery | £15,000.00 | Cwmtillery |
| Glyncoed Phase 2 | Feasibility and design of ramp | £40,000.00 | Ebbw Vale |

We have been awarded £500,000 for Core funding, which is to help develop scheme design and feasibility studies. The core schemes for 2023/24 have been identified as:

| Scheme Name | Scheme Description | ATF Allocation (£) | Town |
|--|--|--------------------|---------------------|
| Crossing at Blaina Road Roundabout | Controlled crossing | Core | Brynmawr |
| Ebbw Vale Sustainable Link | WelTAG Stage 3: New Active Travel between The Works Site and Ebbw Vale Town Centre | Core | Ebbw Vale |
| Abertillery - Blaina Active Travel Links | Feasibility and design to improve existing AT route (widening, street lighting) | Core | Abertillery /Blaina |
| The Dingle, Brynmawr | Feasibility and design of extended NCN 46 to Interediate Road | Core | Brynmawr |

INVOLVEMENT - Wales biodiversity week was used to promote the Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan, presentation being delivered at conference.



COLLABORATION - Collaborative work under the Gwent Green Grid Project's 'Nature isn't Neat' strand to improve grassland management and pollinators has been progressed, with surveys on some of our grassland sites being conducted and altered grass cutting regimes put in place.





Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities



Schools' biodiversity events delivered across 22 Blaenau Gwent Schools to **3,026 pupils** between April 2022 and March 2023

| School | Number of pupils | Number of |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Blaen Y Cwm | 324 | 15 |
| Glanhowy | 153 | 7 |
| Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg | 177 | 6 |
| Ebbw Fawr Primary Ph. | 238 | 10 |
| Pen Y Cwm | 124 | 12 |
| Beaufort Hill | 272 | 10 |
| Sofrydd | 89 | 6 |
| St Mary's CiW | 172 | 10 |
| Willowtown | 143 | 6 |
| Coed Y Garn | 137 | 4 |
| Deighton | 23 | 1 |
| SHEP Roseheyworth | 25 | 1 |
| SHEP Willowtown | 51 | 1 |
| Ebbw Fawr 2ndry LRB | 26 | 1 |
| Georgetown Primary | 401 | 6 |
| All Saints | 21 | 1 |
| St Josephs | 77 | 3 |
| Rhos Y Fedwen | 33 | 2 |
| ALC – Tillery St | 157 | 6 |
| St Illtyd's | 92 | 5 |
| ALC - Roseheyworth | 140 | 5 |
| ALC - Six Bells | 151 | 8 |
| Total | 3,026 | 126 |

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Our Local Places For Nature grant has been fully spent, delivering the following strands of work:



Nature on your Doorstep – funding value of £90,809;



Greening the public service estate – funding value £52,691;

And revenue funding of additional £62,400

This funding was spent on things such as:

- Fruit trees
- Hedging plants
- Bird boxes
- Bat boxes
- Management plans
- Biodiversity enhancement plans
- Tree thinning works and woodland management works

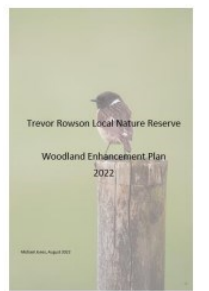
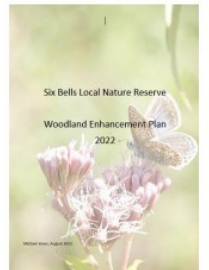
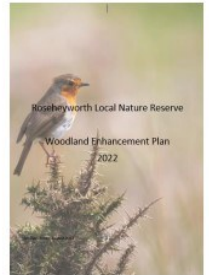
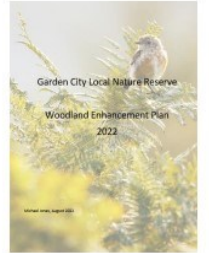
Hedgerow planting in Central Park in Blaina completed



Brilliant Bird workshops are being well received to SLA schools with **1,034 pupils engaged** with so far since January 2023



Woodland management plans have been completed for Trevor Rowsen, Six Bells and a number of other sites and work to implement those management plans has been completed, including tree thinning and Ash removal. Work completed on all sites with the exception of ongoing works at Six Bells Local Nature Reserve.





Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure



Senedd approved new legislation on 12th July 2022 that will

lower the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph

on residential roads and busy pedestrian streets;

This will **come into effect 17th September 2023.**



Work has been completed with dataMap Wales to finalise exception maps which will show which roads are to default to 20mph and those that will remain 30mph). To view roads affected by changes to the speed limit on restricted roads, please visit [Data Map Wales](#).



The current gross replacement value of the Highway Network is estimated at £1.093 billion and is the Authority's most valuable material asset



LONG TERM - Significant progress has been made over the past 10 years on improving the Highway network however the absence of Welsh Government funding for 2023/24 & the end of Blaenau Gwent Prudential Borrowing Programme has curtailed Capital investments in the highway network. The completion and formal adoption of the Highways Asset Management Plan 2023 - 2028 will support and drive the Authority's approach to maintenance over the next 5 years

Design work for new signage and road marking has been completed and the contract for the works was awarded to Noel Fitzpatrick. The contract tender price was £70,925.00 with Blaenau Gwent providing all the materials – signs/posts etc.





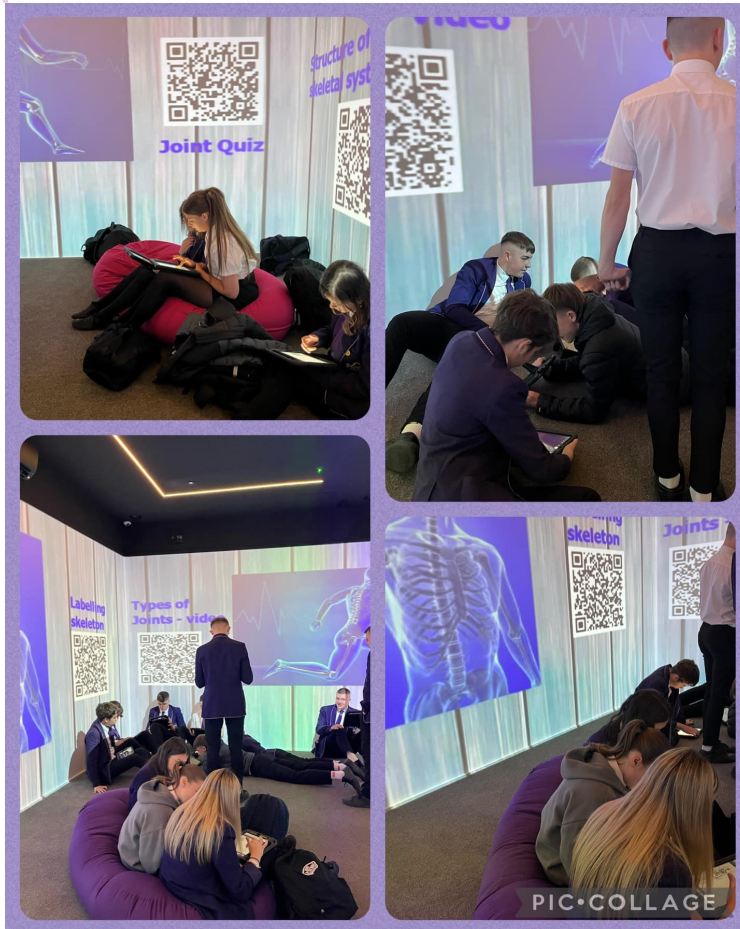
Case Study - 5G Immersive Environment in Ebbw Vale



Our digital champion has continued to engage with schools and some repeat visits to the immersive environment have taken place. A governance structure for future management of the immersive environment is being developed and a Strategic Advisory Group and Content Development Group is yet to be established.

Ebbw Vale 5G Immersive Environment 19 April

Not every class that come in can be photographed, but the **Ebbw Fawr Learning Community** Y10 GCSE PE class this morning were more than happy to be snapped while working. They watched videos together as a class then worked independently, scanning QR codes to various information sites, videos and quizzes about their current topic - bones and joints.



Funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25 has been secured to support ongoing management of the Immersive Environment.



5G immersive environment will need to become financially sustainable - this will include charging for usage by businesses, schools outside Blaenau Gwent going forward.

Ebbw Vale 5G Immersive Environment 26 April

Georgetown Primary went on a whistle stop world tour this week. Where in this Wonderful World would you like to visit?





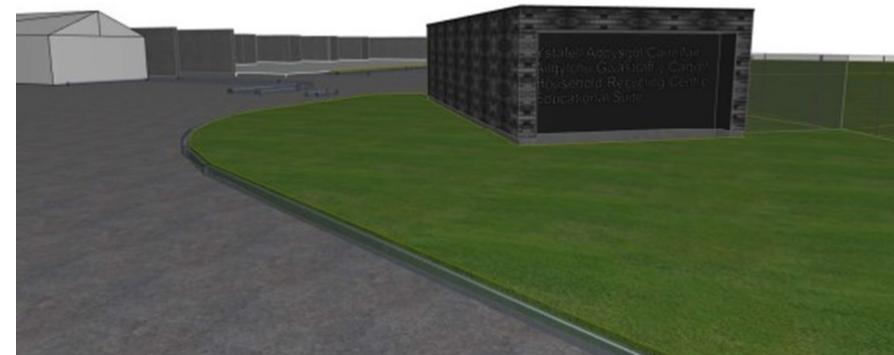
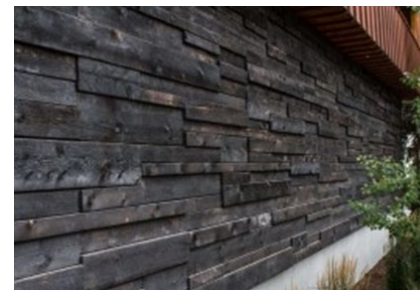
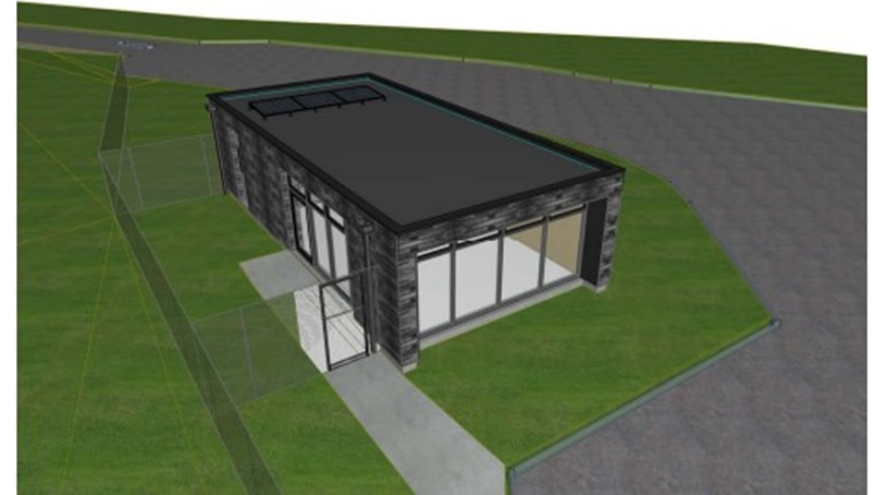
Case Study - Education Centre at Roseheyworth



The build process for a new **Education centre at Roseheyworth** Household Waste Recycling Centre is now completed with a School Education programme being finalised ready for September 2023 Roll out to schools.

The Education Centre will allow **school children and community groups to learn** about the benefits of **recycling, what happens to materials**, the benefits of a **circular economy** and encourage people to **take responsibility for their waste** through interactive materials, games and touch screen technology. The Centre was built following receipt of **Welsh Government Circular Economy Fund, totalling £280,000.**

A bid has been made to Keep Wales Tidy for a Wildlife pack to develop the grounds outside the centre with help from local Community Groups.





Case Study - Community Road Safety



The **Kerbcraft scheme** has been delivered successfully this year teaching pedestrian skills to 5 to 7 year olds, by means of practical road-side training rather than teaching in the classroom.




During 2022/23 we trained 421 children utilising this scheme.


Kerbcraft is built around teaching three skills;

- choosing safe places and routes;
- crossing safely at parked cars;
- crossing safely near junctions.

National Standard Cycle Training has also been delivered in 2022/23 to children aged 8 and above,

where we trained **320 children at**

 **Level 1**, which enabled them to gain basic cycle control skills including starting and pedalling, stopping, manoeuvring, signalling and using the gears on their bikes in an environment away from cars or traffic. and

 **Level 2**, which was delivered on the roads and gave them a real cycling experience so that they are able to deal with traffic on short journeys such as cycling to school or local shops.



Road Safety Grant funding bid submitted to Welsh Government for 2023/24

We bid for £40,000 of funding for 2023/24 and have successfully been granted

£26,598 Kerbcraft to train 429 children

£13,402 National Standard Cycling – to train 253 children in Level 1 and Level 2 training

(although we anticipate this figure being higher)



Case Study - Clean local environment



Delivery of key objectives, and actions within the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy continues.

These support our goal of **improving of the local environmental quality for the future.**

Cwmtillery Litter



Barefoot Cwm



Foundry Bridge



- During 2022/2023 there were **33** visits to schools within the borough.



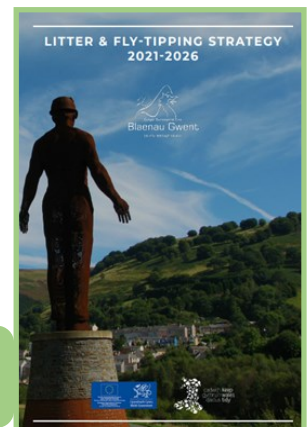
Georgetown Oceans

- There were **37** community litter picks.

- There were **5** events with Keep Wales Tidy.



- There were **7055** bags of general litter and **424** bags of recycling collected by the litter champions.



LONG TERM— Work is ongoing to deliver the goals of the litter and fly-tipping strategy



Case Study - Consultation on Ebbw Vale sustainable link and Active Travel

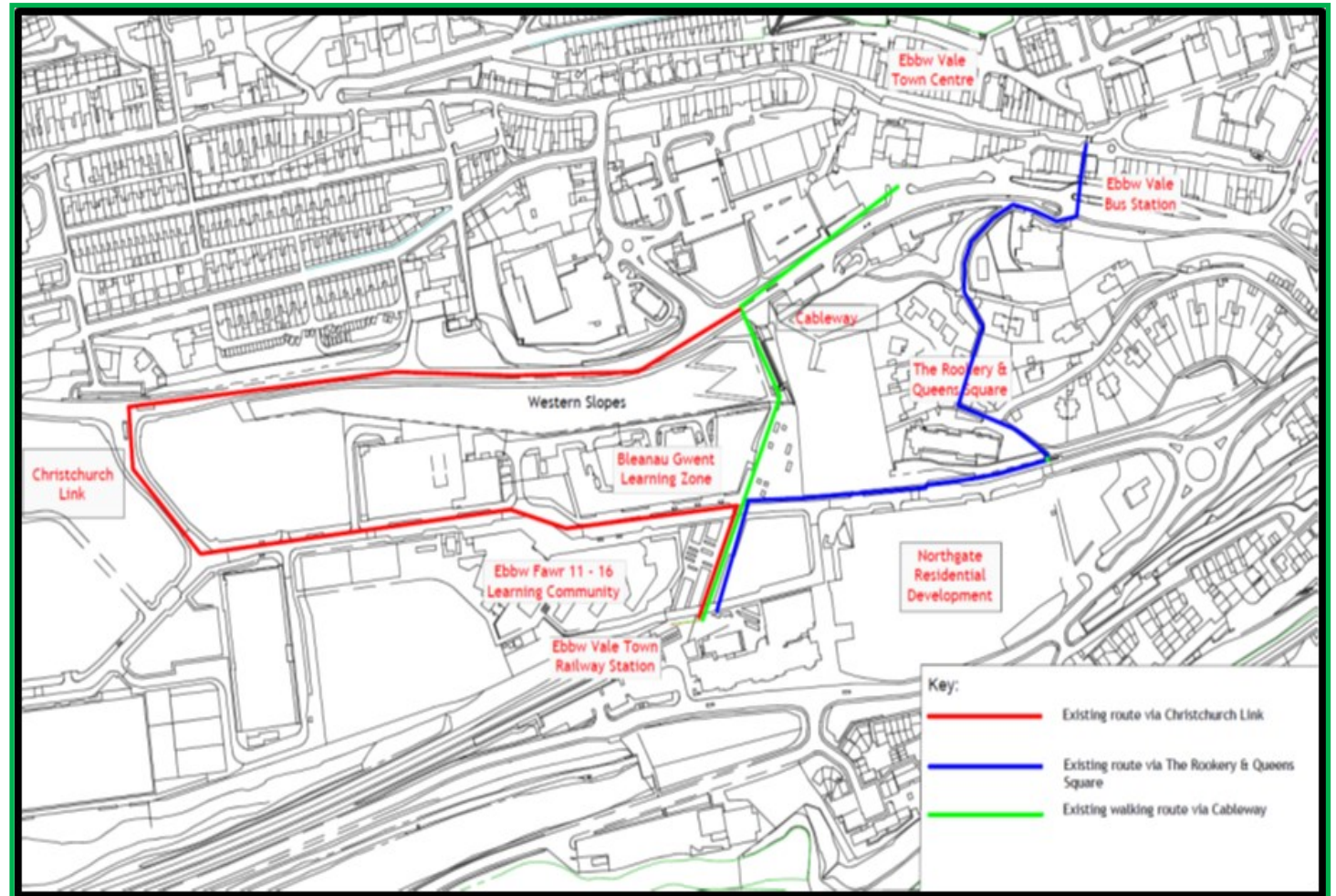


A consultation event was held in the General Offices on Wednesday 22nd March. The consultation was premised on the current lack of Active Travel compliant routes between Ebbw Vale Railway Station and Ebbw Vale Town Centre; the cableway having limited opening hours and other routes being too steep or indirect.

Blaenau Gwent commissioned WSP to undertake a study into the existing routes available for walking and cycling and provide an options appraisal of ways active travel could be improved within the area. A preferred option had been identified and consult with the public sought their views.

The consultation provided an opportunity for the public and members to see the designs and give an opportunity to make suggestions and raise any questions on our plans for the new Active Travel route in Ebbw Vale.

We also ran an online survey as part of our consultation for those unable to attend the event.





Case Study - Outdoor Accessibility



Works to ensure the provision of suitable outdoor access and rights of way have continued throughout the year and include:-

Works at Cwmtillery have provided improved connections onto the lakeside path from the carpark and also enabled a circle walk of the lake without entering onto the road in use by vehicular traffic. The improved surfaces have also enabled the route to be accessible by mobility scooters more easily.

Before



After

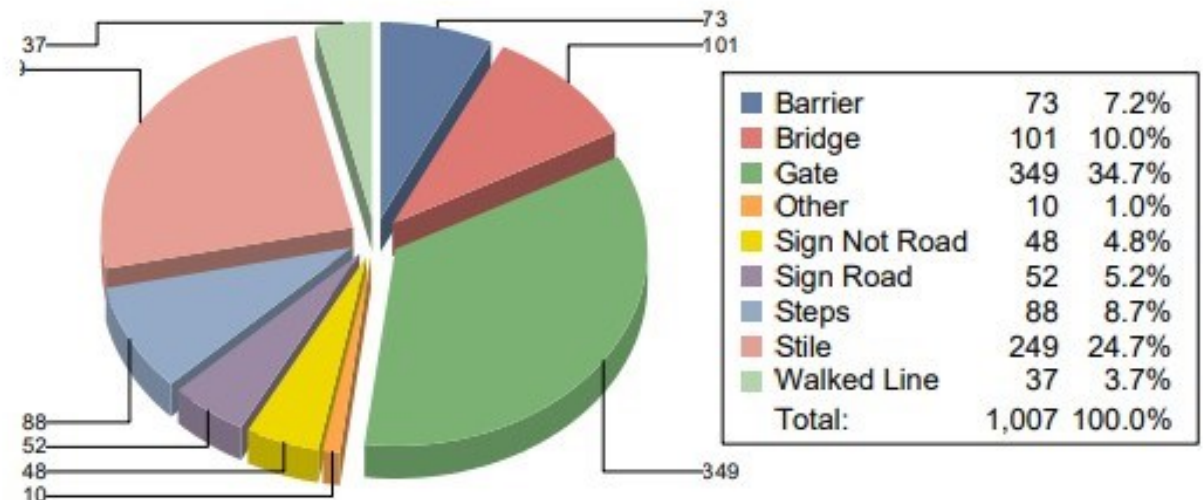


A condition survey has been commissioned to provide baseline data on our 500km of rural Public Rights of Way. The survey results have now been received which will assist us when prioritising future works:-

| Issue Priority | Priority Description | No. of Issues |
|----------------|--|---------------|
| 1 | Immediate hazard to public safety | 0 |
| 2 | Operationally imperative issues (legal deadlines, emergency) | 0 |
| 3 | Potential hazards to public safety. | 14 |
| 4 | Inaccessible route (obstructed) | 549 |
| 5 | Inconvenient route (disrepair) | 323 |
| 6 | Minor detriment to use of route (desirable) | 786 |
| | Total | 1672 |

We further collected an inventory of all infrastructure (stiles, gates, etc) on the network:-

Furniture breakdown across network by Type



Work to complete the Glyncoed cycleway has now been completed at a cost of £426,001.65 in 2022/23

Before



After





Case Study - Town Centre Community Events



- Increasing footfall, bringing communities together and building positive relationships

The Town Centre Business Development Officer has continued to organise events which is proving very beneficial to our community as a whole. These free events are not only helping local businesses and increasing town centre footfall, it is becoming more and more apparent how important these events are in drawing the community together and the events are so welcomed by families in these difficult financial times.

Volunteers take part who help with the events, and we also have dance groups, brass bands, theatre groups all wanting to attend. A variety of departments with the Local Authority also attend events such as the family information service, the Police (when possible) come along and engage with the community, Hospice of the Valley, Scout groups, St Johns Ambulance attend. We welcome any group that wants to participate in future events.



Events are varied and different activities are included continually. These include completing trails, providing opportunities for children to pet animals, classic car shows, along with activities geared at older children with beatboxing, breakdancing and a graffiti workshop.



At a recent Dinomania event the recycling department came along and had a wonderful day engaging with so many people on the importance of food recycling.



Case Study - National Parks Tennis Project



We continually work to ensure that provision is available to support the positive health and well-being of our community. As part of this, there was significant investment into park tennis courts for Blaenau Gwent during the reporting period.

“These works have been grant funded as part of the National Parks Tennis Project, a joint investment by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Tennis Foundation and the UK Government, delivered by the LTA, to refurbish public tennis courts across Britain and support a new generation of players to get into the sport.

This investment is designed to open up tennis to people of all backgrounds, to level up sports provision across the nation, and provide greater opportunities for children and adults to be active. Park tennis courts are particularly important in providing affordable, engaging and accessible opportunities for more female players and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as being the most popular sport for women to play after they have left education.

Alongside this investment, Blaenau Gwent CBC and Six Bells Park Community Tennis Ltd. are working with the LTA and Tennis Wales to deliver a range of tennis activities catering to all ages and abilities. This includes free park tennis sessions where equipment is provided, and Local Tennis Leagues are organised.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council are delighted with the outcome of these works and the positive partnerships established with all parties concerned.

The Council are very grateful to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and local community groups for their support in improving the Six Bells Park tennis courts. This refurbishment will now provide opportunities for the local and wider community to play tennis no matter at what level and at top quality facilities.”



Total investment at Six Bells Park of £38,000.



Case Study - Empty Properties



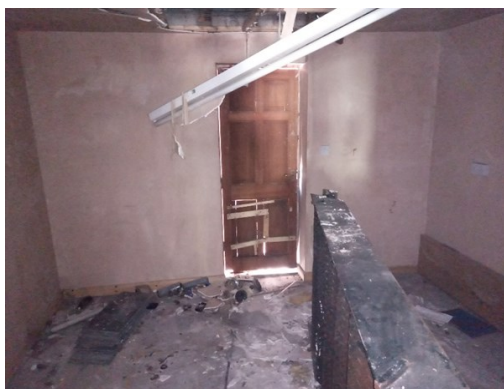
EMPTY PROPERTY - CROWN OWNED

- Lewis Street, Swffryd – ongoing case
- Empty since approx. 2017
- Complaints received from neighbouring properties
- Limited Company owner dissolved - No Owner
- Property subject to Escheat and rests with The Crown
- No enforcement action possible
- Negotiating the purchase of the property for nominal £1 fee

- Payment of The Crown solicitor fees
- Immediate sale at public auction to private buyer
- Recover costs from proceeds of sale and return surplus to the Crown
- Work with new owner to renovate and bring back into use
- Enforcement Action if necessary
- Additional properties if process is successful

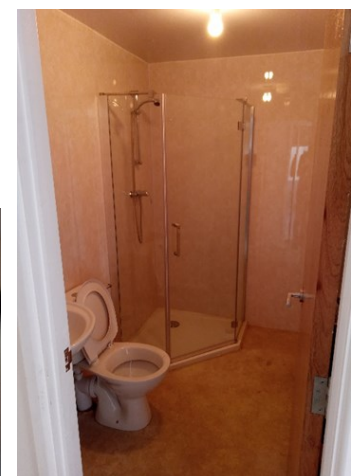
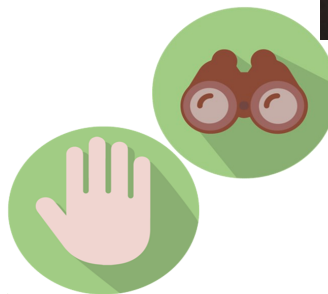
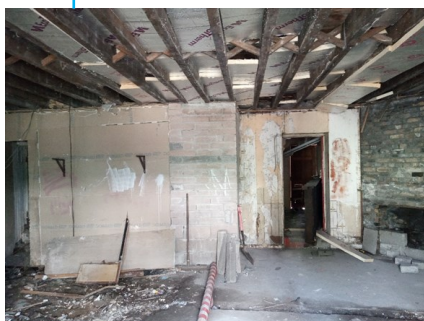


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EMPTY PROPERTY - COMPLETED LOAN

- High Street, Blaina
- Landlord Loan
- £35,000 loan to let
- Conversion of a disused ground floor unit into a 2 bed self-contained flat





Case Study - Universal Primary Free School Meals



UNIVERSAL PRIMARY FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Did you know?
All children from full-time nursery up to Year 6 can have a healthy and nutritious FREE school lunch at no cost to you!

Claiming your free school meals can save you approximately £400 per year per child.

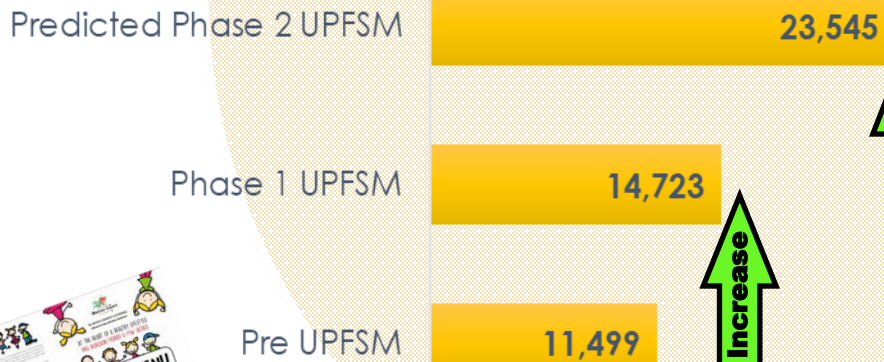
- Religious & Special dietary requirements catered for
- Freshly made meals
- Healthy Food choices
- Funded by Welsh Government

For more information please contact Blaenau Gwent School Meals Catering Service on Tel: 07790 344458 or 07790 30360

It was announced by Welsh Government in December 2021 to extend free school meal entitlement to all primary school children. The aim was to begin implementation in September 2022 with the youngest learners in primary receiving free school meals as part of phase one. The Welsh Government would then look to continue the roll-out in September 2023 so that all learners in primary schools can benefit from a free school meal as phase two. **Blaenau Gwent were one of 8 authorities to be able to offer Universal Primary Free School Meals to all pupils in full time nursery, reception classes and years 1 & 2 classes in Primary as part of phase one.**

To support delivery of both phases the school meals catering department are able to **employ additional catering staff, increase current catering staff working hours, develop current catering staff with their personal development learning skills** by on the job training into future assistant cooks and cooks.

Average Meals Served Per Week



The school meals catering department employ approximately 250/300 staff from our local community who strive to support all learners who attend breakfast clubs and lunchtime services in our schools.

The School Meals catering department works with the local health board, Dietician to support families and learners with special dietary and religious menus for the school meals service.



Certificate of Compliance

The evidence submitted by **Angela Meredith** indicates that the food and drink being provided by **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council** in primary schools is compliant with [The Healthy Eating in Schools \(Nutritional Standards and Requirements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#).

Food in Schools Programme Coordinator

 Cara Lewis

Checks undertaken by **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council** confirm that the food and drink being provided by **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council** in primary schools is compliant with [The Healthy Eating in Schools \(Nutritional Standards and Requirements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#).

Catering Manager

 Claire Edmunds

Issue date 11 July 2023
 Review date 10 July 2024

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Agenda Item 15

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**
Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**
Report Subject: **Local Government Act 1972 Proposed Transfer of Further Land to Abertillery Bluebirds**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Place & Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Ellie Fry, Corporate Director for Regeneration and Community Services**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Corp. Asset Management Working Group |
| 8/8/23 | 17.08.23 | | | | | 04.10.23 | | 18/7/23 |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the transfer of a sports pitch at Windsor Road, Six Bells for use by the junior section of Abertillery Bluebirds. The extent of the property is shown edged red on the plan attached as Appendix 1.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In July 2019, following completion of the Community Asset Transfer process, Abertillery Bluebirds signed a 50-year lease for the football facilities at Cwm Nant-y-Groes. The Club have successfully run the facilities since then and recently gained promotion to the Cymru South Division.
- 2.2 The club has increased their junior section and are finding it difficult to accommodate all the use on the current pitch. They have enquired about taking on the pitch at Windsor Road.
- 2.3 As the club had already applied for and shown they can run a facility they have not been asked to complete a full Community Asset Transfer (CAT) application as it was expected that the Windsor Road pitch would be added to their existing lease. However, as the land at Cwm Nant-y Groes was dedicated under Fields in Trust should the transfer proceed then the Council's Solicitor feels that the issue of a new lease to run to the same term as the existing would be the simplest way forward.
- 2.4 The Windsor Road pitch did not have a primary home user when the sports facilities were all transferred in 2018/2019 and as such was not requested as a transfer by any club. As such it was not advertised as a loss of public open space under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and before the proposal to include the land within the Bluebirds Lease can move forward it has been necessary to advertise the land under the Act.

- 2.5 This was done via adverts in the local paper -The Gwent Gazette – 13th and 20th April 2023 with any objections to the proposal to be made to the Council by the 27th of April 2023.
- 2.6 Site notices were also erected during the same time- period confirming that plans of the proposed area could be viewed at the General Offices.
- 2.7 One letter concerning the proposal has been received raising concern at the loss of public access to the area. The author confirmed that if the transfer allows the same use of public access to the land as now, then they would have a minor objection and if it is anything less, then they would have a total objection to the transfer.
- 2.8 The land lies within the settlement boundary of Six Bells and is included in the open space assessment and identified as a park. This means that policy DM13 Protection of Open Space is triggered. The policy states:
- Development proposals which affect existing open space will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:*
- a. The site has no significant amenity, nature conservation or recreational value; and*
 - b. There is a surplus of such facilities in the locality; or*
 - c. The loss can be replaced with an equivalent or greater provision in the immediate locality; or*
 - d. The development enhances an existing facility.*
- 2.9 There are no proposals by the club to develop the site but the club have indicated that they intend to try and invest in the facility to improve the pitch and potentially to provide storage/ changing facilities.
- 2.10 They have confirmed that at this stage they do not intend to restrict public access but would not wish to be restricted on proposals moving forward.
- 2.11 The site is designated as a Dog Exclusion Area under the Council Order PSPO – DC – 013 and is completely fenced albeit with access gates which currently allow entry to the site.
- 2.12 Should the Council be minded to dispose of the property at an undervalue, it will need to comply with the Local Government Act 1972, General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003 – Disposal of Land in Wales for Less than Best Consideration, which came into effect on 31st December 2003 and removes the requirement for Authorities to seek specific consent for any disposal and undervalue where the Authority considers that the disposal is in the interest of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the whole or part of its area, or any persons resident or present in the area and the undervalue is £2,000,000.00 Million Pounds (two million pounds) or less.

- 2.13 As the proposed long-term lease is more than 7 years, the Council will need to comply with these requirements. In this case the market value of the site being certified by a qualified valuer in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – professional standards, who has confirmed that given the restrictions on the use of the land and the restrictions which will be attached to the proposed lease there is no value to the property other than a nominal £1.
- 2.14 The Council needs to consider any issues under the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022 which replaces previous advice on European State Aid Given the market value of the site it is not felt this is relevant in this case.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 That the Cabinet consider the following options:
- 3.2 **Option 1 (Preferred)** To allow Abertillery Bluebirds to take on control of the sports field at Windsor Road to facilitate use by junior members of the club.
- 3.3 **Option 2** To retain the site and not transfer responsibility to Abertillery Bluebirds.
- 3.4 Consultation took place with local members, Cabinet Member and Town Council and no adverse comments were received.
- 3.5 Consultation also took place with the Council's Community Asset Transfer Group and no comments were received.
- 3.6 Consultation with CAMWG (Corporate Asset Management Working group) took place and the proposed transfer was supported by all those who responded.
- 3.7 Divisional Leadership Team discussed the report at their meeting of the 8th August 2023 and supported the report and option 1.
- 3.8 The public were given the opportunity to comment via the Local Government Act 1972 as detailed in section 2 above. There has been one objection which has resulted in this report being presented to Cabinet.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 The proposals within this report support the achievement of the priorities contained within the Corporate Plan 2022-2027, including:
- To respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities.
 - An ambitious and innovative Council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place.

- Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact on Budget (short- and long-term impact)* Option 1

5.1.1 The impact will remove the maintenance burden for the site from the Environment department but this will be in the region of £1500 p.a. based on the frequency of cutting the pitch and surrounding area.

5.1.2 There could also be potential income for the Council should the club decide to utilise the Council for ongoing grounds maintenance although for their nearby site they utilise non – Council contractors for maintenance.

5.1.3 **Option 2**

Council will continue to maintain the site.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

5.2.1 **Option 1**

There are no real risks associated with the transfer as Council will still own the site and any proposals for the site would be limited via the lease and normal land related permissions – planning.

5.2.2 **Option 2**

No risk but continued maintenance cost when site is not being utilised as a sports pitch.

5.3 *Legal*

5.3.1 **Option 1**

The Council will need to bear the legal costs of entering an agreement with the club.

5.3.2 **Option 2**

No costs over and above the cost of advertising under the Local Government Act 1972 which have already been incurred.

5.3 *Human Resources*

Staff time in dealing with the proposal.

5.4 *Health and Safety*

5.4.1 **Option 1** – continued responsibility for fence line and gates.

5.4.2 **Option 2** – responsibility for whole site

6. **Supporting Evidence**

- 6.1 The Council resolved to transfer all sports facilities to users in 2018/19 and whilst this pitch did not have an identified main user the same principles relating to any transfer would apply.

The success of the club in increasing numbers means they now need an extra facility point to the success of the original transfer.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public.***

Restoration of site as a formal sports pitch and increased opportunities for youngsters to participate in football.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Detailed at section 3 above.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The proposal supports elements of the Council's Corporate Plan which sets out long term intentions for the Borough.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The proposal will reinstate use as a pitch and training facility and mitigate against deterioration of the site should grounds maintenance funding be reduced.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working.***

None identified.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Not applicable

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Limited reduction in Council's carbon emissions if not maintaining the area.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

Not applicable

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 No formal monitoring but contact will be maintained with the club periodically to assess how things are going and if there are any issues with the site

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 –Windsor Road Field Plan

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PROJECT:

TITLE: Appendix 1
Playing Field Windsor Road, Six Bells



For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

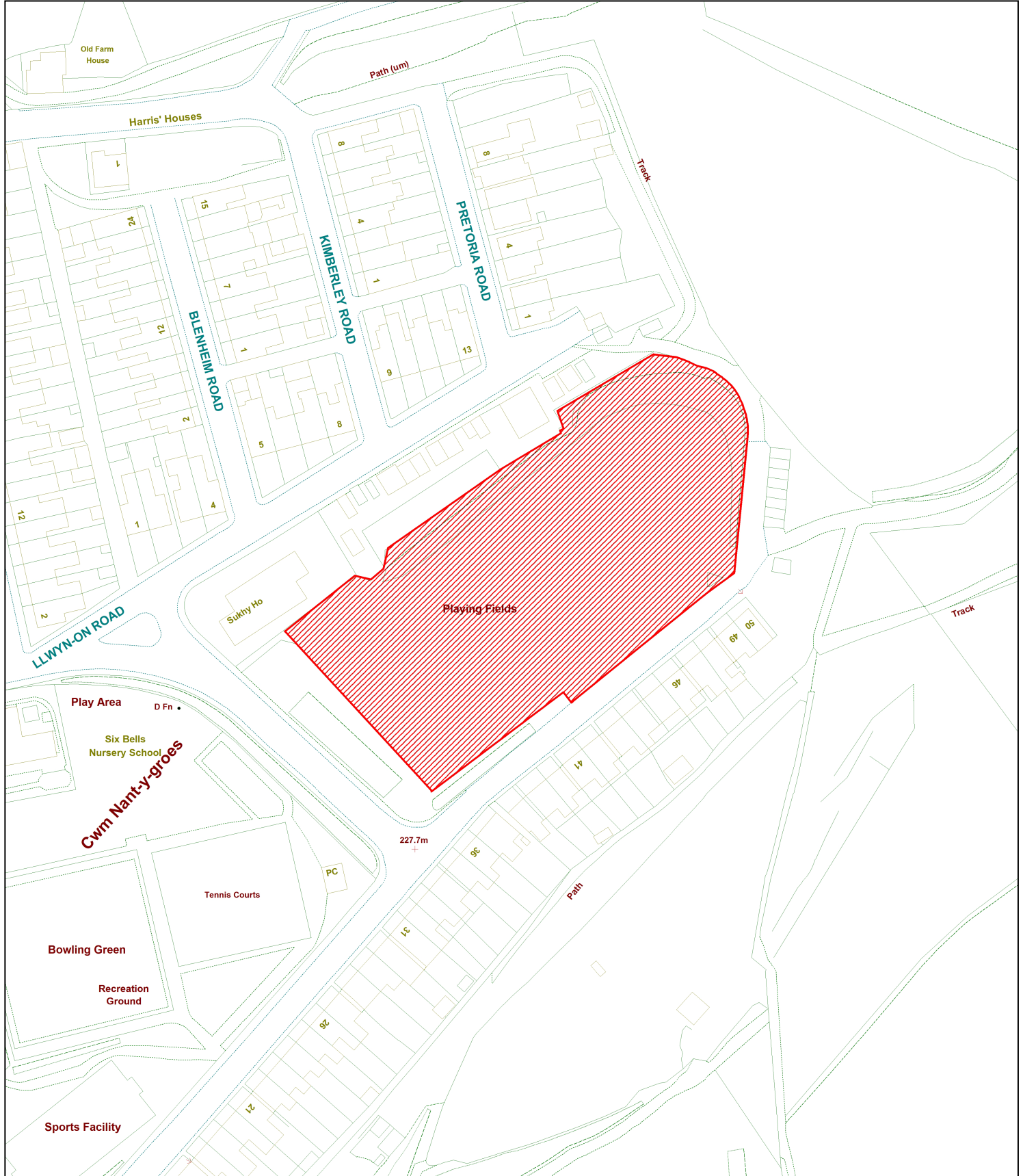
(C) Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council



Date : 12/04/2023

Map Reference : SO2203SW

Scale : 1:1250



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Agenda Item 16

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**

Report Subject: **Inclusion and ALN Strategy/Policies/Guidance (review and amendments)**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Sue Edmunds, Cabinet Member for People and Education**

Report Submitted by: **Luisa Munro-Morris – Interim Corporate Director of Education**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Leadership Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| √ | √ | 07.09.23 | | | 19.09.23 | 04.10.23 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the reviewed Inclusion and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) strategies, policies, and guidance (documentation), appended to this report, in order to provide the opportunity for members to feedback. The ALN Strategy and subsequent policies and guidance documents have been reviewed in line with the ongoing ALN implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) legislation, new Welsh Government guidance for Elective Home Education (EHE), and to further support in areas of EOTAS/Exclusion and Attendance. The updates will support the Local Authority in utilising their statutory powers where necessary.
- 1.2 The strategy, policies and guidance documents are being presented for consideration, prior to re issuing to school Governing Bodies for adoption.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware that some of the included documents were presented last Autumn (2022). Moving on from the previous adoption of policies, the Welsh Government has now further updated some of its own guidance and legislation and ALN implementation has been underway. The attached strategy, policies and guidance documents have been reviewed and amended in line with those updates. This ensures that Blaenau Gwent Council's documentation is up to date and is reflective of the Welsh Government's guidance and legislation.

- 2.2 During the November 2022 Estyn inspection of the Education Directorate (LGES), it was suggested that the Local Authority engage with key stakeholders when reviewing and amending policies as they are of direct interest to them. Following the suggestion by Estyn several sessions were set up commencing January 2023 for the purpose of reviewing policies to which key stakeholders were subsequently invited. However, given the initiation of Action Short of Strike (ASOS) the sessions have not been attended by key stakeholders (Headteachers) across Blaenau Gwent; this has resulted in documentation related to Inclusion and ALN being reviewed only by Local Authority Staff. However, these staff have been from cross directorate so as not to limit to education officers only – education and social services have been engaged across the service areas.

The Local Authority, in line with the ALNET legislation and implementation, are currently developing the Post 16 ALN Guidance and Process Documentation. This is currently work in progress, which is reflective of all SEWC local authorities.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The People Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 19th September 2023, and the Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend Option 2 to Cabinet, owing to there being no consultations with Headteachers and therefore, Members felt that as a result the policies may not be fit for purpose.

- 3.2 **Option 1** – to consider and approve, the reviewed and amended documents giving consideration that only Local Authority officers have been involved and engaged in the process. This will ensure that the documents are re distributed to key stakeholders with the inclusion of the most up to date changes to national guidance and legislation; this will allow LA processes and statutory functions to align.

Option 2 – to reject and not approve, the reviewed and amended documents and continue with them in Draft with the option of setting up further sessions for engagement with stakeholders. However, the impact of this will be that the LA and our schools will not be obligated to follow the draft versions and may revert to the older versions of documentation. This may impact on learners and the LA processes being negatively affected as they will not be aligned with Welsh Government guidance. The LA and schools would also be lagging behind other authority areas.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 The local authority's Education Directorate has a vision of schools becoming self-led and self-improving with a purpose of creating better schools, better citizens for better communities. In order to meet these objectives, the local authority has a duty to support its schools, to carry out the statutory functions in regard to ALN and Inclusion; the ALN (ET) Wales 2018 and the

ALN Code of Practice (2021) is the legal framework by which the local authority and schools must execute their duties. The Inclusion Service contributes to the Blaenau Gwent wellbeing plan through supporting learners to overcome barriers. The local authority will also align its support work to schools and learners within Welsh Government national guidance around areas including absences, exclusions, and elective home education.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

- 5.1 *Impact on Budget-* N/A – all recent and additional support posts within inclusion (to support the changes in policy/legislation) are fixed term and funded via grants.
- 5.2 *Risk-* If the local authority does not adopt the new reviewed and updated policies and guidance there is a risk that BG Council will not be working in alignment with Welsh Government guidance and other neighbouring local authorities.
- 5.3 *Legal* – The council has statutory functions to execute, and this is supported by the new reviewed and updated policies and guidance.
- 5.4 Human Resources – N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

- 6.1 *Performance Information and Data-*
There are 25 schools across Blaenau Gwent and of these, 7 schools have resource base provision attached and 2 are special schools. There are 22 early years settings to which the EY ALN Policy relates. ALN implementation work is ongoing and via forums and staff survey it is apparent that ongoing support is needed to ensure the local authority is ALNET compliant. There is also ongoing support across all of our schools and for learners who are EOTAS or EHE in regard to attendance and exclusion – all of which are priority areas for the LA in 23/24.
- 6.2 *Expected outcome for the public-* Should the reviewed and amended documents be re distributed to schools; it will have a direct positive effect on the learners of Blaenau Gwent. As a result of this in turn the learners and their families should experience positive outcomes. The documentation is directed related to supporting schools and providing advice and guidance on the most appropriate way to support our learners, promotion of inclusion across all settings and executing the ALN legislation where necessary.
- 6.3 *Involvement (Consultation, engagement, participation)-*
Feedback from ALN forum meetings, Cluster meetings and ALN 'readiness' questionnaire. Discussions with head teachers earlier in the academic year 22/23.
- 6.4 *Thinking for the long term-* Appropriate intervention, support and guidance to schools and settings is crucial in ensuring smooth implementation of the

ALN Legislation and to enable our learners to attend school/receive an education and reach their full potential.

- 6.5 **Preventative Focus-** Prevention of learner's needs not being met or the initiation of the Inclusive Practices/ALN processes.
- 6.6 **Collaboration/Partnership Working-** Blaenau Gwent Local Authority Inclusion Service works in collaboration with a range of stakeholders concerned with learners and their families. The attached documentation will support our Early Years settings (maintained and non-maintained), schools and staff with an anticipated outcome of indirect positive impact on the learners going forward.
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
All of the attached policies and guidance link across service areas i.e. Education Welfare Service, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Additional Learning Needs and Early Years Additional Learning Needs.
- 6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**
N/A
- 6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**
See Appendix 8.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 The School Improvement and Inclusion Team have a joint Business Plan which includes ALN, EWS and GRT services as key priorities. The work streams will be measured against the business plan priorities and reporting for the end of each quarter will be undertaken to monitor the progress.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

[Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act | GOV.WALES](#)

[The Additional Learning Needs Code | GOV.WALES](#)

https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2023-06/consultation-document-belonging-engaging-and-participating-guidance_0.pdf

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-05/elective-home-education-guidance-may-2023.pdf>

Appendices:

1. Inclusion Strategy 2023
2. ALN Policy 2023
3. ALN Early Years Guidance and Process 2023
4. Elective Home Education (EHE) Policy 2023
5. Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) Policy 2023
6. Exclusion Guidance 2023
7. Attendance Policy 2023
8. Integrated Impact Assessment

INCLUSION STRATEGY

August 2023 - 2025



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Contents:

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- b) **Vulnerable learners**
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- d) **Behaviour and Relationships**
- e) **Exclusion**
- f) **Roles and Responsibilities**

Partnerships

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Introduction

“Inclusion requires the active involvement from all concerned. It places the onus on schools to adapt their organisation and their ways of responding to the needs of all children and young people and to value their development in all areas of school life.” (Inclusion and Pupil Support, WG 2016)

The Local Authority (LA) is committed to an approach of social inclusion of which inclusive education is a key dimension. This approach is aligned with the strategic direction of the Education Directorate and other linked strategies and policies and provides definitions for inclusion and the underpinning principles and values.

The LA recognises that there are a number of factors to consider in further developing a truly inclusive ethos across schools and education providers and has considered the direction of travel for Welsh Government (Curriculum for Wales reform, ALN reform, CAMHS transformation, support for vulnerable learners, thematic reviews by Estyn, research, school inspections, case studies, stakeholder views and the voice of the child in developing this approach).

The aim of this overarching strategy is to support the further development of our collective view of inclusion as being central to underpinning a high-quality local - based education, promoting good attendance and minimising the use of exclusion, wherever possible.

Participation is concerned with the quality of learners’ educational experiences and the extent to which they are accepted and feel that they belong. BG believe that all learners have a right to express their views about educational matters that affect them. We have a responsibility to listen to and learn from those views.

Achievement is concerned with learning outcomes. It is about what learners learn both inside and outside the classroom. Achievement, therefore, includes academic attainment, but it is a much broader concept that cannot be measured by tests alone.

Policy and Legislation

In recent years, the Welsh Government have issued a range of guidance, some of which has statutory status, which require LAs, schools, and other educational settings to:

- promote equality of opportunity for different groups of learners;
- review their policies and practice to ensure they do not discriminate against particular groups of learners; and,
- pro-actively promote equality in relation to disability, race, gender, religious belief and sexuality.

The LA considers that inclusion is a fundamental principle that underpins all our practice and procedures, and the LA is committed to an effective and inclusive education system in which all children and young people are:

- valued equally;
- treated with respect;
- given equal opportunities.

All children and young people should have access to an appropriate and high-quality education, which will inspire them to participate in lifelong learning. The LA, EAS, schools, early years and other educational settings will:

- work collaboratively to promote equality of opportunity for different groups of learners;
- review policies and practices to ensure they do not discriminate against groups of learners; and,
- pro-actively promote equality in all areas in relation to disability, race equality, gender, religious belief and sexuality.

Context

The Inclusion Strategy is supported by key policies and practices, which support the development of best practice in all schools and settings. The core guidance in relation to inclusion in Wales is found in Welsh Government's guidance document '*Inclusion and Pupils Support*' (2016). This guidance identifies a number of vulnerable groups of children and young people who may have additional learning needs (ALN) as identified in the ALNET (Wales) Act 2018.

The LA is committed to the seven core aims identified by the Welsh Government, which summarise the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The LA believes in celebrating diversity as a source of richness and potential that benefits all. The LA's commitment is to act in accordance with relevant equality legislation, and the LA and Inclusion Service's various policies, a number of which have been created or updated in line with the ALNET (Wales) Act 2018 and its associated reforms including:

- ALN Policy
- Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviours Policy
- Attendance Policy & Guidance
- Well Being Strategy
- Safeguarding in Education Policy
- Traveller School Attendance Guidance
- Policy for the Education of Pregnant School Girls and School Age Parents
- Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Reduced Timetables
- Hard to Place Protocol
- Exclusion Guidance
- Reducing Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPI)
- Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) Guidance
- Blaenau Gwent Policy for the Education of CYP with Medical Needs
- Admission Guidance

Aims

The aim of this strategy is to set out the commitment of the LA to the principles of inclusive education and its responsibilities to implement this across all relevant service areas and activities.

Inclusive principles will inform the work of the LA within the context of Blaenau Gwent's support for lifelong learning with the following as a focus:

- review and further develop a holistic education approach to inclusion, wellbeing, behaviour and relationships;
- support and empower schools to further develop their coherent whole school approach to wellbeing, relationships and behaviour; support schools to reduce exclusions and improve attendance;
- provide a framework for associated guidance;
- promote effective partnerships and cluster working with and across schools; and,
- support effective working between schools and other education providers to share good practice.

Principles

Inclusion involves celebrating, not just tolerating, diversity and the creative use of resources to support all children and young people to learn effectively. The LA, EAS, schools and other educational settings will show good practice in relation to inclusion by:

- adopting a person centred approach to planning and delivery of services in order to meet individual needs;
- providing dynamic leadership and effective management to promote social and emotional well-being through inclusive and non-discriminatory practices;
- facilitating a multi-agency focus to provide early intervention through a team around the family approach;
- targeting resources, interventions and training through positive actions in accordance with identified need;
- improving educational access and participation, and promoting achievement for all, particularly those in vulnerable groups;
- providing high quality learning and teaching experiences which are flexible and respond to the changing needs of individuals and the community;
- reviewing policies and practices to facilitate the change process and improve and develop culture and ethos;
- communicating effectively with and supporting schools, education settings, parents/ carers, children and young people.

DEFINITIONS

a) **Inclusion**

“Inclusion requires the active involvement from all concerned. It places the onus on schools to adapt their organisation and their ways of responding to the needs of all children and young people and to value their development in all areas of school life.” (Inclusion and Pupil Support, WG 2016)

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-05/guidance-inclusion-and-pupil-support_0.pdf

Welsh Government has, in recent years, issued a range of legislation and guidance which requires local authorities, schools, and other educational settings to:

- promote equality of opportunity for different groups of learners;
- review their policies and practice to ensure they do not discriminate against particular groups of learners, including those with characteristics protected by the Equalities Act 2010;
- pro-actively promote equality in relation to disability, race, gender, religious belief and sexuality;
- ensure the needs of vulnerable groups including those with additional learning needs are identified and met in a timely fashion;
- adopt person centred approaches.

b) **Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners**

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/guidance-supporting-vulnerable-disadvantaged-learners.pdf>

In its ‘Guidance for supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners’, Welsh Government stress that children may be seen as vulnerable for a number of reasons. In accordance with WG, Estyn also state that vulnerable children may be defined as those who may be more likely to experience emotional, social, and developmental barriers to learning. This may be as a result of their life experiences and disadvantage. A wide definition of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners has been adopted. It includes, but is not limited to, learners who are in one or more of the following groups:

- children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- care-experienced children, including Children Looked After (CLA)
- those at risk of exclusion
- Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (MEGRT) learners who have English or Welsh as an additional language (EAL/WAL)
- young carers
- young offenders
- learners educated other than at school (EOTAS)

- children of refugees and asylum seekers

- learners from outside of the UK

- learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM)
- children at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

Not all learners from these groups will face barriers to learning or be vulnerable to underachieving. Learners from these groups **may** face a range of barriers to achieving their potential and will, therefore, require different solutions and support targeted towards meeting each of their individual needs. In addition, learners may belong to several of the above groups at the same time, depending on their individual circumstances. *The list of groups is not exhaustive.* Learners not in these groups may be considered vulnerable or disadvantaged, including specifically as a result of COVID-19. For example, some learners who would not have been considered vulnerable or disadvantaged pre-COVID-19 may require additional support because of their experience during lockdown.

Learners educated through the medium of Welsh from homes where Welsh is not spoken may also require additional support, especially where they also face other barriers to learning. This may also be the case for those learners where English or Welsh is not their first language.

The role of the LA is to ensure that schools and providers are supported to identify the vulnerable learners in a broader context, and that there are clear links for support for schools from EAS and LA officers. It is often the most vulnerable learners for whom education other than at school (EOTAS) is considered. The LA has a clear EOTAS Policy which aligns with the principles outlined in this strategy.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The LA has an ALN Policy which defines Blaenau Gwent's Local Authority's (LAs) approach, objectives and plans (within the context of current legislative changes) to support schools to meet the needs of children with additional learning needs (ALN) to overcome barriers and challenges to enable them to reach their full potential. The principles underpinning the additional learning needs system are to support the creation of a fully inclusive, person-centred education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enable them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The LA has a policy for children looked after (CLA), which outlines the LA approach, supports the development of schools' policies, implementation and monitoring of a consistent approach, working in partnership with children's services and the EAS.

c) Wellbeing

There has been significant focus from Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and Estyn for a number of years on ensuring a collective focus on improving children's wellbeing. Locally, in Blaenau Gwent, there is a significant focus on children's wellbeing and mental health, particularly in relation to the Whole School Approach (WSA), early help and enhanced support, CAMHS in-reach project and EAS strategy for wellbeing and equity. Blaenau Gwent makes a significant contribution to the WSA agenda at both a national and regional level.

The LA has a Wellbeing Strategy and Good Practice Guide, which defines Blaenau Gwent's Local Authority's (LAs) approach, objectives and plans (within the context of current legislative changes) to support schools to support learners' well-being and mental health. The Blaenau Gwent aspiration for well-being is that all children and young people are purposefully engaged in education which is appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families and our community. We want our children and young people to be healthy, confident, capable and independent as far as possible and ready to learn throughout their lives. We want our children and young people to be enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work.

The Wellbeing Strategy and Good Practice Guide recognises the multi-dimensional nature of well-being and the critical importance of promoting good well-being for all. The mechanism for achieving this will be through the co-ordination of the curriculum in schools and how extra and co-curricular activities can be designed to enhance and complement learning experiences to improve well-being. This strategy aims to establish a framework where it is possible to map how aspects of learner well-being are explicitly promoted through the curriculum and how the community, outside agencies and partners can help augment school provision to provide comprehensive and meaningful experiences to promote well-being.

Schools and other education settings should strive to have an inclusive culture that fosters schools' ability to provide protective factors that develop resilience and promote wellbeing. The LA, working together with partners, aims to support schools to develop a coherent whole school approach to wellbeing, focusing on the Welsh Government 'whole school approach' and to develop a coherent whole education approach to wellbeing across a range of dimensions. These aims are consistent with the recommendations outlined in Estyn's (2019) report: Healthy and happy: school impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and with the 'Mind Over Matter' (2018) report.

d) Behaviour / Relationships

The Local Authority has recently produced a draft version of the 'Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviours Policy and Guidance' document, to support schools in promoting inclusion and preventing exclusion amongst its community.

In addition, there is a range of policy and guidance documentation from the Welsh Government including:

- [Welsh Government Inclusion & Pupil Support Document](#)
- [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units 225/2019](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in primary schools 117/2012](#)
- [Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom. A handbook for classroom teachers in secondary schools 086/2010](#)
- [Effective managed moves: A fresh start at school for children and young people 096/2011](#)

- [Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools 2019](#)
- The Children Act 1989 and The Social Services and Wellbeing act (2014),
- Curriculum for Wales 2022 and
- Challenging Bullying: Rights, Respect Equality statutory guidance (2019)

e) Exclusions

Our vision is for all children and young people in Blaenau Gwent is to be purposefully engaged in an educational programme appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and to achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families, and our community and for society at large. We want our children and our adults to be happy, healthy, capable and engaged with school and the wider community. Minimal school exclusions will be a key indicator of our collective success.

Welsh Government recognises and promotes the importance of wellbeing in schools as a key factor in achieving this ambition. Blaenau Gwent is aware that improving the all-round wellbeing of pupils and staff is important in and of itself, as well as crucial in lifting performance and attainment levels.

In most cases, fixed-term exclusions are only given after exhausting all the available options for internal interventions and exclusions from the classroom. However, research demonstrates the clear need to consider what additional external support can be provided to children to prevent exclusion when internal school-based interventions do not succeed.

The Local Authority has produced a guidance document to support schools in promoting inclusion and preventing exclusion amongst its community. There are regular exclusion monitoring arrangements in place e.g., DLT (Directorate Leadership Team) and school levels.

f) Roles and Responsibilities

The Education Directorate and Inclusion Service, in collaboration with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and local and regional partnerships, will:

- provide leadership to promote successful inclusion in schools, early years, youth and adult learning settings and have regard to stakeholder views;
- develop strategies and policies that are inclusive and non-discriminatory;
- monitor educational outcomes of vulnerable groups and target resources appropriately and transparently aim to challenge and monitor outcomes, provision and the quality of leadership in order to secure the best possible quality of education for vulnerable groups;
- promote effective and coordinated transition for children and young people between phases and settings;
- celebrate and disseminate good practice that has been identified across LA.

Schools and other educational settings will:

- develop an organisational culture and ethos that is inclusive, non-discriminatory and responds to diversity;
- personalise learning so that all children and young people achieve and reach their full potential;
- celebrate and publicise the achievements of all learners;
- monitor educational outcomes for all potentially vulnerable groups work to remove barriers and build bridges for inclusion;
- work with local communities to promote inclusion and continued access to education and lifelong learning.

Partnerships

Working in partnership is a key priority for the LA. Effective collaboration will be secured through active involvement with:

- the Wellbeing Partnership.
- Multi-agency forums with Children's Services and Health;
- voluntary organisations and other key stakeholders;
- schools and other educational settings;
- children, young people, parents and carers.

Learner Voice

The LA recognises the importance that all agencies involved in the education and support of children and young people should seek their views. Their views will be sought through relevant person centred practice reviews and pupil participation forums and taken into consideration when decisions about their educational experience are made.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Inclusion Strategy will be reviewed annually. The LA will monitor progress towards inclusive practice both at school and other educational settings through:

- Reviewing performance indicators at local and national level on a regular basis;
- Analysis and effective use of relevant data at a corporate, directorate and school level;
- Education and EAS Officer visits and reports;
- Estyn inspection findings and independent reviews;
- The range of self-evaluation processes.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy

September

2023 - 2025



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy

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1. Executive Summary

The Education Directorate's agreed purpose is to deliver 'Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities' and the work of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy is fundamental in supporting our learners with identified needs. The ALN Policy

defines Blaenau Gwent Local Authority's approach, objectives and plans, within the context of current legislative change, to support schools to meet the needs of children and young people with additional learning needs to overcome barriers and challenges to enable them to reach their full potential. Blaenau Gwent has a proportionately high-level of learners experiencing ALN, therefore, this strategic approach is of high importance.

This overarching policy for ALN should be read in conjunction with the additional guidance and process information relating to Early Years ALN and Post 16 ALN.

The policy sets out the Welsh national context for meeting the needs of all learners, as outlined by the Education in Wales: Our National Mission Action Plan 2017-21 and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act. Both the plan and the Act advocate the need to work in partnership to ensure that all learners are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential and that every learner has access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning. The duties placed on Local Authorities by the Act and the new Additional Learning Needs Code (2021) are highlighted.

The local context demonstrates how Blaenau Gwent's ALN Policy is supported by the aims and objectives identified in wider local authority strategies. The holistic view that Blaenau Gwent Local Authority (LA) has taken to understand how key issues in children's early years, such as poverty and exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), can affect attainment is outlined. Within this context, the LA focus is on: improving the provision and outcomes for vulnerable groups of learners; early intervention; reducing the rates of exclusions (as these impact upon pupil attainment and outcomes); securing excellence in learner well-being; and ensuring that the LA is fully compliant with the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act 2018.

Definitions of ALN and disability are provided. The principles underpinning the ALN system are discussed and the importance of including children and young people in decisions which affect them are highlighted, as this contributes to better outcomes for them.

The key partnerships with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), local and regional services, schools and other educational settings are set out to emphasise the importance in facilitating high quality support and provision and developing the knowledge and skills of school staff to effectively support children with additional learning needs.

The roles and responsibilities of schools and early years settings (including the governing body, senior leadership team, additional learning needs coordinator and teachers) and the local authority with respect to the duty outlined in the Additional Learning Needs Act and Code to: identify whether a child or young person has additional learning needs, prepare, maintain and transfer an IDP, Partnership/Dispute resolution, Safeguarding and Monitoring, Evaluation and Review are highlighted.

2. Strategic Context

National Context

All learners must be supported to be emotionally and physically ready to learn in a safe and supportive environment. Equity requires that we ensure that the system, at settings, local and national level takes account of and responds to the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners. We will strengthen partnership working to improve the early childhood experiences of children and ensure a widespread understanding of the importance of the first thousand days in a child's life. The reformed twenty-first century curriculum will help schools focus effectively on learner well-being, equity and excellence. Each learner must be respected and challenged to achieve the best that they are capable of, including our most able learners, while being supported to overcome barriers that inhibit their learning. Children and young people who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self – and who can understand and manage their own health and emotions – are in a better position to reach their full potential in the future.

Working in partnership, Welsh Government are determined that no challenge should prevent any learner from reaching their potential, including those learners who experience several Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

(Education in Wales: Our National Mission Action Plan 2017 – 21)

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) legislation was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 12 December 2017 and became an Act on 24 January 2018 after receiving Royal Assent.

There is a clear duty on local authorities to secure education at mainstream, maintained schools, where possible:

- The power of local authorities to secure additional learning provision (ALP) at independent schools will be limited.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensure that all learners are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential. Every learner should have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

The Act places a range of duties on the local authorities in relation to additional learning needs (ALN) which can be grouped as follows;

- Specific duties in relation to individual learners (usually those in their area) such as duties to maintain Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for some learners (including learners who are dual registered and those with more complex needs).

- General duties – to support the functioning and effectiveness of the additional learning needs system – including the duty to provide information and advice and the duty to keep additional learning provision under review.
- Local authorities will be directly responsible for meeting the needs of children and young people with the most complex and/or severe needs, those who do not attend a maintained school or further education providers in Wales (including those below school age - * see Early Years ALN Guidance).
- To have due regard to the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a child or young person. (It provides guidance on actions local authorities and NHS bodies might consider taking when discharging these duties).

The new ALN Code imposes a duty on local authorities, early years settings, schools, providers and further education providers to determine whether children and young people aged 0-25 have additional learning needs (ALN), which calls for additional learning provision (ALP). Once a school or setting has decided that a child has additional learning needs (ALN), it must prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for that child. Where emerging needs are identified particularly in very young children this does not necessarily require an identification of an additional learning need but may require early intervention.

The Code sets out the general principles underpinning the additional learning needs system which are reflected in the 2018 Act.

- A rights-based approach where the views, wishes and feelings of the child or the child's parent(s)/carers are central to the planning and provision of support; and the child, child's parent are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the decision-making process.
- Early identification intervention and effective transition planning where needs are identified and provision put in place at the earliest opportunity, and transitions are planned in advance.
- Collaboration where all those involved in planning and providing support to children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) should work in the best interests of the child or young person.
- Inclusive education where children and young people are supported to participate fully in mainstream education, wherever feasible, and a whole setting approach is taken to meeting the needs of learners with additional learning needs (ALN).
- A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh over time.

In following the additional learning needs legislation and guidance, the Local Authority will also be mindful of other relevant legislation and guidance such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Social Services and Wellbeing Act and The Equalities Act.

Blaenau Gwent - Local Context

This policy is supported by the aims and objectives identified in wider local authority policies and strategies including, amongst others, the BGCBC Education Improvement Plan, Corporate Plan, Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan, BG Council Well-being Objectives, Inclusion Equity and Diversity Policy, Wellbeing Policy, Education Other than at School (EOTAS) and Elective Home Education (EHE) Policies and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) policy.

Objectives that relate to this includes those which aims to:

- Raise the standards of attainment;
- Support those who are not able to follow a traditional attainment path;
- Improve the learning environment;
- Improve skills for a digital age;
- Support learning that enables young and adult employment opportunities;
- Safeguard all children and young people in order to create a climate for learning, particularly for those most vulnerable.

Blaenau Gwent Local Authority takes a holistic view of education such as understanding issues in children's early years and aspects like poverty and how they can affect attainment. Much has been done to develop a multi-agency approach and learn and adapt approaches from relevant research, such as work on 'Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and Trauma Informed Schools (TIS).

The Local Authority is committed to the delivery of statutory education for children and young people, alongside providing support and guidance to families to provide opportunities for those children and young people to achieve within their schools and communities. It provides opportunities for adults and young people to improve their life chances by gaining qualifications and supports them into sustainable employment.

The Education Directorate will focus on:

- Improving the provision and outcomes for vulnerable groups of learners.
- Early identification and intervention.
- Reducing the rates of exclusions, therefore impacting upon pupil attainment and outcomes.
- Securing excellence in learner well-being.
- Ensuring that the Local Authority is fully compliant with the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act 2018.

Exceptionally, it is recognised that for a small minority of children and young people with severe and complex needs, alternative provision arrangements will need to be identified. Within the Local Authority (LA) there is a continuum of specialist provision that includes Pen-y-Cwm School and the River Centre 3 -16 Learning Community, and specialist resource bases attached to mainstream schools. These facilities are appropriately resourced to meet the needs of children and young people with more significant additional learning needs. The allocation of a place within such settings is decided by the Local Authority ALN Panel, and in order to promote inclusion, such settings may only be required by a learner for a period of time with a return to a mainstream setting when appropriate.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council believes that for many children and young people the best place to undertake their education is in their local mainstream school. It is recognised that schools must respond to a diverse range of pupil need and they may require help and support from other agencies, including the Local Authority. There will be a small but significant group of children and young people who may be unable to be educated in school at a given point in their life. Where a child is not electively home educated, a key priority for the Local Authority is returning these children to school as soon as they are able to do so; therefore, Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) provision is not to be considered as a long term solution. The Local Authority's EOTAS policy and guidance provide further detail regarding the approach taken by the Local Authority in this area.

(A full list of specialist provision within the Blaenau Gwent County Borough is attached – Appendix 1)

3. Definitions

Additional Learning Needs

A child/young person is said to have 'additional support needs' if they need more, or different, support to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools to children of the same age. Children might need extra help to be able to take part in school or get the most from their education.

Key questions:

- Does the child have significantly greater difficulty in learning than many others of the same age?
- Does the child have a disability (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) which prevents or hinders the child from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained school or mainstream further education providers?

In the early years, providers will focus on early intervention to support emerging needs thus supporting children where possible to have their needs met in a mainstream school alongside their peers on transition. In some instances, it may be appropriate for a child in the early years to have an Individual Development Plan. In Early Years settings (non-maintained) the IDP would be held by the Local Authority. In nearly all cases the maintained school will be responsible for deciding whether a child has

additional learning needs (ALN) and for preparing and maintaining an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Identifying whether a child may have additional learning needs (ALN) and the subsequent decision as to whether the child has additional learning needs and if so, what those additional learning needs are, needs to be based on evidence; this evidence might come from staff within the early years setting, school or further education provider, other services which have been involved with the child or young person such as health or social services, it might also come from the child, their parents or the young person themselves.

Disability

According to legislation, children and young people are considered to be disabled if they are

"blind, deaf or dumb or suffer[s] from a mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed. Section 17 (11), Children Act 1989.

*A person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Section 1(1), Disability Discrimination Act 1995."*³

4. Blaenau Gwent's Principles and Aims

The principles underpinning the additional learning needs system are to support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enable them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

Blaenau Gwent include the participation of children and young people and families in decisions which affect them, which ultimately may contribute to better outcomes for them.

This will ensure that:

- Families are supported with their child's development
- Practitioners supporting children and young people with additional learning needs having a better understanding of the child or young person, including who they are and what is important to them.
- Increased expectations of children and young people based on an understanding of the child or young person's strengths and potential.
- The development of personalised learning based on the identification of targets that build on the strengths of children and young people with additional learning needs.

- More effective planning and delivery of ALP which supports children and young people to work towards achieving positive outcomes based on their ambitions and aspirations.
- The empowerment of children and young people and their families through celebrating their achievements and abilities and focusing upon the possibilities, rather than the problems they face.

The Local Authority's objective is to achieve high quality support and provision by working in partnership with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), local and regional services and school and other educational settings. The LA is committed to supporting schools and other educational settings to raise attainment levels and achievements, celebrating progress towards realistic goals which are motivating and jointly developed with children and young people.

The Local Authority in collaboration with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) will provide a range of training and professional development programmes and information sharing forums for schools and other agencies in order to maintain and develop knowledge and skills to effectively support children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). Further details can be found in section 10.

The aim is to ensure that the Local Authority:

- Incorporates processes and practice that adheres to the stipulations set out in the ALN Code of practice and the ALNET legislation.
- Works together to deliver the best outcomes for children with additional learning needs.
- Support schools and settings to develop an inclusive and highly skilled universal provision.
- Support schools and settings to improve educational and inclusion opportunities.
- Attempts to raise achievement and attainment by removing barriers to learning.
- Ensures early identification and intervention for children and young people who have additional learning needs and establish coordinated approaches across services and settings that work.
- Increases physical and curricular access for all children and young people with additional learning needs.
- Promotes inclusive education in all educational and early years settings and colleges.
- Develops a fair and equitable system for providing resources and support to schools and settings to meet an array of additional learning needs.
- Builds on existing expertise and enhance the professional development of all staff working with children and young people with additional learning needs.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Person centred practice puts the child, child's parents or **young person** at the centre of decisions. The Local Authority, schools and settings will use a range of resources to gather

relevant information and to inform actions to support learners with an additional learning need. The Local Authority has developed person centred templates in readiness for the move to Individual Development Plans.

*NB A **young person** can give consent from the statutory education official leaving date (end of Year 11) providing that they have full capacity.

Identifying ALN and ALP Needs and Provision

Additional learning needs processes are based on the premise that:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child and the child's parent or the young person are central to the process
- the child and the child's parent or the young person should be enabled to participate as fully as possible in decisions
- appropriate information and support are provided to enable participation in decision making

Local Authority and school / settings paperwork reflects person centred approaches and information collated through person centred reviews forms the focus of decisions about additional learning needs.

Schools, Early Years Settings and LA Responsibilities

Schools and Early Years settings are responsible for operating in accordance with legislation and adhering to the ALN Code, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of their learners, while also offering a continuum of support and services to match those needs.

When it is brought to the attention of, or appears to, a maintained or non-maintained early years setting or school that one of its pupils (who does not have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or Education Health Care (EHC) Plan) may have additional learning needs, these settings must follow the process outlined below: (different arrangements apply if pupils are dual registered, looked after, detained, an English resident without an EHC plan):

- Obtain child (or parents) consent to decide about whether the child has additional learning needs.
- Prepare an Individual Development Plan when the school considers the child has additional learning needs.

Where the setting has determined that the child has additional learning needs, which calls for Additional Learning Provision (ALP) and it would not be reasonable for the setting to secure, they can refer the matter to the Local Authority responsible for the child or young person for support and consideration.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body must have regard to relevant guidance in the ALN Code when exercising functions under Part 2 of the Additional Learning Needs Act. The Governing Body, with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), will maintain Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and ensure appropriate Additional Learning Provision (ALP) for learners with Additional Learning Needs.

Senior Leadership Team (Schools)

The SLT will advise, support and challenge the systems and processes to identify and meet the needs of the learners. The SLT and Governors will work strategically to ensure the education setting is meeting its responsibilities under the additional learning needs Act, the additional learning needs Code and Act.

Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo)

The additional learning needs coordinator, at a strategic/operational level, ensures the needs of all learners with additional learning needs are met within the education setting. The additional learning needs coordinator will either form part of the Senior Leadership Team or have a clear line of communication to the SLT in accordance with the ALN Code. The additional learning needs coordinator has responsibility for deploying and supporting staff and will be involved in decisions around budgets and resources to plan appropriate provision. The additional learning needs coordinator will ensure IDPs and other associated records are maintained and kept up to date and will have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child, the child's parent or the young person.

The additional learning needs coordinator will secure relevant services that will support the learner's ALP as required and this may involve liaising with specialist external services. The additional learning needs coordinator must also prepare, and review information required to be published by the governing body pursuant to the additional learning needs Code.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for the day-to-day process of supporting every learner with additional learning needs. The class teacher will work closely with the additional learning needs coordinator to assess the child and to track child's progress in order to provide a differentiated learning programme. The class teacher will also make effective use of teaching assistants deployed to support learners.

Local Authority

Where it appears that a child or young person may have additional learning needs the LA **will** decide whether the child or young person has additional learning needs unless:

- an IDP is already being maintained for the learner;
- the LA has previously decided the issue and is satisfied that the child's needs have not changed materially since that decision and there is no new information which materially affects that decision;

- the LA is satisfied that the question of whether or not the child has additional learning needs is being decided by a Governing Body; and/or,
- the child is a young person who does not consent to the decision being made.

If the LA decides that a child or young person has additional learning needs the LA **will**:

- prepare and maintain an IDP,
- or
- prepare an IDP and direct a Governing Body to maintain it,
- or
- direct the Governing Body to prepare and maintain the plan.

Following such a direction the Governing Body **must** prepare and/or maintain the plan unless the young person does not give consent.

The circumstances in which the LA duty to maintain an IDP ceases; in the case of an IDP maintained by the LA for a child or young person, the local authority's duty to maintain the IDP ceases to apply in the following circumstances:

- the LA decides that the child or young person no longer has additional learning needs, and that decision has not been successfully challenged
- in the case of a young person, the young person no longer consents to the IDP being maintained or, in the case of a child becoming a young person, does not consent to the IDP being maintained
- the LA ceases to be responsible for the child (provided the child is not looked after) or young person - that is, if the child or young person ceases to be in the Blaenau Gwent Borough.
- in the case of a child who is looked after by Blaenau Gwent LA, the person ceases to be a looked after child (for whatever reason, including because the child has become a young person) and the LA is not responsible for the person (i.e., the child is not in its area). Where another LA is responsible for the child or young person, the duty to maintain the IDP transfers to that LA.
- in the case of a child or young person who is a registered pupil at a maintained school in Wales, the LA will direct the school to maintain the plan;
- in the case of a young person who is enrolled as a student at an FEI in Wales, the FEI agrees to a request from the LA to become responsible for

maintaining the IDP or the Welsh Ministers have determined that the FEI should maintain the plan;

- the child or young person becomes subject to a detention
- in the case of a young person, the young person attains the age of 25, in which case the duty to maintain the IDP will cease at the end of the academic year in which the person attains that age;
- in the case of a young person who is neither a registered pupil at a maintained school in Wales nor enrolled as a student at an FEI in Wales, the LA decides that it is no longer necessary to maintain the IDP to meet the young person's reasonable needs for education or training.

Transferring an IDP Responsibilities:

Where a child or young person with an IDP maintained by a school transfer to another maintained school in Wales or to an FEI in Wales, responsibility for maintaining their IDP will usually transfer at the same time. Similarly, where a child or young person with an IDP maintained by Blaenau Gwent LA moves to another local authority's area, responsibility for maintaining the IDP will normally transfer between the local authorities.

Where a child or young person with additional learning needs becomes the responsibility of Blaenau Gwent LA, that the LA will maintain the IDP if immediately before the child or young person became its responsibility, an IDP was being maintained for the child or young person by another local authority.

The LA will provide children, young people and others with information and advice about additional learning needs and the new system and ensure that it is accessible for all who need it.

Decision-Making Processes:

Currently, the LA use multi-agency panels to moderate decisions in a consistent and robust manner. Evidence based decisions could include;

- Whether a child or young person has ALN
- Whether a child or young person requires access to a specialist placement (both in/out of the Blaenau Gwent Borough).
- Equipment requests – for the child or young person to be able to access education

- To allocate Additional Learning Needs specialist transport. Edibility criteria can be found in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy.

The decisions are based on the written evidence and information received by the panel.

6. Partnership / Dispute Resolution

The LA is committed to working in partnership with parents /carers and values the contribution they can make to enable children and young people with additional learning needs achieve their potential. An Independent Advocacy Service is currently provided by SNAP Cymru.

SNAP Cymru's aim is to ensure families have access to information, advice and guidance in relation to the Additional Learning Needs of their children and young people so they can make appropriate, informed decisions. SNAP Cymru make sure that the views and wishes of children and young people are listened to and taken into consideration and that, along with parent's views, can inform and influence the development of local additional learning needs policy and practice. This service also has in place processes for avoiding and resolving disagreements (Dispute Resolution).

The LA also provides information and advice about additional learning needs and the additional learning needs system. The information and advice is provided in an impartial manner. In addition to working with parents / carers and SNAP, effective collaboration will be secured through active involvement with;

- **LA teams including:**
 - The ALN Statutory Team
 - The Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
 - The Education Welfare Service (EWS)
 - The commissioned Inclusive Practice Service (IPS)
 - Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (EYALNLo)
 - CLA Education Officers
 - Safeguarding in Education Lead
 - Youth Service
- Education Achievement Service (EAS)
- Gwent-wide Sensory and Communication Support Service (SENCom)
- Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS)
- Careers Wales
- Local Health Board and DECLO (Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer)
- Social Services

7. Safeguarding Children

Children and young people with ALN may be more vulnerable to issues such as bullying, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and neglect. All those working with children must be alert to these issues and their responsibilities in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and Safeguarding in Education guidance.

Children and young people who have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties or who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion or who have physical medical difficulties may require a risk assessment to ensure their health, safety and well-being.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The LA has a statutory duty to ensure the quality of educational provision, and as part of this to ensure that the needs of individual children / young people are met. In carrying out its responsibilities towards children with additional learning needs the LA will monitor how effectively schools and governing bodies fulfil their duties via:

- the Monitor, Challenge, Intervention and Support process undertaken by the Education Achievement Service (EAS) including scrutiny of school development plans in relation to ALN;
- Local Authority ALN QA (Additional Learning Needs Quality Assurance) Panel meetings (termly)
- Professional Discussions with all schools on an annual basis;
- Team Around the School (TAS) meetings;
- Progress against Estyn recommendations;
- Annual review of individual service areas, provision and the effective use of its resources through the evaluation of Service Improvement Plans and against service standards and national & local performance indicators as well as impact evaluation of specialist staff visits;
- Self-evaluation; and,
- use of relevant data.

Through termly analysis of data, the LA will:

- track vulnerable learners;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions for an individual child, groups of children and at school level;
- monitor trends and identify emerging areas of need;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of additional funding, both delegated and centrally held on outcomes for children with ALN; and,
- target additional funding appropriately and identify future funding and resource needs.

The LA will collate and share information in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018). The LA will keep Additional Learning Needs provision under review and will link their activity to action linked wider strategic duties including:

- The Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

9. Training

Support / Training for Schools

The LA has developed a range of training / resources which have been designed to support schools and the early years settings. Schools are also made aware of other training opportunities through signposting to relevant training opportunities. These include Communication and Intervention Service (ComIT), Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), In Reach School Support, and Sensory Communication Service (SenCom).

APPENDICES

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | Specialist Provision Details |
| Appendix 2 | The Education Directorate - Additional Learning Needs Services |
| Appendix 3 | Sources of Information |

1. Specialist Provision Guide – Special Schools and Resource Bases

| Provision | Contact Details |
|--|---|
| Pen y Cwm Special School (PMLD) | Strand Annealing Lane Ebbw Vale NP23 6AN Tel: 01495 357755 |
| The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community (SEBD) | River Centre 3-16 Learning Community Pontygof, Ebbw Vale Blaenau Gwent NP23 5AZ |
| Abertillery Learning Community - Six Bells Primary Campus | Bryngwyn Road Six Bells Abertillery NP13 2PD Tel: 01495 212678 |
| Coed y Garn Primary School | Parrot Row Blaina NP13 3AH Tel: 01495 290044 |
| Glanhowy Primary School (ASD) | Coach Bach Tredegar NP22 4RW Tel: 01495 722312 |
| Willowtown Primary School | Brynheulog Street Ebbw Vale NP23 6NJ Tel: 01495 302436 |
| Ystruth Primary School (ASD) | East Pentwyn Blaina NP13 3XG Tel: 01495 290955 |
| Abertillery Learning Community - Secondary Campus | Alma Street Abertillery NP13 1YL Tel: 01495 217121 |
| Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (ASD) | Lime Avenue Ebbw Vale NP23 6GL Tel: 01495 354690 |

2. List of Additional Learning Needs Services within Blaenau Gwent LA

| Service | Contact |
|---|--|
| The Inclusion Service – Service Manager | Julie.Sambook@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |
| ALN Team (Statutory Assessment) | ALNEnquiries@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |
| Early Years ALN Lead Officer | Sara.Thomas-Gough@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |
| Educational Psychology Service | Robert.smith@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |
| Education Safeguarding | Sarah.Dixon@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |
| Education Welfare Service | Lisa.Adams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |
| GRT (Gypsy Roma Traveller) Family Liaison Officer | Rebecca.Bevan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |
| School Admissions Officer | Eleri.griffiths@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |
| IPS Inclusive Practice Service | carmichaeljulia@penycwm.com |
| GEMS (Gwent Ethnic Minority Service) | Serina.Gifford@newport.gov.uk |
| SenCom (Sensory and Communication Support) | Roger.Thurlbeck@torfaen.gov.uk |
| SNAP Cymru website | www.snapcymru.org |
| | |
| | |

3. Sources of Information

Hyperlinks

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs>

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act>

<https://gov.wales/the-additional-learning-needs-code-and-regulations>

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#)

[Estyn Thematic Report \(2020\). Knowing Your Children - Supporting Pupils with Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)

[Welsh Government \(2020\). Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#)

[Estyn Thematic Report \(2020\). 'Effective School Support for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Pupils' – Case Studies of Good Practice](#)

[Welsh Government \(2018\). Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act](#)

[DfE \(2010\). The Equality Act](#)

[Welsh Government \(2015\). Inclusion and Pupil Support](#)

[Rights, Respect, Equality Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools \(2019\).](#)

[New Curriculum for Wales 2022](#)

www.snapcymru.org – Independent Advocacy

Early Years Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Guidance and Process

September

2023 - 2025



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Introduction

This Early Years Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Guidance and Process document outlines the Blaenau Gwent Local Authority approach to supporting Early Years settings (maintained and non-maintained) with their responsibilities under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) 2018 and the corresponding ALN Code of Practice. The approach within this guidance intends to meet the needs of our young learners with additional needs (AN) and/ or Additional Learning Needs (ALN), to overcome barriers and challenges to enable those learners to reach their full potential.

This guidance is inclusive of the Early Years 0-5 age range and the ALN Act 2018. The pathways to support learners with Additional Needs and/or with Additional Learning Needs are included as appendices within this guidance.

The authority has a designated Early Years ALN Lead Officer in post and this role works in partnership with health and social care colleagues.

Definition of Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, provides a clear definition of what constitutes an **Additional Learning Need**:

2.3. Definition of additional learning needs:

(1) A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision.

(2) A learner of compulsory school age or person over that age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she —

(a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or

(b) has a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained schools or mainstream institutions in the further education sector.

(3) A learner under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is, or would be if no additional learning provision were made, likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age.

(4) A person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been used at home.

Just because a learner or young person has a disability or a medical condition, this doesn't automatically mean that they have ALN. It is only if their disability or medical condition prevents them from accessing mainstream provision and they need ALP that they are considered to have ALN.

2.18. Those learners and young people who are considered 'more able and talented' do not have a difficulty in learning on the basis of their enhanced ability or talent. These learners and young people may require enhanced opportunities and challenge in order to reach their full potential, but this ought to be provided as part of differentiated teaching.

Definition of Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, provides a clear definition of what constitutes an **Additional Learning Provision**:

2.4. Definition of additional learning provision:

(1) “Additional learning provision” for a **person aged three or over** means educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in—

(a) mainstream maintained schools in Wales,

(b) mainstream institutions in the further education sector in Wales, or

(c) places in Wales at which nursery education is provided.

(2) “Additional learning provision” for a learner aged under three means educational provision of any kind.

(3) In subsection (1), “nursery education” means education suitable for a learner who has attained the age of three but is under compulsory school age.

2.15. ALP for those aged under three can take many forms; for instance, group work or individual support - where it is educational provision of any kind. This might include, for example, educational provision in Flying Start or specialist health, physical, communication or sensory support. This can take place in an education setting or elsewhere.

2.42. In the case of young learners, learning ought to provide the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of the world through exploratory play and experiences. Learners with ALN might require ALP in the form of exploratory play, or other ALP to enable them to access appropriate play opportunities/activities.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 states that we must promote equality of opportunity and must not discriminate against, harass or victimise learners with a disability. Maintained and non-maintained settings have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that learners with a disability are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory: setting must look ahead and anticipate what disabled learners might need and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent any disadvantage.

Definition of Disability

The Act defines that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Discrimination

The law prohibits 'direct discrimination', for example if a setting refused to offer a learner a place because the learner has a disability; and 'indirect discrimination' where policies or practices within a setting may particularly disadvantage learners who share a particular 'protected characteristic' including, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion and belief. This means that all learners and adults should be treated with equal concern and respect and that the setting complies with relevant anti-discriminatory legislation and good practice in all areas, including employment, training, and admission to settings and access to the resources, activities and facilities available. The setting is responsible for ensuring that there is an equal opportunities policy, which is consistent with current legislation and guidance and is regularly reviewed. All practitioners and volunteers understand and implement this policy and it is available to parents.

Vision

The vision of the Welsh Government is to deliver a fully inclusive education system for the learners of Wales; Blaenau Gwent Local Authority is in full support of this approach. Planning should be flexible and responsive, and professionals should be skilled and confident in identifying needs. The learner should be at the centre of everything we do, and they and their parents or carers seen as equal partners in their learning; this is known as Person Centred Practice (PCP).

Inclusion For All

The vision for Wales is to have strong and inclusive setting committed to excellence, equality and wellbeing. All learners should have their needs met enabling them to participate, benefit from, and enjoy learning and play in a diverse growing and changing world.

All learners will be welcomed and included in all settings across Blaenau Gwent. Where learners require additional or particular support to meet their needs, care will be taken by practitioners to identify and implement this both inclusively and sensitively.

Successful inclusive practice happens primarily when practitioners accept, understand, and attend to learners physical, social, cognitive, emotional and academic differences and diversity. In its simplest form, inclusive practice means that every learner, no matter what their barrier is to learning or play, has equal access to learning and opportunities to succeed.



The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018 (ALNET)

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018 (ALNET) was implemented in Wales from September 2021.

The principles underpinning the ALN system are:

- A rights-based approach
- Early identification, intervention, and prevention
- Collaboration and integration
- Inclusive education

- A bilingual system

There are 11 key changes from the previous legislation.

The core Principles are:

1. **The Introduction of the term Additional Learning Needs (ALN)** - Replacing the term 'Special Educational Needs' with 'Additional Learning Needs' (ALN) and 'Special Educational Provision' with 'Additional Learning Provision' (ALP)
 2. **0–25 age range** - Improved transition between early years education providers and schools
 3. **A unified plan** - Individual Development Plans (IDP) will replace Statements of Special Educational Needs and other non-statutory SEN plans for learners.
 4. **Increased participation of learners and young people** - The Act requires that learners' views should always be considered as part of the planning process, along with those of their parents.
 5. **High aspirations and improved outcomes** - The emphasis of IDPs will be on identifying ALP that delivers appropriate positive outcomes for all
 6. **Clear and consistent rights of appeal** - Learners and their parents will have the right to appeal to the Education Tribunal against decisions made by a Local Authority (LA) in relation to their ALN or their ALP.
 7. **Increased collaboration** - Improved collaboration and information sharing between agencies including education, health and social services, which will be essential to ensuring that needs are identified early and the right support is put in place to enable learners and young people to achieve positive outcomes.
 8. **Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution** - Where disagreements occur about an IDP or the provision it contains, the matter is considered and resolved at the most local level possible.
 9. **Clear and consistent rights of appeal** - When disagreements about an IDP cannot be resolved at a local level, parents and young people will have the right to appeal to Tribunal.
 10. **ALN Code** - The ALN code will impose mandatory requirements in respect of decisions about ALN; preparation, content, form, review and revision of IDPs and ceasing IDPs.
 11. **A bilingual system** - The Act requires that services must consider whether a learner or young person needs ALP in Welsh. If they do, this must be documented in the IDP and 'all reasonable steps' must be taken to secure the provision in Welsh.
-

The Early Years Additional Learning Needs

Lead Officer (EYALNLO)

It is the duty on Local Authorities to designate an Early Years ALN Lead Officer. This statutory role has responsibility for coordinating the Local Authority's functions under the 2018 Act.

The EYALNLO will:

- Hold the register of all AN and ALN learners in the Early Years sector in Blaenau Gwent.
- Have a role in the strategic planning for and allocation of any budget and/or the funding the authority provides for learners under compulsory school age.
- Be directly involved with the development of the authority's policy on AN and ALN provision for learners under compulsory school age.
- Develop and deliver training to settings on matters related to ALN, engaging other professionals where appropriate for specialist input.
- Maintain their own continuing professional development in the field of ALN to remain an authoritative and expert source of knowledge.

The Local Authority Duties Include:

- Deciding whether a learner has an ALN and the designation of an officer to be to be responsible for coordinating the actions required to make that decision and if an IDP is required, to be responsible for preparing it.
- Preparation of a Local Authority Individual Development Plan (IDP) in line with a statutory 12-week timeline.
- Maintaining a LA IDP and securing the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) described in it.
- Reviewing and revising an IDP.
- Reviewing the ALP arrangements.
- Making arrangements to provide advice and information and taking reasonable steps to make the arrangements known to parents and case friends of learners in its area.
- Making arrangements for the avoidance and resolution of disagreements and promoting the use of them to parents.
- Making arrangements for the provision of independent advocacy services.
- Outline any action the Local Authority will undertake in light of its consideration to ensure the learner's needs are met if ALN is not agreed at this time.

Person Centred Practice (PCP)

Person Centred Practice (PCP) means focusing on the learner and keeping them at the centre of everything we do.

A person-centred approach is all about:

- Understanding the learner's needs and wishes.
- Thinking about what is important **to** them and **for** them.
- Thinking about what **is** working and **not** working.
- Making sure that the learner gets the best support from everyone involved.

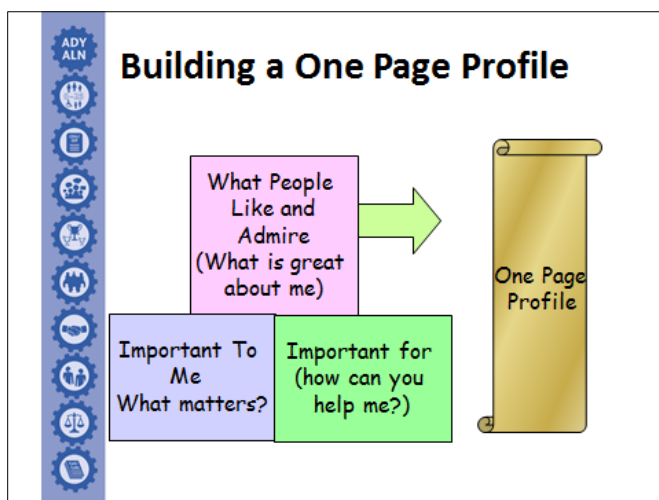
All meetings that are held in relation to learners should be person centred.

If there are concerns that a learner may have Additional Learning Needs, a PCP meeting will be arranged to gather and share information. It is an opportunity for parents and any professionals involved with supporting the learner to meet to celebrate the learner's achievements and to discuss the way forward. It will have an informal atmosphere, and everyone will contribute to develop a realistic action plan for the future of the learner.

The areas that will be covered during an entry planning meeting are:

- Relevant background information
- What is unique about your learner?
- What is important to your learner?
- What is important for your learner?
- Parents / carers views
- Learner's view
- What currently works well?
- What is not working so well?
- Details of agreed next steps.

One Page Profile



A one-page profile is a simple summary of what is important to a learner or young person and how they want to be supported.

This information will be gathered during the PCP review meeting with learners with an Additional Need (AN) or with identified learners with an Additional Learning Need (ALN).

All About Me

Blaenau Gwent

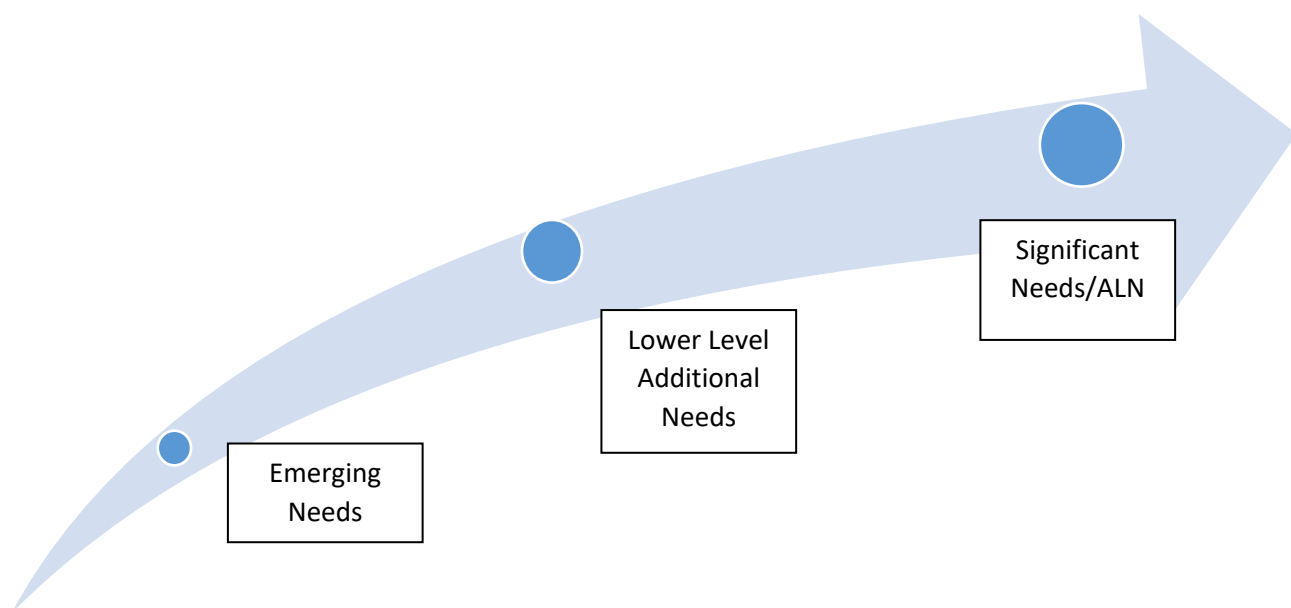
| | | | |
|---|------------|--------------------------|--|
| Name: | | D.O.B: | |
| Entry date: | Photo here | | |
| Exit date: | | | |
| What is great about me? | | Who are in my family? | |
| What and who is important to me? | | What is unique about me? | |
| What do I need a little help with? How can you help me? | | | |
| Parent/Guardian Signature: | | Date: | |

The information that is included on a One Page Profile / All About Me is as follows:

- **What is great about me?** – What do people like and admire about the learner? This can include personal attributes such as ‘I am always happy’.
- **What and who is important to me?** – What and who really matters to the learner from their perspective? What is needed for them to have a good day?
- **What is unique about me?** – Is there anything specific people might need to know about the learner? This might include allergies or additional needs.
- **What do I need a little help with? How can you help me?** – What is needed to keep the learner safe, healthy and to help them develop?

Graduated Response

Early intervention is key in Early Years and we apply a graduated response. Support and strategies are put in place when learners are exhibiting emerging or lower level needs. This may prevent them from developing significant needs and reduce the need for identification of ALN later on by the Local Authority.

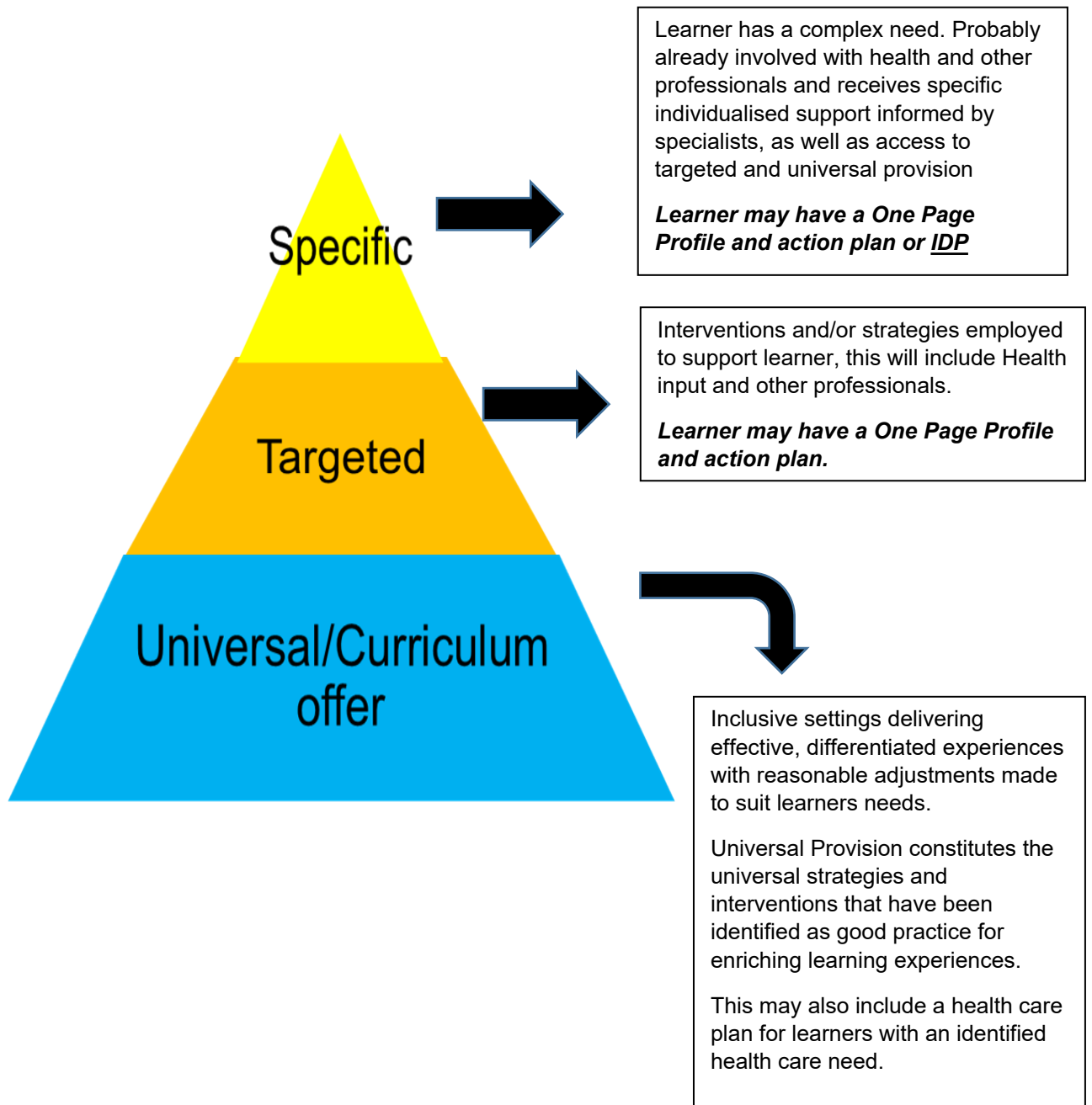


Graduated Response - Levels of Support

Provision for a learner with Additional Learning needs will differ depending on the individual needs of the learner but should fall into one of three categories;

1. **Universal Offer** - Learning environments are tailored to meet the needs of all learners and young people, so they are able to make progress in learning and wellbeing.
2. **Targeted Support** - Professionals working with the learner or young person have appropriate knowledge and skills to monitor the specific needs. They can act accordingly if additional help is needed.
3. **Specific Support** - The learner or young person has a complex need which means that specialised/specific individualised provision is required in order to meet the learner's needs and enable them to make progress.

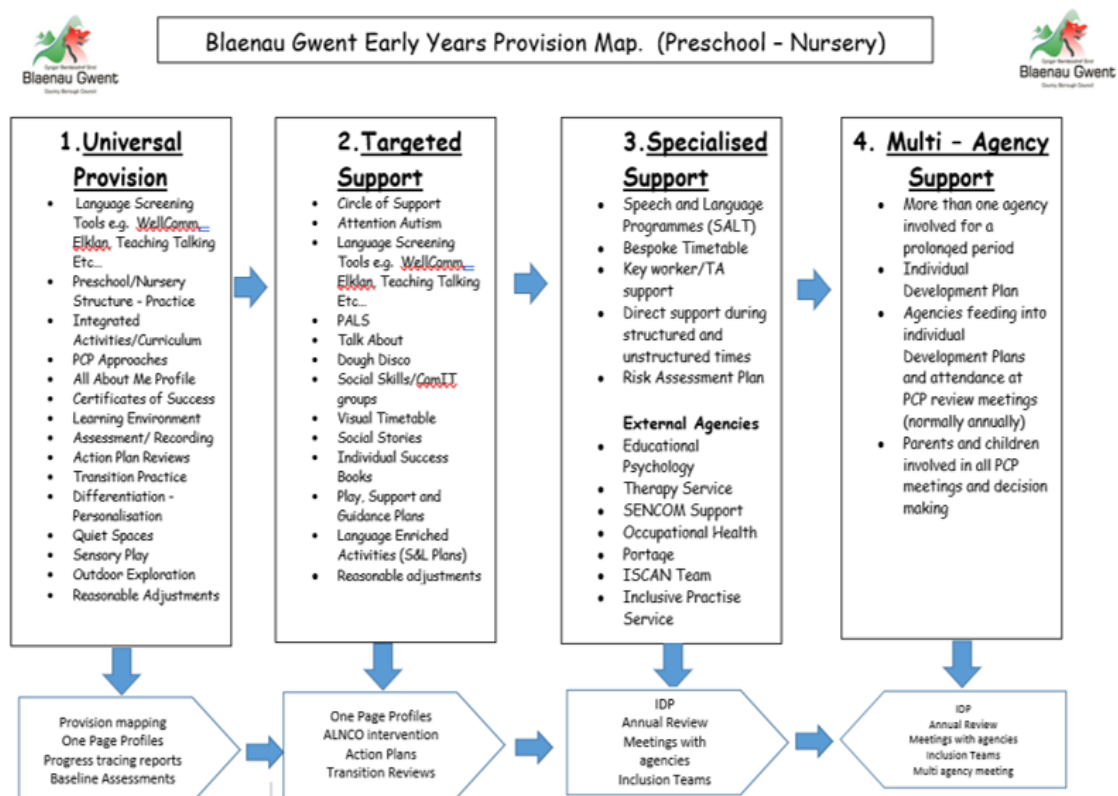
As the triangle suggests, the majority of learners will only need to access the universal offer, some will be receiving targeted support and a relatively small number of learners will require specific support (ALP).



Early Years Provision Map

Below is the Early Years Provision Map for Blaenau Gwent. This map has been put together with a comprehensive overview of what is available in our authority. This is a guide to what provision maps could look like.

An individual setting or school provision map will capture what they are offering and unique to their setting or school.



Early Years Funding & Local Authority Early Years Panels

There are two Early Years funding panels in Blaenau Gwent.

1. **Early Years Additional Needs Support Panel (EY AN Panel). This panel is co-ordinated by social care.**

The purpose of this panel is to...

- To coordinate the identification of early years/pre-school learners with Additional Needs (AN) and to ensure learners are supported to have high quality early years support.
- To identify needs early and offer support and advice as appropriate to ensure needs are met, potentially mitigating the need for ongoing support/more intervention at a later age.
- To ensure the early years workforce are supported and their training needs are identified and provided for.

2. **Early Years Additional Learning Needs Panel – (EY ALN Panel). This panel is co-ordinated by ALN Education.**

- The purpose of the Early Years Additional Learning Needs Panel is to support learners in regard to their identified additional needs and is chaired by the EY ALNLO.

Additional funding to settings and/or schools is allocated to support AN/ALN where this has been identified via either of the above panels and will require evidence.

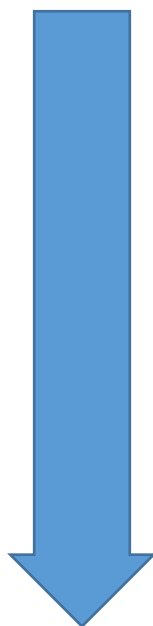


Notification of an ALN

When a notification is made to the local authority regarding a learner who **may** have ALN the following process is initiated:

1. If the learner is **under statutory school age** (under 5 years old) and **NOT** attending a maintained school, the co-ordination of the statutory process will be the responsibility of Blaenau Gwent's Early Years Additional Learning Needs Officer.
2. If the learner is over three years old and **is** attending a maintained school setting, the co-ordination of the IDP process will be the responsibility of the school, as this will be a school based IDP.
3. If the learner is **over statutory school age** (The term after their 5th birthday), the co-ordination of the IDP process will be the responsibility of the school or the Local authority's ALN statutory team.



The pathway below is a step by step guide of the twelve week statutory process. This pathway is a clear timeline that will follow from a notification to the local authority of a learner who may have ALN.




Statutory Process for an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Early Years.

Reference:




1. EYALNLO - Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer.
2. Local Authority - LA

| Timescale | Event /Action taken | Actioned by? | Correspondence to Learners/parents/others Steps to be taken |
|---|--|---|---|
| 12 week statutory process begins | Local authority is notified that a learner is considered to have significant Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and may need an IDP with an Additional Learning Provision (ALP) | ISCAN partners Health Professionals Parents | |
| Day 1 To Day 5 | Day 1 - LA acknowledges notification and requests consent from parents | LA ALN panel EYALNLO | LA to send the following correspondence to parents. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consent Letter 2. PCP guide for parents 3. ALN Act – Information for parents. |
| Day 6 | Has consent been received from parents? NO – End process YES  |  | If no consent is received, LA ALN panel will send a letter to end process. |
| Day 6 to Day 10 | YES, consent received. Day 6 to Day 10 EYALNLO will ensure that a graduated response has been implemented by all professionals. | EY Setting LA EYALNLO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One page Profile (If applicable) • Barriers to Learning Matrix – (If applicable) • Targets/strategies must be in place and progress |

| | | | |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>evaluated for at least 2 terms / 12 weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools will follow the Graduated Response Workflow. |
| Day 10. | Day 10 – Arrange a PCP meeting | School LA EYALNLO | <p>Letters to be sent to all professionals and parents.</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Parent Carer.</p> <p>Appendix 2a Parent Carer Report Dec 21</p> <p>Appendix 4 Professional Guidance Dec 21.</p> <p>Appendix 4a Professional Report Dec 21</p> <p>If professionals are not able to attend, an up to date report is required.</p> |
| Day 19 | Day 19 - PCP meeting is held to gather information | School LA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCP meeting held with all professionals and parents. All information will be gathered and all reports to be considered to be submitted to ALN panel for a consideration of an IDP. |
| Day 20 | Submission to LA for consideration of IDP to panel | <p>School to email LA ALN Panel with the following documents</p> <p>or LA EYALNLO to email all paperwork to LA panel.</p> | <p>Consideration of an IDP document to be completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCP Review document One page profile Target plan Risk assessment (if applicable) EP reports Agency reports Parents written report Views of the learner This will be reviewed at next available LA panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA have 6 weeks to request professional reports |

| | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------|---|
| <p>Local Authority now has 6 weeks – 30 days to draft and finalise an IDP</p> | <p>LA ALN Panel – From paperwork received, panel agrees that learner does not have ALN.</p> <p>Learner will continue to be monitored through targets set through universal and targeted provisions, in the school of placement.</p> | <p>LA ALN Panel</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written confirmation to be sent to parents from the Local authority regarding the decision given, with right of appeal/dispute resolution |
| | <p>LA ALN Panel agrees that learner does have ALN – A draft IDP is to be written</p> | <p>LA ALN Panel</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA ALN panel to inform parents / settings / health that an IDP has been agreed and a draft IDP is in the process. |
| | <p>EYALNLO drafts IDP – LA Panel to agree the written draft IDP</p> | <p>LA ALN Panel EYALNLO</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaenau Gwent ALN team to send out agreed draft IDP to parents and school. |
| | <p>Do parents agree of draft IDP – Yes</p> <p>Parents do not agree </p> | <p>LA EYALNLO</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If parents agree - LA will issue final IDP • Parents and EYALNLO to discuss changes and make amendments. |
| | <p>LA issue final IDP. Review in 12 months</p> | <p>LA ALN Panel EYALNLO</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and school to receive final IDP. |

Appendices

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| Appendix 1 | Pathway 0 – 7 Years |  Pathway 0-7 Years |
| Appendix 2 | Pathway – Early Years Additional Needs Panel 0-3 Years |  Pathway into Early Years Additional Neec |
| Appendix 3 | Pathway - Early Years learner arriving in a maintained setting from Preschool |  Pathway - learners arriving in a maintaine |
| Appendix 4 | Pathway - Early Years learner arriving in a maintained setting without Preschool Experience |  Pathway learners arriving in a maintaine |

For any queries regarding this guidance and/or the processes please
email: ALNEnquiries@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION POLICY

Education Inclusion Service

**ELECTIVE HOME
EDUCATION POLICY**

**Revised September
2023**



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Elective Home Education Policy

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Introduction

Elective home education is when parents decide to provide home-based education for their child rather than sending them to school. Home educated children are therefore not registered at mainstream or special schools.

The decision to home educate should never be taken lightly. Before parents decide to make such a commitment, they need to talk and listen to their child and also consider the time and energy they will need to invest. Parents should be aware that if they choose to home educate, they assume financial responsibility for their child's education, including the costs for equipment, visits, books and tutors, as well as the cost of any public examinations.

Parents should also be aware that children must continue to receive education until the end of compulsory education (i.e. the last Friday in June in the academic year the child reaches the age of 16).

It would not be in the child or parents' best interests if the parents chose to educate their child at home as a response to a disagreement with a teacher or the school. It would therefore be advisable to try and talk through any issues with the Head teacher or Governors if this is the case.

On no account should parents be encouraged to remove their child from the school register to avoid exclusion or prosecution for failing to ensure that their child has attended school or to improve school performance results.

Another aspect to take into consideration is the social side of school life, such as contact with other children, joint activities and the stimulus of seeing the work of other children. Parents will need to plan how the child's social development can be maintained or extended.

The rights of the child

Article 28 of the (UNCRC) declares the right of all children to receive an education.

Article 29 of the UNCRC declares that education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full and should encourage children to respect their own and other cultures.

Article 12 of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides a right for children to express their views and for due weight to be given to those views, in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. This does not, however, give children authority over parents. Local authorities, through their services supporting the participation of children, should consider how the individual and collective voices of home educated children can be heard.

Article 3 of the UNCRC requires all adults to think about how their decisions will affect children and to do what is best for the child.

The rights and responsibilities of the parents

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the duty placed on parents to secure a full time, suitable and efficient education for children of compulsory school age, either by sending the child to school or through other means.

Parents, therefore, have a right to educate their child at home providing they fulfil their duty to ensure that their child, of compulsory school age, receives full-time education that is efficient and suitable for their age, aptitude, ability, and any special educational needs they may have.

Education can be said to be **efficient** if it achieves what it sets out to achieve.

A **suitable** education is defined as one which prepares a child for life in modern civilised society and enables him or her to achieve his or her potential. It is suitable if it equips a child for life within the community to which he or she belongs, as long as this does not reduce the child's chance to adopt some other form of life in later years, should he or she wish to do so. This is important where a family have religious or cultural beliefs.

In *Harrison & Harrison V Stevenson*, the judge defined the outcomes of a suitable education as:

‘In our judgement education’ demands at least an element of supervision; merely to allow a child to follow its own devices in the hope that it will acquire knowledge by imitation, experiment or experience in its own way and in its own good time is neither systematic nor instructive ... such a course would not be education but, at best, child-minding. We should not, in the ordinary case, regard a system of education as

suitable for any child capable of learning such skills, if it failed to instil in the child the ability to read, write or cope with arithmetical problems, leaving it to time, chance, and the inclination of the child to determine whether – if ever – the child eventually achieved even elementary proficiency in those skills’.

(Harrison & Harrison v Stevenson [1982] (QB (DC) 729/81)

Parents do not need to ask the permission of the Local Authority (LA) to begin home educating. If their child has been attending school, the parents will however need to notify the governing body of the school, normally through the Head teacher, of their intention to home educate. This must be in writing. It is then the responsibility of the school to notify the LA within ten days.

The name of the pupil is only removed from the school register when the school has received the written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education other than at school.

If a child has not attended school then the parent should inform the LA directly although there is no legal requirement for them to do so.

Parents seeking to home educate a child registered at a special school must obtain the consent of the LA to withdraw their child from the school. These requests will be discussed at ALN panel to determine if the parent can provide evidence to demonstrate that they are able to meet the requirement of the statement of SEN or the Local Authority IDP.

The responsibilities of the Local Authority (LA)

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, places a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age who are not registered learners at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities must have regard to this statutory guidance in exercising their functions.

The LA needs to be satisfied that a child is receiving an effective and suitable education at home, appropriate for the child’s age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs. The evidence provided by parents should demonstrate that the education being provided is suitable and not simply a statement of intent.

Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996 states: ‘If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing to the parent requiring them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education.’

Section 437(1) goes on to state that if the parent fails to satisfy the LA within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving suitable education, the LA should serve a school attendance order requiring the parent to register the child in the school named in the order.

For a local authority to satisfy itself of the suitability of education provided by the parents, the local authority should see and communicate with the child. In the absence of seeing and communicating with the child, it will be questionable whether the local authority can reasonably assess suitability of education and to know if evidence of the suitability of the education provided by the parent relates to that child. For example, whether the evidence provided can reasonably be said to have been produced by that child or be about that child. Seeing and communicating with the child will provide an opportunity for the local authority to better understand how the child learns and what areas of learning they are interested in. Parents and Gillick competent children are not, however, obliged to meet with the local authority and are free to decline a meeting if they so wish.

While parents are under no legal obligation to meet with a representative of the LA or engage in discussing their child’s education, Lord Donaldson has stated that:

‘...it would be sensible for them to do so. If parents give no information or adopt the course.... of merely stating that they are discharging their duty without giving any details of how they are doing so, the LA will have to consider and decide whether it ‘appears’ to it that the parents are in breach of Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996’

Legal precedent has established that local authorities can make informal enquiries of parents for details of the educational provision for their child. *Goodred v Portsmouth City Council* states “There is nothing remotely problematic in the defendant approaching a home-schooling parent...to request evidence that, if satisfactory, would enable the defendant to discharge its duty under section 436A without the need to serve a [notice to satisfy under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996] R. (on the application of *Goodred*) v Portsmouth City Council¹⁶ November 2021

Remember: If it appears that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, the LA is able to serve a notice in writing requiring the parent to provide evidence that the child is receiving a suitable education. If no response is received within 15 days the LA is able to issue a school attendance order (SAO) to ensure a suitable education.

Under section 447, Education Act 1996, if a parent fails to comply with an SAO a local authority must consider whether it would be appropriate (instead of or as well as instituting proceedings for the offence of failing to comply) to apply for an education supervision order (ESO) in respect of the child. Failure to comply with an SAO could lead to either a criminal conviction or the imposition of an ESO or both.

Initial contact

Once the LA has received notification of a parent's intent to withdraw their child and home educate, the LA will apply the following procedure within 10 working days:

- i. Update our records accordingly.
- ii. Contact the parent/carers to request an initial meeting and information about the education they are providing or are intending to provide and request they complete the Elective Home Education Parent Information form.
- iii. Contact the school to confirm that the child's name has been removed from the school's register and ensure the school completes the Elective Home Education School Information form.
- iv. Contact other agencies to seek clarification of any involvement with the child:
 - Education Welfare Service
 - Additional Learning Needs Team
 - Educational Psychology Service
 - Traveller Education Service
 - Children's Social Services
 - Youth Offending Team

Any information provided will be gathered by the LA Officer (LAO) who will contact the family and request an initial meeting within four weeks.

Initial meeting

At the initial meeting, parents are able to discuss any concerns or queries they may have. The LAO will explain that parents who home educate assume financial responsibility for their child's education, including the cost of public examinations, and that their child must continue to receive suitable education until the end of compulsory education. Also at the initial meeting, parents and the LAO should consider and agree what future contact there will be and the contact details of the LAO should be made available.

It is important that the child attends this meeting and any subsequent meeting so that they have an opportunity to provide their views. Seeing the child to discuss their education provision and access to resources accords with a number of articles in the UNCRC such as a child's right to an education and to fulfil their potential, including their rights to express their views and to receive appropriate information in order to make informed choices, to support and provision, to play and leisure activities and to be kept safe.

Following the meeting, a report will be prepared within 10 days by the LAO setting out any recommendations that were discussed and agreed, and the reasons for them, and a copy will be sent to the parents.

Alternatives to a meeting

Parents may wish to decline a meeting in their home or alternative venue. Where this is the case, it should be possible to discuss and evaluate the parents' educational provision by alternative means. Parents might prefer:

- to write a report;
- provide samples of work;
- have the provision endorsed by a recognised third party;
- provide evidence in some other appropriate form of the education being provided.

Where parents decline a meeting, the LA should provide the same information that would be communicated at a meeting in letter form.

Therefore, when the LA is made aware of a child's withdrawal from school, the LA will:

- acknowledge the withdrawal in writing;
- invite the parents to meet with an LAO, as a named contact within the LA, to discuss the suitability of their proposed education programme;
- provide information if requested;
- consider and decide whether it appears that a child is not receiving a suitable education if the parents do not engage with the LA.

Suitability

Where the LA is not satisfied that a child is receiving a suitable education, the LA will:

- contact the parents in writing, explaining the concerns and reasons for concluding that provision is unsuitable, and serving the parents a notice requiring them to provide evidence of suitable education within 15 days;
- if there is no reply or an unsatisfactory response, a further letter will be delivered. The letter will include a notice stating which school the LA will name in a school attendance order and giving the parents, within 7 days, the opportunity to choose an alternative school or provide evidence of a suitable education.
- If there is no response, a School Attendance Order naming the school where the child should be registered will be issued.

Remember: If a parent on whom a School Attendance Order has been served fails to comply with the requirements of the Order they are guilty of an offence under Section 443 of the Education Act 1996.

If at any stage the parents provide information which satisfies the LA that a suitable education is being provided then no further action would be taken.

To achieve the aim of ensuring that every compulsory school age pupil who is home educated receives an effective and suitable education we know that the LA and parents will need to work together and communicate on a reasonably regular basis. You may need some help and support and we need to give you the opportunity to present evidence of the learning experience which a child is receiving.

Ongoing monitoring

The LA will contact parents on an annual basis, or more frequently if needed. Contact will normally be made in writing with a request for a meeting or an updated report.

Where a meeting or updated report leads to concerns about the efficiency or suitability of the education being provided for the child, further clarification may be needed. If, after further investigation the LAO is not satisfied that the child is receiving a suitable education then a copy of the written report will be forwarded to the Education Welfare Service to apply for a School Attendance Order.

What about flexi-schooling?

'Flexi-schooling' is an arrangement between the parents and the school where the child is registered. The child would attend school on a part time basis and be home educated for the rest of the time.

Instances where flexi-schooling would be beneficial to the child can include (but are not limited to):

- where the child is transitioning back into school
- where the child is transitioning into school for the first time
- the child has an autism spectrum condition (ASC) and finds school challenging
- the child is suffering from school phobia or anxiety
- the child has an illness.

This arrangement is only possible provided that:

- the school has given permission, authorised by its Governing Body;

- Evidence for the arrangements for education can be provided and are judged suitable.

It is important to note that a school does not have to agree to this arrangement or give reasons for not agreeing to such a request from parents.

Informing other Services

Schools have a very important role in monitoring the wellbeing of their pupils and sharing concerns with, or making referrals to, Social Services when a child is believed to be 'in need', or when abuse or neglect is suspected. When schools are no longer able to fulfil this responsibility because a child is receiving their education at home, the LA will inform Social Services of this if the LA has wellbeing concerns for the child or if the parent gives consent for information to be shared.

If there are child protection concerns when a child is removed from roll the school will follow existing child protection procedures. If, following a visit, the child is not seen and has not previously been seen, or there is no reasonable explanation for the child's absence, the LAO will assess whether to alert Children's Social Services.

If the Local Authority is notified that there have previously been child protection concerns regarding the child but there is no immediate cause for concern this should be communicated to Children's Social Services to check whether they have been involved and if so to enable them to update their file.

Where there are concerns about a vulnerable child or young person including bullying, the impact of anti-social behaviour, the impact of domestic violence, the impact of drugs and alcohol in the parental household or child protection concerns then the LAO should consider whether a common assessment application would assist the child/young person or whether a referral is required to Children's Social Services.

Returning to mainstream school

Following a period of elective home education, if a parent wishes their child to return to school then an application should be made through the Schools Admission Team. It should be noted that

re-admission is not automatic and is dependent on places being available in the specific year group.

Children with additional learning needs

Where it is brought to its attention or otherwise appears to a local authority that a home educated child (other than a looked after child) for whom it is responsible, may have ALN, the local authority must decide whether or not the child has ALN and, if it decides that the child has ALN, prepare and maintain an IDP and secure the additional learning provision (ALP) described in that plan (section 18.21 of the Additional Learning Needs Code (ALN Code)⁹).

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Current legislation allows for any parent of any child to educate their child at home if they wish to do so, regardless of any identified special educational needs. The only legal right the LA has to refuse a request from parents is if the child has a Statement of SEN or an IDP and is attending a special school.

When a child has a Statement of SEN or an IDP which names a special school in Part 4 of the Statement/Plan, parents must obtain the consent of the LA before removing their child to home educate, and the child's name may not be removed from the school register until the agreement of the LA has been given.

It remains the LA's duty to ensure that the education provided by the parents for their child with a Statement of SEN/IDP is efficient, suitable and that the child's additional learning needs are being met.

The LA will therefore continue to hold an Annual Review of the Statement of SEN/IDP and this will include assessing whether the Statement/IDP remains appropriate.

The Annual Review meeting should take place in the most appropriate location, usually either the home or LA offices and should normally be chaired by the LA.

If parents wish their child with a Statement of SEN/IDP to return to school, then an Annual Review should be held and consideration of school roll should be given. The LAO should then liaise with the ALN Team regarding placement.

Suggested characteristics of a suitable and efficient education

A suitable education would include provision in numeracy, literacy, and language skills, suitable to the child's age, ability, and aptitude and to any SEN/ALN the child may have. Suitable education is not simply a matter of academic learning but should also involve socialisation. These are essential in preparing the child to participate and function in society.

Literacy and language skills should correspond with the child's general ability.

(Including any SEN/ALN they have) and enable the child to:

- Acquire listening and speaking skills
- Acquire reading skills which include vocabulary and comprehension
- Acquire writing skills which include grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Numeracy skills should correspond with the child's general ability (including any SEN/ALN they have) and reflect the stage of development the child is at.

In their consideration of parents' provision of home education, local authorities should reasonably expect it to include the following features:

- consistent involvement of parents or other significant carers
- respond to the needs and the best interest of the child, taking into account areas of learning that interest the child, and should enhance the child's potential
- ensure the child has opportunities to engage in a reasonably broad range of learning experiences
- provide opportunities to develop personal and social skills to help prepare them for later life and become engaged citizens
- ensure the child has opportunities to develop basic skills (taking into consideration any SEN/ALN they have)
- presence of a philosophy or ethos with parents showing commitment, enthusiasm, and recognition of the child's needs, attitudes, and aspirations
- opportunities for the child to be stimulated by their learning experiences

- involvement in a broad spectrum of learning opportunities and activities appropriate to the child's stage of development
- access to appropriate resources and materials
- the opportunity to develop digital literacy

EHE Referral Form

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION REFERRAL FORM (School de-registration form)

Please do not remove pupil from school role until the LA has undertaken further investigations.

Pupil Details

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| School | |
| Year group | |
| ALN | |
| FSM | |
| Exclusions | |
| PSP | |
| Attendance for 2021 / 22 | |
| Attendance for 2022 / 23 | |

Parent / Carer Details

| | |
|--|--|
| Name | |
| Address (Including postcode) | |
| Email address | |
| Telephone number | |
| Relationship to pupil | |

Reason for Elective Home Education¹

| | School | Parent / guardian | Child or Young Person |
|---|--------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Attendance / prosecution | | | |
| School cannot provide appropriate language provision | | | |
| School / parent / child relationship breakdown | | | |
| School cannot provide appropriate SEN / ALN provision | | | |
| Awaiting a place in school of choice | | | |
| Preferred school place refused | | | |
| Religious beliefs | | | |
| Lifestyle / ideology / philosophy | | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Anxious / phobic | | | |
| Racism | | | |
| Homophobia | | | |
| Bullying | | | |
| Child medical need | | | |
| Parent / carer medical need | | | |
| COVID-19 | | | |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

3. Please give details of any interventions, referrals or work carried out with pupil, parents', or guardian prior to the notification of decision to educate at home

4. Please give details of discussion with the parents / carers prior to the notification of the decision to educate at home

5. Please give details of the involvement of the Education Welfare Service

6. Please provide names and contact details of any outside agencies currently involved with the pupil. For example, Social Worker, CAHMS

7. Has the school or any other service spoken to the pupil regarding parent / guardian decision to home educate? Please record details

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Please attach a copy of the written notification from the parents / carers informing you of the decision to home educate (if been issued) and email to educationwelfareservice@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

The EWS will contact you with a decision within 5 working days of receipt of this referral form; please do not remove the pupil off role in line with WG guidance.

Headteacher Signature

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Name | |
| Signature | |
| Date | |
| | |

Annex 2a: Initial EHE letter

Name

Address

Date

Dear [name of parent or guardian]

Home education of [name of child/ren]

My name is **[insert name]** and I am writing to introduce myself as the home education contact in **[name of local authority]**.

Local authorities have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to **make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children in their area who**

are of compulsory school age but who are not a registered pupil at a school and who are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

I would like to arrange to meet you and **[name of child/ren]** on **[date]** at **[time]** to discuss the education you are providing and to explore whether the local authority can support you in providing that education, such as providing details about online resources and details about home educating groups in your area. I could arrange for the visit to take place at your home or, if you would prefer, at [LA venue] or another venue of your choice.

If the date/time is inconvenient, please contact me to arrange a mutually convenient time/date/place to meet.

It would be useful if you and **[name of child/ren]** could complete the attached forms **[Annex 3, Annex 4a/4b]** before our meeting as this will help inform the discussion.

If you have any questions before our meeting, please contact me on the email address/telephone number **[below]**.

I look forward to meeting you and **[name of child/ren]**

Yours sincerely

Home education officer

Email:

Telephone:

Annex 2b: Follow up letter to initial EHE letter

Name

Address

Date

Dear [name of parent or guardian],

Home education of [name of child/ren]

Further to my letter of **(Insert date)** in which I requested a meeting with you to discuss the education you are providing and to explore whether the local authority can support you in providing that education. The local authority must make arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school but are not a

registered pupil at a school and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school. This meeting is an opportunity for you to provide information about the education you are providing for your child(ren).

You have not responded to my letter or

We arranged to meet and discuss your child's education on (Insert date) but you **were not available / you informed me by text / email to say that you would not be available.**

I am now proposing that we meet on _____ at _____am/pm at [LA venue]. If this time and date is not convenient or if you would rather meet at an alternative place, please contact me by email address/ telephone number below.

It would be useful if you and **[name of child/ren]** could complete the attached forms **[Annex 3, Annex 4a/4b]** before our meeting as this will help inform the discussion.

I look forward to meeting you and **[name of child/ren]**

If you have any questions before our meeting, please contact me using the email address/telephone number **[below]**.

Yours sincerely,

Home Education Officer

Email:

Telephone:

Annex 2c: Second follow up letter to initial EHE letter

Name

Address

Date

Dear [name of parent or guardian]

Home education of [name of child/ren]

With reference to my letters of (**Insert date**) and (**Insert date**) in which I requested with you to discuss the education you are providing as you are now home educating your child. You have not responded to either my initial letter or my follow up letter **or**

We arranged to meet on (Insert date) and then rearranged to meet on (insert date) but you **were not available / you informed me by text / email to say that you would not be available.**

The local authority has a legal obligation to ensure that all learners are receiving a suitable and full-time education, which is why we request a meeting and information about the education you are providing.

To enable the local authority to fulfil its statutory duties, I am proposing that I now meet with you at your home/ County Hall or at a neutral place on _____ at _____ am/pm.

If this time and date is not convenient or if you would rather meet at an alternative place, please contact me using the email address/ telephone number below.

Without information about the education you are providing, the local authority may need to seek a School Attendance Order under the 1996 Education Act.

Yours sincerely,

Home Education Officer

Email:

Telephone:

Annex 3: Template for parents

The information you provide in this form will help us understand the reasons why you chose to educate [name of child here] and the type of education you have decided is suitable for [name of child here]. If you are unsure about how to answer any of the questions, please call [NAME] on [number] or via email [address]. **If you are home educating more than one child, a separate template will be required for each child.**

| | |
|---|--|
| Your name | |
| How would you like to be contacted? Please provide details | |
| Name of your child | |
| Their date of birth | |
| Gender of learner | |
| Did [name of child] previously attend a school(s)? If yes, please provide the name(s) of the school and the location(s) of the school(s) | |
| Why did you decide to home educate [name of child]? | |
| How long have you been home educating [name of child]? | |
| What is [name of child] learning about or taking part in? Please list these– this could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities such as being involved in sports, music or other activities • learning about things of interest • areas of learning experience being covered | |
| Do you feel you need support in providing education for [name of child]? If yes, what type of help do you feel you need? | |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Additional Learning Needs</p> <p><i>Do you think your child has an additional learning need?</i></p> <p><i>If yes, why do you think this?</i></p> <p><i>Have you contacted [name of local authority] to request the local authority decides if [name of child] has an additional learning need?</i></p> | |
| <p><i>Has the local authority decided your child has additional learning needs?</i></p> | <p>(Yes/No)</p> |
| <p><i>Does your child have a local authority maintained individual development plan (IDP)?</i></p> | <p>(Yes/No)</p> |
| <p><i>If yes, what additional learning provision (ALP) is the local authority providing?</i></p> | |
| <p><i>Is the local authority preparing an IDP for your child?</i></p> | <p>(Yes/No)</p> |
| <p>How well do you think [name] is progressing with their learning?</p> <p><i>What do you think [name] is doing well?</i></p> <p><i>What are they able to do now that you feel they couldn't do before they were home educated?</i></p> | |
| <p>What are your child's hopes for the future?</p> <p><i>What are they aiming to learn next?</i></p> <p><i>Have they any areas of interest that they want to know more about?</i></p> <p><i>Do they know what they would like to do when they are older?</i></p> | |
| <p>Where does your child receive their education? Please tick all that apply</p> <p>At home</p> <p>Home educator groups</p> <p>In libraries</p> <p>Educational trips e.g., museums, castles, theatre etc.</p> <p>Other</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>Who provides the education/sessions for your child? Please tick all that apply</p> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Parent/Carer Other family member(s) Friends of the family Home education groups Privately employed tutor Online tutor(s) Other If you employ a tutor, have you enquired whether they have a Disclosure and Barring Service (D.B.S.) check? | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> (Yes/No) |
| Experiences <i>Please outline the opportunities for your child to:</i> <i>Learn from real-life experiences</i> <i>Discuss personal, social, wellbeing and health issues</i> <i>Experience a broad range of activities such as music and art</i> | |
| Physical activity and play <i>How do you ensure that your child has opportunities to participate in physical activity and play?</i> | |
| Meeting with other children <i>Please outline the opportunities for your child to socialise with other children and make friends.</i> | |
| Resources <i>Please list some of the resources or facilities you use to facilitate your child's learning e.g., online resources, educational workbooks, libraries or community facilities.</i> <i>Are there any additional resources you feel could benefit your child?</i> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| | |
| Links with other organisations <i>Does your child belong to any clubs, associations or organisations?</i> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Access to local services <i>Are you aware of the local services available to home educated children? e.g., health nurse, careers advice, ALN advice, youth support service etc</i> | Yes/No |
| <i>Would you like further information about any of these services?</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Advice from local Health Nurse, access to health initiatives e.g., period dignity grant</i>• <i>Careers advice</i>• <i>ALN Advice</i>• <i>Youth Support Services</i>• <i>Counselling</i> | Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No |
| <i>Would you like us to share your details with any of these services if you would like more information?</i> | Yes/No |

This information, together with other evidence, such as any planning, records of visits/activities, examples of your child’s work will enable the local authority to determine whether your child is receiving a full-time efficient and suitable education. Once we have taken into consideration the evidence you have provided, we will be contacting you:

- (i) *If we have concerns about the suitability of education provided for your child or*
- (ii) *To arrange the next year’s discussion where you will again be required to provide evidence of how you are delivering a suitable and efficient education in line with your child’s age and ability and how you are providing for any ALN that they may have.*

Annex 4(a): Template to secure child's view (aged 5-10)

| | |
|--|--|
| Name: | |
| What do you enjoy learning about? <i>What do you enjoy doing?</i> <i>What kind of things are you interested in?</i> <i>Are you enjoying home learning?</i> <i>What do you enjoy about home learning?</i> <i>Are you learning well at home?</i> <i>What are you good at?</i> <i>What do you find difficult?</i> <i>Is there something you like to do but haven't been able to?</i> | |
| What are you proud of? <i>What work are proud of?</i> <i>Are there any things you have enjoyed learning that you would like to show me?</i> <i>Do you belong to any clubs?</i> <i>Do you have any talents? e.g., are you able to play any musical instruments?</i> | |
| What is the favourite thing you have learned recently? <i>Have you been learning about things that interest you?</i> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>How have you been learning about this?</i></p> | |
| <p>What are you learning about next?</p> <p><i>Is there something you want to learn about next?</i></p> <p><i>How are you going to learn about this?</i></p> | |
| <p><u>Meeting other children?</u></p> <p><i>Do you play with other children?</i></p> <p><i>Where do you play with them?</i></p> | |

Annex 4(b): Template to secure child's view (aged 11-16)

| | |
|---|--|
| Name: | |
| <p>What do you enjoy learning about?</p> <p><i>What do you enjoy doing?</i></p> <p><i>What kind of things are you interested in?</i></p> <p><i>Are you enjoying home learning?</i></p> <p><i>What do you enjoy about home learning?</i></p> <p><i>Are you learning well at home?</i></p> <p><i>What are you good at?</i></p> <p><i>What do you find difficult?</i></p> <p><i>Is there something you like to do but haven't been able to?</i></p> | |
| <p>What are you proud of?</p> <p><i>Is there any work that you are really proud of?</i></p> <p><i>Is there any of your work you would like to share with me?</i></p> <p><i>Have you received any awards from clubs that you belong to?</i></p> <p><i>Do you have any talents? e.g., are you able to play any musical instruments?</i></p> | |
| <p>What is your favourite thing you have learnt recently?</p> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Have you been learning about anything that interests you?</i></p> <p><i>How have you been learning about this?</i></p> | |
| <p>What are you learning about next?</p> <p><i>Is there something you want to learn about next?</i></p> <p><i>How are you going to learn about this?</i></p> | |
| <p>Meeting other children</p> <p><i>Do you meet with other children?</i></p> <p><i>Where do you meet with them?</i></p> | |
| <p>Is there anything that you feel you could benefit from?</p> <p><i>Do you have any questions for me?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything you would like help with?</i></p> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Access to local services</p> <p><i>Are you aware of the local services who can support you?</i></p> <p><i>Do you feel that you need help from any of the following services: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Advice from local Health Nurse, access to health initiatives e.g., period dignity grant</i> • <i>Careers advice</i> • <i>ALN Advice</i> | <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Youth Support Services</i> • <i>Counselling</i> | YES/NO YES/NO |
| <p><i>Would you like us to share your details with them if you would like more information?</i></p> | YES/NO |
| <p><i>Are you going to be sitting examinations?</i></p> | YES/NO |
| <p><i>Would you like some advice on where you could sit your examinations?</i></p> | YES/NO |

Annex 5: local authority report

| | |
|--|--|
| Date of discussion/information provided by parent | |
| Parent/carer name* | |
| Preferred contact method and contact details | |
| Name of learner | |
| D.O.B. of learner | |
| Gender of learner | |
| School(s) and town(s) that child previously attended (if any) | |
| <p>Seeing the child</p> <p><i>Was/were the child/ren seen?</i></p> <p><i>Were they spoken with and asked about their views on home education?</i></p> <p><i>Is there any follow up required following discussion with the child?</i></p> | <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO (If YES, what was this, who is following up and when?)</p> |
| Reasons given by parent for home educating their child | |
| Date that parent withdrew child from school and commenced home education | |
| What evidence of planning have parents shared to demonstrate how they are going to home educate their child? | |
| Child's Current Knowledge and Skills | |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>What are they learning in relation to: -</i></p> <p><i>(i) Numeracy</i> <i>(ii) Literacy</i></p> <p><i>Have they any specific areas of interest, e.g., humanities, expressive arts, science and technology</i></p> | |
| <p>Additional Learning Needs</p> <p>(i) Does the child have an additional learning need?</p> <p>(ii) Have parents brought it to the attention of the local authority the child may have an additional learning need?</p> <p>(iii) Has the local authority decided the child has additional learning needs?</p> <p>(iv) Does the child have an IDP?</p> <p>(v) If yes, what ALP is the local authority providing?</p> <p>(vi) is the local authority preparing an IDP?</p> | <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES/NO</p> |
| <p>Child's development and progress</p> <p><i>What has the child done well in the past year?</i></p> <p><i>Is the parent able to articulate what their plans are for the next year and what they see as the next steps in their child's educational development and what next steps have they identified?</i></p> | <p>YES/NO</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Does the child have clear hopes and aspirations for their future?</p> <p><i>What are they aiming to learn next?</i></p> <p><i>Have they any areas of interest that they want to know more about?</i></p> <p><i>Do they know what they would like to do when they are older?</i></p> | |
| <p>Where does the child receive their education?</p> <p>At home</p> <p>Home educator groups</p> <p>In libraries</p> <p>Educational trips e.g., museums, castles etc.</p> <p>On-line tuition</p> <p>Other</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Who provides the education/lessons for the child?</p> <p>Parent/Carer</p> <p>Other family member(s)</p> <p>Friends of the family</p> <p>Home education groups</p> <p>Privately employed tutor</p> <p>Virtual tutor tuition</p> <p>Other</p> <p>If the parent employs a tutor, have they enquired whether the tutor has had a Disclosure and Barring Service (D.B.S.) check?</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <p>(YES/NO)</p> |
| <p>Experiences</p> <p><i>Is it possible to determine from the evidence provided that the child is benefiting from:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning from real-life experiences</i> • <i>Being supported with personal, social, wellbeing and health issues</i> • <i>A broad range of activities such as music and art.</i> | <p>YES*/NO</p> <p>YES*/NO</p> <p>YES*/NO</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | *if Yes give brief example |
| <p>Physical activity and play</p> <p><i>Is it possible to determine from the evidence provided that the child is benefiting from participation in physical activity and play?</i></p> | <p>YES* / NO</p> <p>*if Yes give brief example</p> |
| <p>Meeting with other children</p> <p><i>Is it possible to determine from the evidence provided that the child is benefiting from:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>social experiences with other children</i> <i>having opportunities to make friends.</i> | <p>YES* / NO</p> <p>YES* / NO</p> <p>*if Yes give brief example</p> |
| <p>Resources</p> <p><i>Is it possible to determine from the evidence provided what resources and facilities the parent is using to facilitate their child's learning e.g., online resources, educational workbooks, arts and craft materials, libraries or community facilities.</i></p> <p><i>Did the parents identify whether there were any additional resources that could benefit their child?</i></p> | <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES* / NO</p> <p>*if Yes give brief example</p> |
| <p>Links with other organisations</p> <p><i>Does the child belong to any clubs, associations, organisations?</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Careers advice</i> |
| Access to local services | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Is the parent aware of the availability of local services?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g., health nurse, access to health initiatives (e.g., period dignity grant), careers advice, ALN advice, youth support service etc.</i> <p><i>Would the parent like us to share their details with these services to enable the parent to have more information?</i></p> <p><i>*(If YES, this will be actioned by LA EHE Officer)</i></p> | <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES*/NO</p> |
| <p>Is the local authority able to determine whether the child is in receipt of a suitable and efficient education?</p> <p>Does the local authority believe the education provided is suitable and efficient?</p> <p><i>Please outline why the local authority has arrived at the above decision.</i></p> | <p>YES/NO?</p> <p>YES/NO?</p> |
| <p>Any further action required?</p> <p><i><u>If yes define action, by whom and when</u></i></p> | <p>YES/NO</p> |
| <p>Next discussion with parents</p> <p>To follow up on actions identified above Date--/--/----</p> <p>Annual discussion to determine suitability of education provision Date--/--/----</p> | |

Home education Officer Name:

Signature:

Date:

Final report shared with parents on --/--/----

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| <p>Child's view of report</p> |
|--------------------------------------|

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | |
| Date | Child's signature |
| Parental view of report | |
| Date | Parent's signature |

Annex 6: annual EHE discussion contact letter

Name
Address
Date

Dear [name of parent/guardian]

Home education for [name of child/ren]

You will recall when we met on **[insert date]**, I explained the local authority has a duty to establish that children in their area who are of compulsory school age are receiving a suitable education.

Suitable education means full-time efficient education suitable to the child's age, ability, and aptitude and any additional learning needs the child may have.

To enable the local authority to determine whether your child is receiving suitable education, the local authority would like to discuss the education that you are providing.

We would like to discuss **[name of child's]** education and progress, any plans and aspirations that you or your child may have. We propose that we meet with you and **[name of child]** at your home/ the County Hall or a neutral place on **(Date)** at **(Time)** and anything else that you would like to discuss, such as support that may be available to you from the local authority or from other local home educating groups.

If this time and date is not convenient or if you would rather meet at an alternative place, please contact me using the email address/ telephone number below.

If you have any queries prior to our discussion, please contact me on the number [below].

I look forward to seeing you and **[name of child]**.

Yours sincerely

Home Education Officer
Email:
Telephone:

Annex 7: initial school attendance order notice template

Dear [parents' name]

Re: home education for [child's name]

It appears to [name of the local authority] that you are the parent* of [name & DOB of child] (the child) of compulsory school age living at [address of child] within the local authority area.

[Name of local authority] recognises and respects the rights of parents to educate their children at home and is committed to working with those parents.

[Section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#) states that: 'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive an efficient full-time education suitable

a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

b) to any special educational needs [(in the case of a child who is in the area of a local authority in England) or additional learning needs (in the case of a child who is in the area of a local authority in Wales)] he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A suitable education would include provision in numeracy, literacy and language skills, appropriate to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any additional learning needs/special educational needs they may have. These are essential in preparing the child to participate in, and function in, society.

I refer to letters issued to you recently offering to meet with you to discuss the education you are providing and to share advice and support for your provision of home education for your son/daughter. As I received **[no response/ a refusal to attend a meeting]**, the local authority cannot be satisfied that your child/ren are receiving an efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any additional learning needs which he or she may have.

OR (delete as appropriate)

I refer to letters issued to you recently expressing concern about the provision of home education for your son/daughter. The local authority is not satisfied that your child/ren are receiving an efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any additional learning needs which he or she may have.

In accordance with section [437\(1\) of the Education Act 1996](#), the authority requires you, within 15 days from the service of this notice, to satisfy **[name of local authority]** that your child is receiving a suitable education.

I look forward to hearing from you in relation to my request within the above-mentioned timescale.

Yours sincerely

Home education officer

Email:

Telephone:

Annex 8: School attendance order notice template (child without an IDP which names a school)

Dear **[name of parent]**,

I wrote to you on **[date]** requiring you to satisfy the local authority that within 15 days that **[name of child]** is receiving suitable education. More than 15 days have now elapsed. On behalf of the local authority, I consider that **[name of child/ren]** should attend school and I intend to serve on you a school attendance order.

In the school attendance order, the authority intends to name **[name of school]** in the order and to name the following school(s) which they regard as (a) suitable alternative(s)

-
-
-

If you select one of the schools named above within 15 days from the date of service of this notice on you, the authority will name that school in the order.

Alternatively, if one of the following occurs within 15 days from the date of service of notice on you, the relevant school will be named in the Order accordingly:

1 You apply for admission to a maintained school, and inform me if the school is in another local authority's area, and *[name of child]* is offered a place at the school as a result of the application

2 You ask this authority to provide a place for *[name of child]* at a school which is not maintained by a local authority, and *[name of child]* is offered a place at such a school under arrangements made by this authority for us to pay the fees under section 517 Education Act 1996.

3 You apply for a place for *[name of child]* at a school which is not maintained by a local authority and notify us of your application without asking us to pay the fees; and *[name of child]* is offered a place; and the school is suitable to *[name of child]*'s age, ability and aptitude and to any additional learning needs *[name of child]* may have.

OR (delete as appropriate)

Having considered **[name of child]** needs, I do **not** consider there are suitable alternative schools in *[name of local authority]*. Unless you provide a suitable alternative school, the local authority will name **[name of school]** in the order.

Unless you provide information that confirms that you are delivering a suitable efficient full-time education suitable to the age(s), ability(abilities) and aptitude(s) of your child(ren) and any additional learning needs your child(ren) may have the local authority will issue the school attendance order after a further 15 days from the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Home education officer
Email / Telephone:

Annex 9: School attendance order template

Dear **[parents' name]**

[name of local authority] ("the Authority")

As you, **[name of parent]**, of **[address of parent]**, being the parent* of a child of compulsory school age in the area of the Authority, have failed to satisfy the Authority in accordance with the requirements of the notice served on you under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996 by the Authority on **[date of notice]** that [name of child] is receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

And as, in the opinion of the Authority, **[name of child]** should attend school.

You are required to cause **[name of child]** to become a registered pupil at the following school:

[Insert full name and address of the school and omit the whole or part of the following words as the case requires]

being the school [specified by the Authority] [selected by you] [determined by a direction of the Welsh Ministers] [as the school to be named in this Order] [specified in the statement for the child under section 324 of the Education Act 1996] [specified in the individual development plan for the child under Part 2 of the [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#)].

Failure to comply with the requirements of this order is an offence unless you can prove that **[name of child]** is receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Yours sincerely,

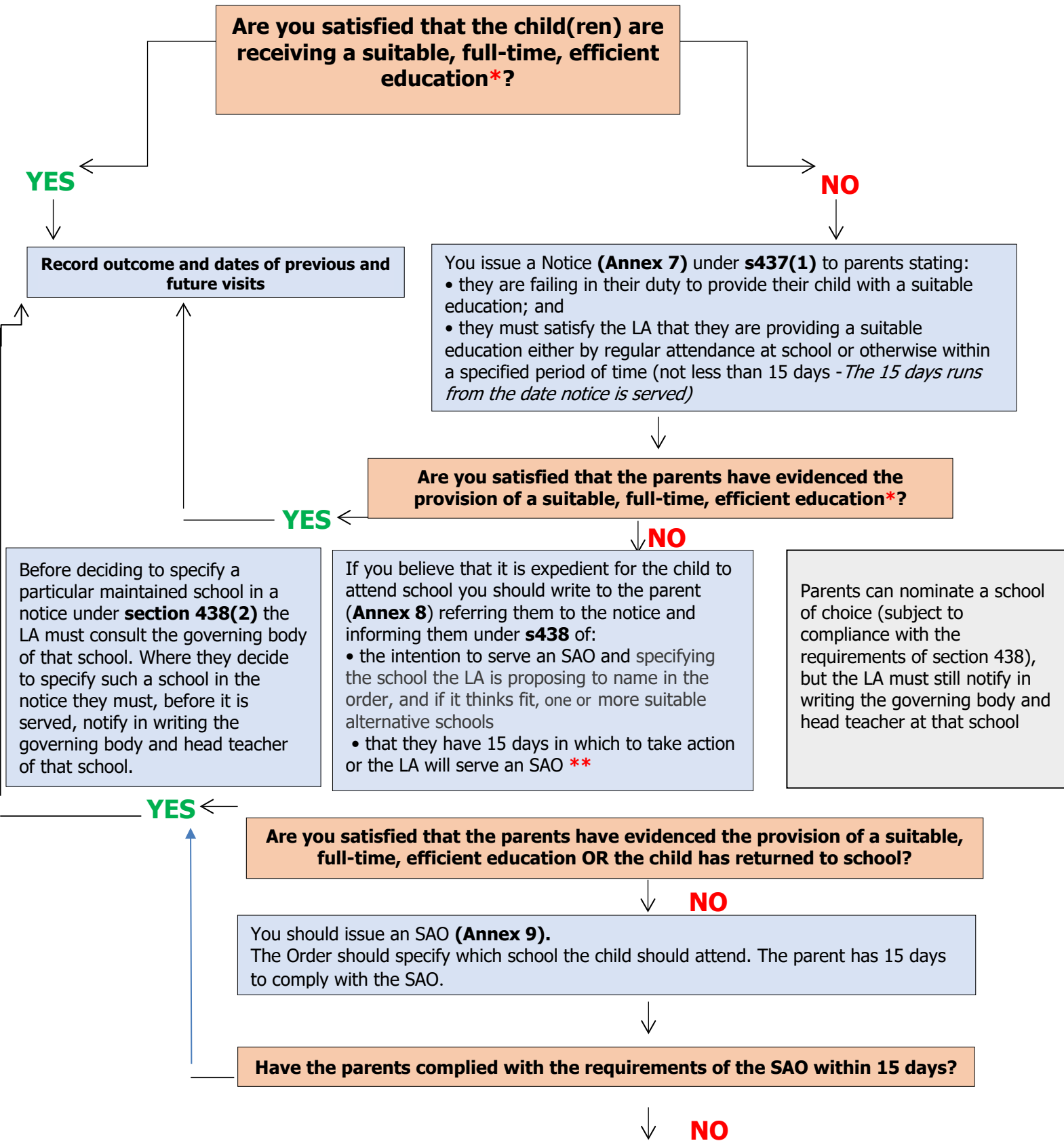
[Name of local authority officer] of [name of local authority]

Email:

Telephone:

**The expression 'parent' in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent of the child but has parental responsibility for him or her, or who care of the child.*

Annex 10: school attendance order and education supervision order flowchart



Continue to next page

If you do decide not to apply for an ESO, then you should record reasons that it was felt not to be appropriate.

You can:

- Prosecute parents for failure to comply with an SAO; and/or
- Apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO)

You **must** consider applying for an ESO under **s36(9) Children Act 1989** before a decision to prosecute parents for failure to comply with an SAO is made

LA prosecutes parents

AND/OR

LA applies for an ESO

Court decides education is suitable and, therefore, does not convict

Court decides education is not suitable and convicts parents.

Parents do not send child to school despite conviction

Court decides education is suitable and refuses ESO.

Court makes ESO and you implement it.

You can:

- Restart the s437 process again.
- Apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO).

Parents do not comply with ESO

You can prosecute for breach of an ESO and/or consider using safeguarding powers under the Children Act 1989 if local authority believes relevant threshold is met.

*In the absence of seeing the child, has the parent provided evidence they are providing an efficient full-time education which is suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any additional learning needs the child may have.

**Where a local authority indicates that an SAO will be issued, and the family is working with the local authority to re-engage child with an agreed school, the expectation is that the child attends their new school within 20 days.

Welsh Government [Elective home education guidance](#) (7.15) states that local authorities should approach all cases where the suitability of home education is in doubt using their powers in the Education Act 1996 but they should also be prepared, if a lack of suitable education appears likely to impair a child's development, to fully exercise their safeguarding powers and duties to protect the child's well-being, which includes their suitable education.

Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Policy

September 2023



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Siro
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

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Appendix 1 Placement Review Form

Introduction and Context

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council believes that for most children in Blaenau Gwent the best place to undertake their education is in their local mainstream school. It is recognised that schools have to respond to a diverse range of pupil need and they do require help and support from other agencies, including the Local Authority. There will, however, be a small but significant group of children who cannot be educated in school. Children sometimes require education outside school because of illness, injury or clinically defined mental health issues. In addition, there are a number of children with behavioural issues. The situations of these children and young people will vary widely but they all run the risk of a reduction in self-confidence and educational achievement.

Where a child is not electively home educated, a key priority for the Local Authority is returning these children to school as soon as they are able to do so, therefore EOTAS provision should not be seen as a long-term solution.

This policy details the arrangements through which the Local Authority meets these requirements.

It should be noted that children and young people with statements of Special Educational Needs/Individual Development Plans are overrepresented in EOTAS provision.

Legal Background

The Education Act 1996: Section 19 states that. "Each local education authority shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusions from school, or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them".

Excluded Pupils

For a fixed-period exclusion of more than fifteen school days, the governing body must arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age. This provision must begin no later than the sixteenth day of the exclusion. Schools will need to contact the local authority to start discussions as soon as possible so that suitable education can be considered.

For permanent exclusions, in compliance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Local Authority must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil to begin no later than the sixteenth day of the exclusion.

In addition, where a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), or a Local Authority Individual Development Plan (IDP) plan the Local Authority needs to ensure that an appropriate full-time placement is identified in consultation with the parents who retain their right to express a preference for a

maintained school that they wish their child to attend or make representations for a placement in any other school.

Excluded learners should only be educated outside mainstream schools where there are significant problems that are better addressed in a different environment. Where this is the case, the Vulnerable Pupil Panel will discuss the learner and consider the most appropriate provision. This could be a turn-around placement at the River Centre, or a bespoke package where cost-effectiveness, quality and provision is appropriate to the learner's needs.

Full-time and Appropriate Provision

Part-time provision is often inadequate to meet the educational needs of excluded learners and to ensure continuity of education. It also leaves some of these learners unsupervised for significant periods of a normal school day. The LA, therefore, aims for all learners to receive full-time education 15 days after being excluded, either at another school or, where necessary an alternative provision. Where learners may have become so disengaged from education, or their current circumstances may be such, that a rapid reintroduction to full-time education is unlikely to prove successful a plan will be drawn up specifying how the move to full-time education is to be achieved.

Full-time means that the amount of supervised education should mirror that provided by mainstream schools in the area. An average school week might amount to some 25 hours; so excluded learners should receive around five hours of supervised education or other activity a day. A full timetable for an excluded learner may, however, look significantly different from that provided in a mainstream school.

Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs

In 2018 Welsh Government published statutory Guidance – 'Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs'. It provides comprehensive guidance to local authorities and related services. Roles and responsibilities, including those of the local authority and school, are outlined in detail. This policy should be read alongside this guidance and any future relevant guidance.

The LA is responsible for ensuring that pupils with health needs are not at home or in hospital for more than 15 working days without access to education: this may be consecutive or cumulative with the same medical condition. If the pupil is a patient at hospital, they will usually receive education on the ward from the onsite Hospital Teacher as soon as they are fit enough to do so. Effective liaison with medical professionals will ensure that there is a minimum of delay in starting appropriate support for those pupils not admitted to hospital.

The LA will arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

The LA is responsible for ensuring that there is a named senior officer with responsibility for the provision of education for children who are unable to attend

school because of medical needs. In this Local Authority the officer is the Service Manager - Inclusion.

Educational provision for pupils who are physically ill or injured is the responsibility of all schools and education services. Provision for tuition is made through Smart Education. Where the child has a mental health condition, which requires a small group setting this will be provided at Ty Afon if the entry criteria is met. It is important to note that Ty Afon is not a dedicated EOTAS provision.

The current entitlement of medical tuition is as follows:

- Pupils who have not yet reached statutory school age i.e., the beginning of the term after the 5th birthday is achieved - no provision is made
- Pupils, from the beginning of the term after the 5th birthday is achieved, to the end of Year 10, 1 hour per day (up to 5 hours per week)
- Pupils in Years 11, 2 hours per day (up to 10 hours per week)

The provision may include use of more than one teacher and will be delivered on-line, either 1-1 or on small groups. Clear lines of communication operate to ensure that a pupil absent from school due to medical needs for more than 15 school days consecutively is not left without education.

Parents and pupils will be consulted before teaching begins. To support reintegration back into school at the earliest opportunity and reduce isolation, tuition may be supplemented with an offer of wellbeing or youth service support.

Children receiving education outside of school should do so in the most appropriate setting to their needs. Pupils will be taught in groups wherever possible according to their medical needs to provide a more rounded education and social experience.

Wellbeing support at home will only be carried out if there is an agreed "named adult" also in attendance and the appropriate risk assessment identifies safe practice for all. On-line tuition will be provided where appropriate, including the establishment of on-line links to the pupil's school to support social inclusion and maintain friendship groups. The pupil's experience will be an extension of their school experience and will seek to maintain their studies and social contacts with the schools (as their medical condition allows).

Close liaison and sharing of information will be maintained by the pupil's school and other key professionals, which will include some or all the following, medical professional, Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Smart Education and Careers Wales.

Provision will be reviewed every 6 weeks and will be integral for long term planning for the education provision for the child. Where the child has a mental health condition and a pupil has been offered a place at Ty Afon, the provision will be a full-time placement, initially for 6 weeks with 6 weekly reviews.

Transport will be provided to the educational setting if outside of the home in line with the LA's Home to School Transport Policy.

The pupil's experience will be an extension of their school experience and will seek to maintain their studies and social contacts with the schools (as their medical condition allows).

It is recognised that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their mainstream school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity as soon as they are well enough. Arrangements for reintegration will be discussed with school staff and each child will have a personalised reintegration plan.

Smart Education and Ty Afon should make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage faced by children with disabilities, and plan to increase the children's access to their school and their curriculum. They will also maintain good links with the child's home school and, through regular reviewing, involve them in decisions concerning the educational programme and pupil progress. This should also include social and emotional needs, for example ensuring that learners feel fully part of their school community, are able to stay in contact with classmates, and have access to the opportunities enjoyed by their peers.

The pupil's school should be aware of its continuing role in the child's education whilst they are not attending. For example, through providing relevant assessment information and liaising with the relevant tutors or Ty Afon staff over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate and ensuring that there is a named teacher within school who can co-ordinate and support these links.

The pupil's school must also work closely with the provider to prepare Key Stage 4 pupils for their transition into post 16 education, employment, or training – this would be under the umbrella of careers guidance.

All pupils will remain on roll of their home school and the prime responsibility for their education lies with that school. The process to refer to Ty Afon or tuition is via the Vulnerable Pupil Panel.

The panel paperwork is sent to the Senior Education Welfare Officer by the school with the attached medical advice. The advice confirming that a pupil is medically unfit for school must be completed by a Community Paediatrician, Consultant or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Consultant. Once the referral has been received the Local Authority will work with the pupil's school to put appropriate education in place within the 15 days as stated in the WG guidance.

As soon as educational support via the relevant route has been agreed, schools are required to provide baseline assessment information and curriculum plans to inform the planning of educational provision. This information, along with advice from medical professionals, will ensure that the education provided is effectively matched to the child or young person's unique needs.

The education provided should be tailored to the learner's individual educational needs and the impact of their medical condition on their ability to access education. Use of baseline assessment information from the home school will inform individual education plans, which should be suitable and flexible enough to be appropriate to the learner's needs. The nature of the provision should also reflect the demands of what can be a changing or fluctuating medical condition.

Schools are responsible for monitoring the quality of the provision for the individual learner e.g., through regular reviewing. The learner should, where available, have access to IT equipment and to the school's intranet and internet. However, this will not be used in isolation and should complement face to face education.

Pupils who are Hard to Place

Sometimes children can find themselves without a school place during the year, for example, because their personal circumstances are such that they have had to move into the local authority or are looked after children. In some cases, these children may also exhibit challenging behaviour. (Please refer to Blaenau Gwent's Admission Guidance and Hard to Place protocol for further information). Where children meet the criteria, they will be referred into the Vulnerable Pupil Panel for further discussion. Where it is deemed that a mainstream placement is not the most appropriate provision for the child tuition will be provided, whilst further assessments are completed.

Areas of Responsibility

Schools

Notifying the Education Welfare Officer if a pupil is likely to be away from school due to medical needs for longer than 15 school days: making an appropriate referral to the Vulnerable Pupil Panel and remaining responsible for:

- producing a plan with clear targets for each half terms learning incorporated in half termly work programmes in core curriculum subjects which the pupil would normally be studying in accordance with statutory requirements
- schemes of work in each subject
- setting and marking work
- resources
- examination entry fees
- planning for National Tests
- assessment of course work
- career interviews
- work experience placements
- informing all other agencies of any alterations to the agreed plan
- providing appropriate support for reintegration at the earliest opportunity.

Tuition responsibility

- supports schools in producing a medical plan which will include arrangements for the delivery of a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum, homework and marking.
- ensures clear lines of communication between all agencies and particularly ensures parents are informed about whom to contact in respect of education provision
- sends a half termly report to the pupil's school and the LA, outlining the pupil's progress and achievements

- works with the Education Welfare Service to ensure good attendance whilst receiving teaching outside of school and if necessary, making the appropriate referral requesting a home visit
- completes attendance records which will be sent to the pupil's school
- attends review and reintegration meetings.
- ensures that teachers receive appropriate continuing professional development.
- liaises with appropriate agencies.

Partnership Working

It is essential that, for pupils with medical needs, there is effective partnership working between education, health and other agencies. Medical / Healthcare Plans are an effective tool to ensure that the pupil's education is not compromised by interim arrangements because of the pupil's medical needs.

Funding

While the pupil remains on roll at the school, the LA will withdraw from the school the funding linked to that pupil, on a daily basis, consistent with the number of days that the pupil is in receipt of medical tuition and that funding is then passed to the tuition service.

Monitoring and Evaluation

For pupils on the roll of a school, the school is responsible for monitoring the progress of the pupil's education through regular liaison with the tutor. Schools should also review their provision for vulnerable pupils through their own school self-evaluation.

In the case of children on bespoke packages, the LA will be responsible for quality assuring the quality of the provision. The LA should ensure an appropriate level of insurance is in place to cover the setting's activities in supporting learners with healthcare needs. The level of insurance should appropriately reflect the level of risk. Additional cover may need to be arranged for some activities, e.g. off-site activities for learners with particular needs.

Where EOTAS services are commissioned from private providers the LA will have a set of guidelines regarding the education, safeguarding and wellbeing responsibilities they will be expected to fulfil. The LA reporting will be responsible for undertaking all necessary checks to ensure they are satisfied that the organisation has met their requirements. Once the local authority has undertaken these checks, the Vulnerable Pupil Panel can agree the organisation's 'approved' status. A database should be made available to all maintained schools within the local area.

Once an EOTAS provider has been entered onto the LA's database as 'approved', the local authority will have a responsibility to regularly monitor the

provision available to ensure that the quality of the provision available, and all necessary safeguarding precautions, remain suitable.

Re-integration back into school

It is recognised that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within a mainstream school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity and when it is appropriate for the individual learner. Reviews are carried out on a 6-weekly basis. Arrangements for reintegration will be discussed with school staff and each child will have a personalised reintegration plan.

Links to other strategies / key documents

- Welsh Government - Inclusion and Pupil Support 203/2016
- Public Health Wales – Report 1 ACES
- Estyn – Happy and Healthy (2019)
- Estyn – Education other than at school (2016)
- Public Policy Institute for Wales: Promoting Emotional Health, Well-being, and
- Resilience in Primary Schools 2016
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- Additional Learning Needs Act (ALNET) (2018)
- Shared Ambitions (2019)
- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Strategy (2022)
- Wellbeing Strategy (2020)
- Inclusion and ALN Strategies (2022)
- Managed Moves Policy (2022)
- Elective Home Education Protocol (2022)
- Safeguarding – BG Keeping Learners Safe Policy (2022)
- Appendix 1 – Placement Review Form

Appendix 1

Placement Review Form

Monitoring and review form

| | | | | |
|---|-------|--|-----|--|
| Name of Pupil | | | | |
| Date of Birth | | | | |
| Year Group | | | | |
| Gender | | | | |
| Home Address | | | | |
| Parents/Carers Contact No. | | | | |
| Original School | | | | |
| Current provision | | | | |
| Has the placement been successful? | YES | | NO | |
| Initial Period of placement | From: | | To: | |
| What was the reason for placement and the desired outcomes | | | | |
| Have the outcomes been met? | | | | |
| Is the pupil ready to reintegrate back into school? | | | | |
| If yes, what does the transition plan look like? | | | | |
| If no, what are the next steps? | | | | |
| Please state reasons why placement was / was not successful? | | | | |

Signed..... Date.....
Pupil

Signed **Date.....**
Parent/Carer

Signed..... **Date.....**
Original School

Signed..... **Date.....**
Current Provision

Signed..... **Date.....**
LA representative

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EXCLUSION GUIDANCE

September 2023



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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Exclusion Guidance for Schools

This guidance is supplementary to and should be read in conjunction with the Welsh Government (WG) Guidance “Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units” – which was revised in November 2019. All decisions about exclusion must be made with reference to the guidance which outlines statutory responsibilities. In this BG guidance document, the term ‘schools’ refers to Primary, Middle, Secondary and Special schools.

Schools should note that the WG guidance is statutory guidance and is available via the link below:

<https://gov.wales/exclusion-schools-and-pupil-referral-units-pru>

Contact details for queries relating to exclusions:

Stated pupils/IDP – ALN Manager

ALNEnquiries@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or 01495 355443

Non stated pupils – Senior Education Welfare Officer

lisa.adams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or 07870 998947

Introduction

Blaenau Gwent's aim is for all children and young people is to be purposefully engaged in an educational programme appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and to achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families, and our community and for society at large. We want our children and our adults to be happy, healthy, capable and engaged with school and the wider community. Minimal school exclusions will be a key indicator of our collective success.

National government recognises and promotes the importance of wellbeing in schools as a key factor in achieving this ambition. Blaenau Gwent is aware that improving the all-round wellbeing of pupils and staff is important in and of itself, as well as crucial in lifting performance and attainment levels.

The latest published data from Welsh Government in October 2020 highlighted the fact that children with free school meals were consistently (at least 3 times higher) more likely to be excluded and overall children with additional learning needs (ALN) have higher rates of exclusion than those without.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales report, 'Building Blocks – Inclusion in the Foundation Phase', highlighted concerns about repeat exclusions, reduced timetables and children being taught in isolation.

The Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has also recently written a report considering growing national concern regarding the correlation between school exclusions and children's subsequent involvement in crime. The research indicated that school exclusions were not necessarily a causal factor for criminality, but rather an indicator of a series of vulnerabilities that increase both exposure to crime and exploitation. More specifically, the research suggested that children excluded or at risk of exclusion from school sit within a network of vulnerability, including adverse childhood experiences, additional learning needs and care experience.

In most cases, fixed-term exclusions are only given after exhausting all the available options for internal interventions and exclusions from the classroom. However, the research also demonstrated the clear need to consider what additional external support can be provided to children to prevent exclusion when internal school-based interventions fail.

Considering the recent reports, the increased focus on the emotional well-being needs of children, and the fact that Blaenau Gwent has relatively high number of fixed term exclusions in Wales, the guidance has been revised as part of Blaenau Gwent's strategy to reduce exclusions

In addition, the Managed Move policy has also been revised and we would encourage head teachers to use this as a supportive intervention.

About This Guidance

This supplementary guidance updates and replaces all previous guidance regarding exclusion from maintained schools, including special schools, published by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, herein after referred to as the Local Authority (LA). It applies equally to children with and without statements of special educational needs or individual development plans (IDPs).

This guidance differs to previous guidance as it now contains a checklist for schools to reflect on provision for learners presenting with challenging behaviour to reduce the risk of exclusion. This guidance is also intended to be of assistance to all parties involved in the exclusion process including head teachers, governing bodies and local authority officers.

The requirements of the guidance apply in relation to all pupils, including those who may be below or above compulsory school age, such as those attending nursery classes.

The term “parents” in this guidance include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the LA where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) with whom the child lives. Where practicable it is expected that all those with parental responsibility should be engaged with the exclusion process. The Education Welfare Service should be the first point of contact for any queries that head teachers, governors, parents, pupils or others may have regarding exclusions.

3 stage approach to supporting inclusion of learners presenting with challenging behaviour

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Monitor Behaviour – report card – contact home</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the school relationship/behaviour policy and monitor behaviour, attendance, and attainment regularly. • Work with ALNCO to ensure repeated behaviours resulting in sanctions are not a result of unmet need. • Ensure work is being planned for at the right level of challenge. • Work with parents, to ensure home-school partnership towards improved engagement with school and learning. |
| <p>2. Inclusion Support Plan ISP The ISP is a helpful alternative to an individual behaviour plan or Pastoral Support Plan. Try to establish what the child is trying to communicate through their behaviour by reflecting on triggers for disengagement and developing strategies to re-engage the learner.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce following internal exclusions or a serious behaviour incident. • Review weekly with key adults in school. Work towards agreed outcomes (rather than set targets) to ensure the pupil makes progress from where they are currently. |
| <p>3. Pastoral Support Plan PSP - The PSP continues to run as the main framework for supporting school settings to reduce permanent exclusions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce if the pupil is at risk of exclusion/PEX. Outline the support offered. • Frequently meet with parents to review progress. • Set achievable goals towards an acceptable outcome in a period. |

When thinking about next steps for the learner – consider the following questions

- Check the data (attendance / exclusions / behaviour points)
- Are there any themes?
- Can you identify any triggers for behaviour through the patterns?
- Does the pupil file highlight a history of need?
- Has the pupil been identified with any ALN?
- Has Blaenau Gwent ALN guidance been used to check what the key barriers to engaging in learning are for the pupil?
- Have any diagnostic assessments been used to identify any needs or areas for development?
- Is the pupil in a group vulnerable to underachievement? (CLA/ALN/EAL/CASP)
- Is there an IDP/statement in place / Has there ever been a CAF or IDP/statement for this child?

- Does the pupil have a one-page profile?
- Is the school relationship/behaviour policy being used consistently to support the learner (including any identified reasonable adjustments?)
- Is the school reward system being used in a way that is equitable to the pupil's needs?
- What external issues may be affecting the learner at this time? (e.g., significant family events).
- Are there any historic issues that may now be affecting the pupil?

Provision for the learner. Have you engaged with or considered the following?

- Team Teach training and de-escalation strategies.
- Behaviour assessment to identify inclusion strategies.
- Is there a Risk Assessment in place for staff, other pupils, the pupil themselves?
- Have you considered an Ed Psych referral and assessment?
- Have you tried a bespoke timetable working with the pupil to avoid 'behaviour hotspots'?
- Work with the pupil to RAG rate their timetable and put in support to eliminate red and reduce amber.
- What incentives are meaningful and relevant to the pupil?
- Is a reduced timetable a useful tool currently? (Ensure all guidelines are followed for safeguarding reasons)
- What nurture interventions are available that would benefit the pupil?
- Would the CYP benefit from seeing a counsellor at this time?
- Some form of therapy?
- Is support needed for the family?
- Consider referral to external agencies / partners.
- Is there a key adult for the pupil – to advocate and support them each day, rewarding where success and progress has been made and communicate with home and other adults in school?
- Is there a need for restorative justice to move a relationship forward?
- Is there a timeline of incidents that supports the pupil to begin to understand and manage their behaviours?
- How are staff being supported?
- How is the pupil developing independence in managing their emotions?
- Support for developing emotional literacy and self-regulation strategies.

At each meeting / review point

- What is the data telling us now?
- What are the views of the child?
- What are the views of the Parents / staff / support team / external agencies?
- How will I ensure the meeting is professional and managed well so all views can be heard, and it is a positive process for all moving the situation forward?

At each significant incident

- Ensure the paperwork is completed and a clear record is maintained. Avoid emotional language and keep it factual.
- Ensure all parties share what happened so that an accurate account is recorded in an impartial manner.
- Ensure the pupil has supported time to reflect and learn from what went wrong using appropriate tools when they are calm, ready and able to do so.
- Ensure the pupil learns from the behaviour incident and has opportunities to mend relationships and 'put right' the situation when they are calm, ready and able to do so.
- Ensure staff who were involved have time to follow up with the pupil to move on from the incident when the time is appropriate.
- Ensure students who were involved in the incident have the appropriate follow up.
- For all CYPs involved communicate clearly with parents / carers what happened and the follow up

Decision to Exclude

Only the Headteacher or teacher in charge of a setting can exclude a learner. They cannot delegate the power to exclude to another teacher. In their absence, the most senior teacher may exercise the power of exclusion though they should make clear they are working in the Headteacher's absence.

If a pupil is deemed to be at risk of exclusion it is appropriate to have a Pastoral Support Programme and support from Families First to enable a range of strategies and support to be implemented.

Schools should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with a statement, an individual development plan or any pupil who is a child looked after.

Key Considerations Before Excluding – Safeguarding

Where a pupil receives support from a Families First worker, is a child in need of care and support or subject to child protection planning, the school must inform the relevant professionals within social care if they feel the child is at risk of exclusion and in advance of any decision to exclude.

If you are concerned about the risk of exclusion of a looked after child, please contact the pupil's social worker and the child looked after co-ordinator.

For pupils where there is concern around sexual, drug or gang exploitation, for those who self-harm or demonstrate behaviours that could cause them significant harm, an exclusion can result in increased risks to the pupil's immediate safety, health and wellbeing.

Proactive planning with professional partners and family/carers about what to do in the event of a serious breach of school relationship/behaviour policy where the conditions for exclusion are met is the ideal, but in an unforeseen situation, contact the relevant involved professionals at the earliest opportunity and before sending a pupil home.

Headteacher' s Checklist

Any decision to exclude a pupil must be:

In response to serious breach of the school's behaviour policy; and, if allowing the learner to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the school.

In deciding to exclude a pupil, the Headteacher must be able to demonstrate that the exclusion has been carefully considered and is being used as a last resort. The checklist below is designed to assist head teachers in these deliberations.

| The circumstances of the case | Yes | No |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Has there been a serious breach or breaches of the school behaviour policy? | | |
| Does the pupil's presence seriously harm or threaten to harm the education/welfare of pupils/ others? | | |
| Is exclusion a last resort following a wide range of other strategies that have been unsuccessful? Is this a serious 'one off' offence? | | |
| Is exclusion the appropriate response? Factors to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a thorough investigation been conducted? • Has the pupil's version of events been sought / encouraged / recorded? • Has the evidence been considered in the light of school policies and possible discrimination? • Are there any mitigating circumstances or any provocation which may be relevant (bullying, harassment etc.)? | | |
| Has a pastoral support programme been used? | | |
| Is this pupil at school action or school action plus? and if so; Has the possibility of additional support from the LA been explored? | | |
| Have alternatives to exclusion been considered (e.g. restorative approach, mediation, internal exclusion)? | | |
| Standard of proof – "on the balance of probabilities" is it more probable than not that the pupil did what he/she is alleged to have done? | | |
| Special considerations | Yes | No |
| ALN Does this pupil have a statement of special educational needs or an individual development plan? Has the ALN team been contacted? Has an emergency review been arranged? | | |
| CLA Is this pupil looked after? Has the CLA Co-ordinator been contacted? | | |
| SAFEGUARDING Is this pupil subject to a child protection or a child in need plan? Has the social worker been contacted? | | |
| Is there a JAFF for this pupil? What other agencies/services are involved? | | |

| The circumstances of the case | Yes | No |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Have issues of ALN or disability been taken into account and reasonable adjustments put in place? | | |

Notification of Exclusions

When a Headteacher has decided to exclude a pupil he/she must:

- immediately inform the parent(s) by telephone.
- draft the appropriate letter (see model letters in appendices)
- ensure that this letter is sent by first class post to arrive the following day or is hand delivered;
- ensure that the letter contains the following information:
 - the reasons for the exclusion.
 - the period of fixed term exclusion or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent and the date it takes effect;
 - parents' and learner's right to make representation about the exclusion to the governing body's discipline committee; *
 - how any representation should be made including the person for the parent/carer and/or learner should contact;
 - when there is a legal requirement for the governing body to consider the exclusion, that the parents and/or learner have a right to attend a meeting, be represented at this meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend;

Headteachers should ensure an exclusion form is completed **within 24 hours** after all exclusions and forwarded to the LA via BSInclusionSupport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk so that the LA database can be kept up to date (see Appendix A for exclusion form). Full details of notification requirement to the school's governing body can be found in section 8.4 of this guidance and in Appendix B 'Summary of Main Processes and Time Limits for Fixed Term Exclusion'.

For a permanent exclusion, if the pupil lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the head teacher must also advise the pupil's 'home authority' of the exclusion without delay.

Unofficial / Illegal Exclusions

The procedures described above and in the WG guidance must always be applied when a pupil is excluded. Sending a pupil home informally for a "cooling-off period" or asking parents to take a pupil home to avoid an exclusion are illegal acts which could be subject to challenge. This also applies to lunchtimes; if a pupil is asked by the school to go home at lunchtimes this must also be treated as one quarter of a day exclusion for each lunchtime.

It is also unlawful to exclude for a non-disciplinary reason. For example, it would be unlawful to exclude a pupil simply because they have additional needs or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet, or for a reason such as: academic attainment/ability; the action of a pupil's parents; or the failure of a pupil to meet specific conditions before they are reinstated, such as to attend a reintegration meeting.

At no time should a school encourage a parent to electively home educate (EHE) in order to avoid a permanent exclusion. Such children will either not have access to

the provision that they need or will transfer to a new school without appropriate support thereby placing additional pressures on both schools and families. Schools should, therefore, not promote the use of EHE to remove a child with challenging behaviour or poor attendance from their roll.

Reduced Timetables

It is illegal for a school to impose a reduced or partial timetable.

In some cases a reduced timetable may be used as a short-term measure towards achieving full reintegration, building back up to full time hours if the parents agree and a written agreement, signed by all parties with stated review dates where appropriate, put in place via a PSP.

Full Blaenau Gwent Guidance on the use of reduced timetables is available from the Education Directorate.

Procedures Following Exclusion

Following a permanent exclusion, staff are available within the LA to assist with the reintegration and support of excluded learners.

Statemented pupils – ALN Manager

Non statemented pupils – Senior Education Welfare Officer

The Education (Reintegration Interview) (Wales) Regulations 2010, require Headteachers of schools to request in specified circumstances parents/carers of learners excluded for a fixed term to attend a reintegration interview at the school. The request for interview applies to all fixed-term exclusions for primary-aged learners but only fixed-term exclusions of six or more days for secondary-aged learners. Reintegration interviews need to take place within 15 school days of the last day of the exclusion period.

Headteachers should note, however, that neither parents nor a pupil can be required to meet specific conditions, such as attending a reintegration meeting, before reinstatement.

ALN / Disability / Vulnerable Group Considerations

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, schools should avoid permanently excluding any pupil with a statement of SEN or an IDP. The 2010 Equality Act does not prohibit schools from excluding learners with a protected characteristic but does prohibit schools from excluding learners because of their protected characteristic (e.g. excluding a disabled learner because of their disability or because of their racial group) or discriminating unlawfully during the exclusions process. This applies to permanent and fixed-term exclusions.

Where a pupil is 'Looked After' (CLA), schools should try every practicable means to maintain the learner in school and should seek LA and other professional advice as appropriate prior to any exclusion decision.

The Governing Body's Duty to Consider an Exclusion – Key Points

The responsibility of the governing body to consider exclusions is usually delegated to a sub-committee of at least three governors. This committee is known as the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee has a clear set of responsibilities.

Where required or requested, the governing body must hold a Governors Discipline Committee (GDC) within the required timescale. (In the case of a permanent exclusion, the GDC must meet within 15 school days of being notified of the exclusion).

For all fixed term exclusions of 5 days or fewer within a term, the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee once a term. For fixed term exclusion of 6 to 15 days or more than 20 lunchtimes in a school term and/or where a public exam or national test will be missed, the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee within one day. For all fixed term exclusions of more than 15 days in a school term and following any exclusion in the same term after 15 days has been reached the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee within one day.

Full advice and support is available to school and governing bodies on the role and responsibilities of the GDC from the Governor Support and Development Section of the EAS (where the school has entered into the SLA agreement).

South East Wales Education Achievement Service
[Statutory Committees <statutory.committees@sewaleseas.org.uk>](mailto:statutory.committees@sewaleseas.org.uk)

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL EXCLUSION

Please send completed form within 24 hours to:
BSinclusionsupport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



SCHOOL

TYPE OF EXCLUSION Permanent Fixed Term Lunchtime

Name of Pupil DOB

Gender NC Year

Is Pupil CLA? Yes / No If Yes, please state LA and status

ALNN Status SA SA+ Statement /IDP Ethnicity

Name of Parent/ Carer

Address

Contact Telephone Number/s

EXCLUSION DETAILS:

Start date of exclusion: *AM / PM *(*please delete as appropriate)*

End date of exclusion: *AM / PM *(*please delete as appropriate)*

No of days excluded:

Return date: #INSET dates:

please indicate if there are any INSET / school closure days during the period of the exclusion

REASON(S) FOR EXCLUSION: ONE primary reason must be marked with a “P” for reporting to the Welsh Government. Supplementary reasons may also be marked with S.

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Physical Assault against pupil (PP) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sexual misconduct (SM) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical assault against adult (PA) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drug and alcohol related (DA) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil (VP) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Damage (DM) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against an adult (VA) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Theft (TH) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Persistent disruptive behaviour (DB) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bullying (BU) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Racial abuse (RA) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (OT) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

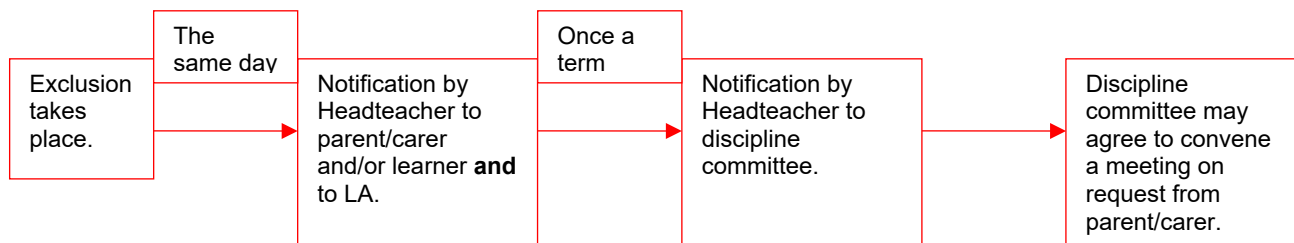
Signed:(Headteacher) Date:.....

You MUST attach a copy of the notification letter sent to parents/guardian

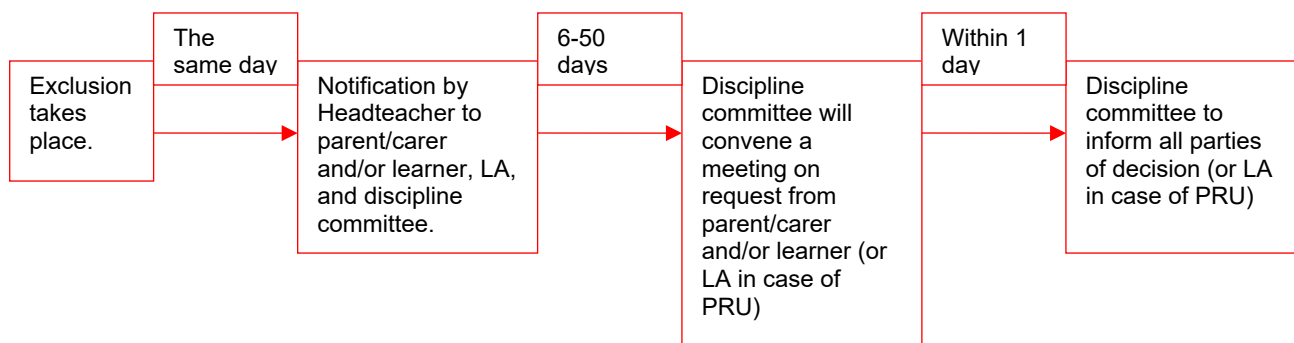
Fixed term Exclusions

The term 'days' refers to school days throughout.

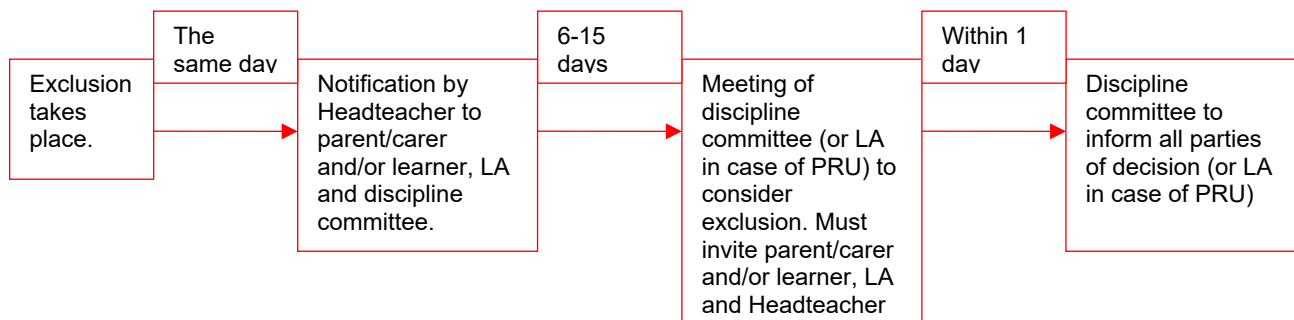
5 days or fewer in a school term



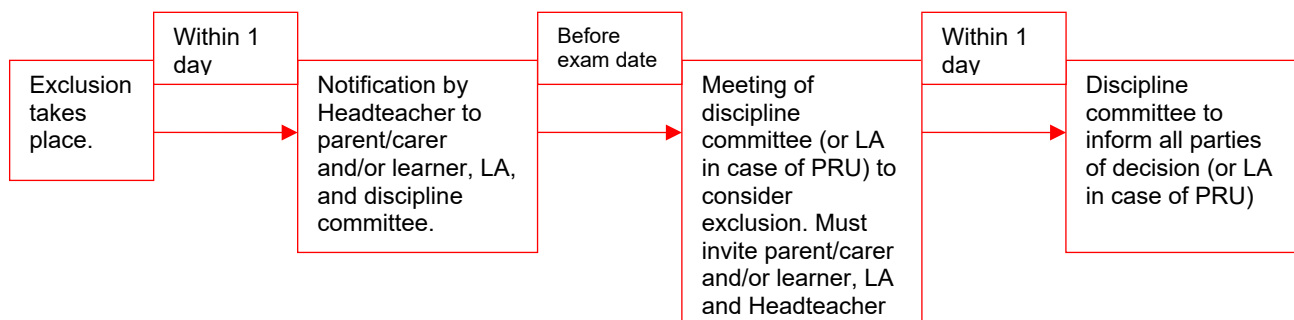
6-15 days or more than 20 lunchtimes in a school term and/or where a public exam or national test will be missed



More than 15 days in a school term and following any exclusion in the same term after 15 days has been reached.



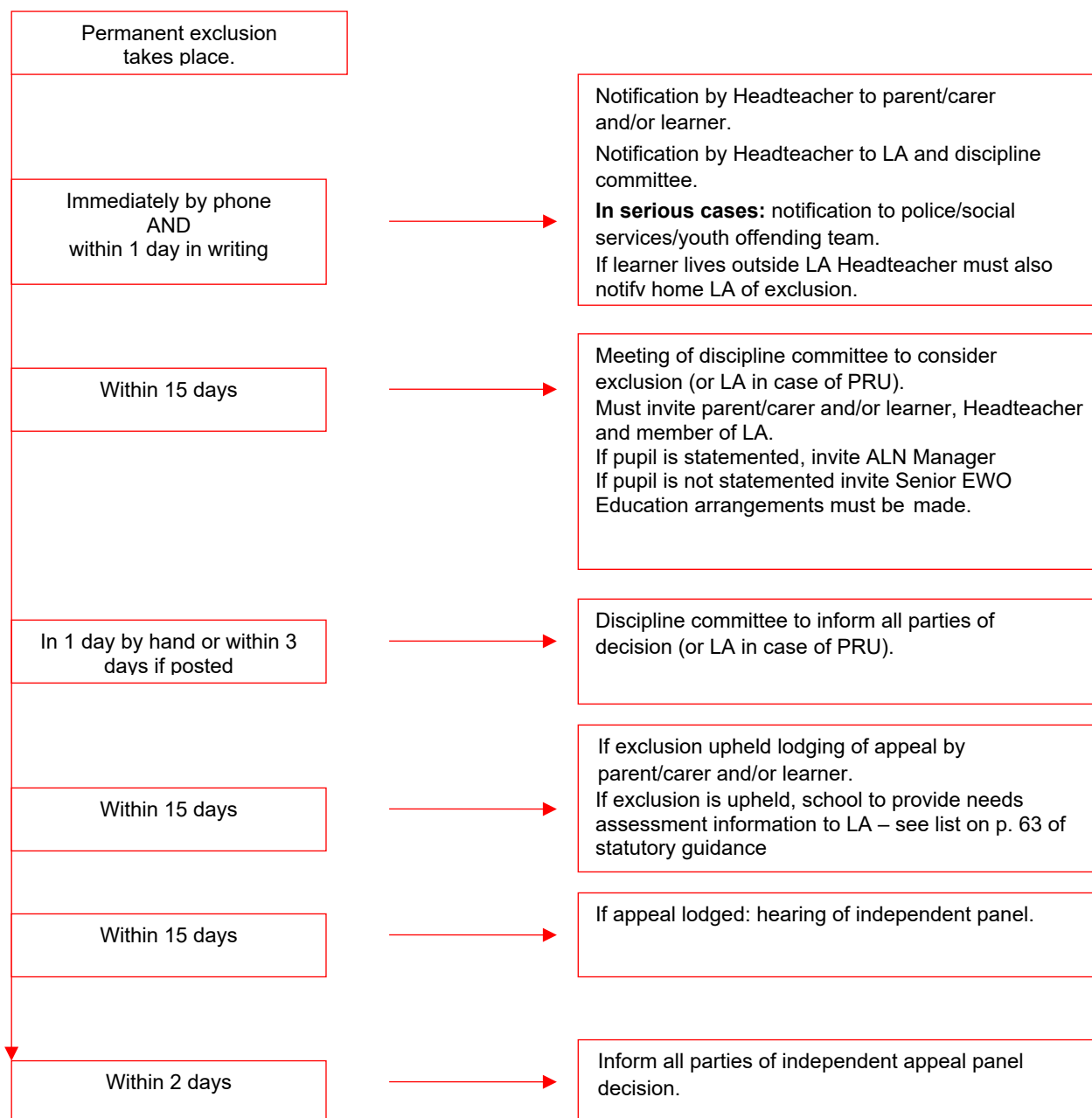
Where a public examination will be missed



Appendix C

Permanent Exclusions

The term 'days' refers to school days throughout.



Appendix D

Model Letters

Model letter 1: Fixed-term exclusion of less than six days

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed term exclusion of less than six days, and where a public examination is not missed.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began on **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has/have been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

The school will continue to set work for **[learner's name/you]** during the period of his/her/your exclusion **[insert details of arrangements that are in place for this]**. Please ensure that any work set by the school is completed and returned to us for marking.

[For learners over compulsory school age insert the following]. As you have been excluded from the school you should arrange for someone to return the work to us on your behalf.

[School/other setting]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to the school governors' pupil discipline committee. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. While the discipline committee has no power to direct reinstatement, they must consider any representations you make and may place a copy of their findings on your child's/your school record.

[Special School]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to **Blaenau Gwent LA**.

These representations will be considered by **[contacting the Service Manager - Inclusion]**. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]** as soon as possible.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be

supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

[Primary school only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next 10 days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher

Model letter 2: Fixed-term exclusion of 6–15 days

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed-term exclusion of six to 15 days, or where cumulative exclusions in the same term fall within this range, or where a public examination is missed.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began on **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has/have been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

The school will continue to set work for **[learner's name/you]** during the period of his/her/your exclusion **[insert details of arrangements that are in place for this]**. Please ensure that any work set by the school is completed and returned to us for marking.

[For learners over compulsory school age insert the following]

As you have been excluded from the school you should arrange for someone to return the work to us on your behalf.

[School/setting]

You have the right to request a meeting of the school governors' pupil discipline committee at which you **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** may make representations and the decision to exclude can be reviewed. As the length of the exclusion is more than five school days (or equivalent) the committee must meet if you request it to do so. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 50 school days from the date the committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible.

[Special School]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to **Blaenau Gwent Local Authority**. These representations will be considered by **the Lead Officer for Inclusion**. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]** as soon as possible.

[Note: this wording is not suitable where the learner would lose the opportunity to take a public examination.]

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be

supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

[Applies to children of compulsory school age only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next ten days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher

Model letter 3: Fixed-term exclusion of 16 or more days

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed-term exclusion of 16 days or more, or where cumulative exclusions in the same term are 16 days or more.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

Alternative education other than setting work will be provided for **[learner's name/you]** if the exclusion has not been overturned within 15 days. A **Blaenau Gwent** LA representative will contact you to discuss this.

[School/Setting]

As the length of the exclusion is more than 15 school days (or equivalent) the school governors' pupil discipline committee must automatically meet to consider the exclusion. At the review meeting you may make representations to the committee if you wish to do so. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the discipline committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. You will, whether you choose to make representations or not, be notified by the Clerk to the committee of the time, date and location of the meeting.

[Special School]

As the length of the exclusion is more than 15 days **Blaenau Gwent LA** must consider the exclusion. **[Set out the arrangements which the LA has made to review fixed-term exclusions.]** A review meeting will be held and at the review meeting you may make representations if you wish. The latest date for a review meeting is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the LA is notified]**. If you wish to make representations and wish to be accompanied by a representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is

because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 6DF.

[Applies to children of compulsory school age only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next 10 days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[Learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher

Model letter 4: Permanent exclusion

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a permanent exclusion.

Dear **[parent's/carer's/learner's name]**

I regret to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** permanently from **[date]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed back to this **[school/pupil referral unit]** unless reinstated by the **[school governors' discipline committee/LA pupil referral unit management committee]** or by an appeal panel.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[Learner's name/you]** has been excluded permanently because **[reason for exclusion – also include any other relevant history here]**.

Alternative education other than setting work will be provided for **[learner's name/you]** if the exclusion has not been overturned within 15 days. A LA representative will contact you to discuss this.

[School/Setting]

As this is a permanent exclusion the school governors' pupil discipline committee will meet to consider the exclusion. At the review meeting you **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** may make representations to the committee if you wish to do so. The discipline committee has the power to reinstate **[learner's name/you]** immediately or from a specified date, or alternatively, has the power to uphold the exclusion in which case you may appeal to an independent appeals panel. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. You will, whether you choose to make representations or not, be notified by the Clerk to the committee of the time, date and location of the meeting.

[Special School]

You have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel against this decision. If you wish to appeal please notify **[name of Clerk to appeal panel]** of your wish to appeal including your grounds of appeal in writing to **[address]** by no later than **[specify the latest date – the fifteenth school day after the second working day after the letter is posted if sent by first class post, or, if delivered by hand, the fifteenth school day after delivery]**. If you have not lodged an appeal by this date your right to appeal will lapse.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent LA** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice on what options are available to you.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher

Model letter 5: Permanent exclusion – discipline committee’s decision

From the Clerk of the discipline committee notifying the parent/carer of a permanently excluded learner of the discipline committee’s decision.

Dear **[parent’s/carer’s/learner’s name]**

The meeting of the school governors’ pupil discipline committee at the **[school]** on **[date]** considered the decision by **[Headteacher]** to permanently exclude you/your son/daughter **[name of learner]**. The committee, after carefully considering the representations made and all the available evidence, have decided:

Either

to overturn the exclusion and direct that **[you/name of learner]** are/is reinstated in the school by **[date]**. We therefore expect **[you/name of learner]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

If you wish to discuss **[learner’s name/your]** return to school before reinstatement, please contact **[name of Headteacher]** to arrange a convenient time and date.

A copy of this letter will be added to **[learner’s name/your]** school record for future reference.

Or

to uphold **[your/name of learner’s]** exclusion.

The reasons for the committee’s decision are as follows: **[give the reasons in as much detail as possible, explaining how the committee arrived at its decision]**.

You have the right to appeal against this decision. If you wish to appeal, please notify **[name of the Clerk to the appeal panel]** of your wish to appeal. You must set out the reasons for your appeal in writing and if appropriate, you may also include any disability discrimination claim you may wish to make and send them to **[address]** by no later than **[specify the latest date – the seventeenth school day after the date of this letter]**. If you have not lodged an appeal by **[repeat latest date]**, your right to appeal will lapse.

Your appeal would be heard by an independent appeal panel.

A **[three-member/five-member]** panel will comprise **[one/two]** serving education practitioner[s] (possibly **[a]** Headteacher[s]) **[one/two]** serving or recently serving experienced governor[s]; and one lay member who will be the chair. The appeal panel will rehear all the facts of the case – if you have fresh evidence to present to the panel you may do so. The panel must meet no later than the fifteenth school day after the date on which your appeal is lodged. In exceptional circumstances panels may adjourn a hearing until a later date.

I would like to remind you of the following sources of advice and assistance: **[repeat]**

details from the original exclusion letter, i.e. a named LA officer and the Advisory Centre for Education and any other local source of advice or assistance if known].

The arrangements currently being made for **[learner's name/your]** education will continue for the time being. However, new arrangements to provide full-time education for **[Learner's name/your]** are being made and **[name of LA officer]** will liaise with you shortly about these new arrangements. If you have any questions about this please contact **[name]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Clerk to the discipline committee

Model letter 6: Independent appeal panel decision

From the Clerk to the independent appeal panel notifying the parent/carer and/or learner of the outcome of their appeal.

Dear **[parent's/carer's/learner's name]**

Following the hearing of your appeal by the independent appeal panel constituted by **Blaenau Gwent** Local Authority on **[date]** at **[location]** against the decision of the governing body of **[name of school]**/the discipline committee for **[name of PRU]** not to reinstate **[learner's name/you]**, I am writing to advise you of the panel's decision.

After careful consideration of your representations (both oral and written) and those of **[school/PRU]** and **Blaenau Gwent** Local Authority **[and of others if applicable, e.g., any victim]** and in the light of the available evidence, the panel has decided:

Either

(i) to uphold the exclusion

or

(ii) to direct **[learner's name/your]** reinstatement in **[name of school/PRU]** with effect from **[date and time]**. **[Learner's name/you]** should report to **[name of school staff member]** at that time

or

(iii) that it is not practical to direct **[learner's name/your]** reinstatement **[here give reasons, e.g. because this is an exceptional case where reinstatement would not be in the learner's best interests or those of the whole school/PRU community]** although otherwise reinstatement would have been appropriate. Your **[child's]** school record will show that the permanent exclusion was overturned on appeal even though reinstatement was not directed.

[Give reasons in as much detail as possible for the panel's decision: the decision may be challenged by judicial review; or be the subject of a complaint of maladministration by the appeal panel to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.]

The panel's decision is binding on you, the governing body of **[name of school]**/ and **[name of LA]**.

For decisions (i) and (iii) above:

The alternative arrangements put in place for **[learner's name/your]** full-time education will continue for the time being; but **[LA officer's name]** will be in touch with you to discuss future provision.

A copy of this letter will be added to **[learner's name/your]** school record for future reference.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Clerk to the independent appeal panel

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Blaenau Gwent County Council

Attendance Policy

Supporting Positive Attendance

The Education Directorate's purpose is to deliver '***Better Schools, Better Citizens, and Better Communities***'

Education Inclusion Service

Attendance Policy

Date: 1st September 2023

Date of review: 31st August 2025



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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Improving attendance is everyone's business.

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Introduction

Blaenau Gwent Local Authority aim to:

Promote and support excellent school attendance by direct work with schools, pupils, their families and secure the engagement of appropriate agencies where their support is critical towards securing improved attendance.

The importance of regular attendance cannot be overestimated. It is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it must be a high priority for schools and their governing bodies, as well as for parents and pupils. Pupils who fail to attend regularly not only diminish the value of the education provided but may also jeopardise their future life chances to succeed.

Good attendance also has a positive effect on wellbeing. Establishing good attendance patterns from an early age is vital for social development. The inter-relationship between attendance and wellbeing is considered so strong that attendance is often considered a proxy measure for learner wellbeing.

The Local Authority (LA) encourages schools to adopt a **whole school approach** to attendance. This requires commitment from all staff employed within the school, together with governors, parents, pupils, and the LA.

This approach relates to a wide range of other issues, including punctuality, rewards and incentives, re-integration of long-term absentees, curricular differentiation, home-school links and the role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

The Education Welfare Service will work in partnership with Blaenau Gwent schools to monitor and address a wide range of attendance issues. The following document outlines our commitment to support schools as an Education Welfare Service in addition to outlining school responsibilities within this process. There will also be links provided to key attendance documents which frames the work undertaken, to ensure that young people and children in Blaenau Gwent benefit from regular school attendance.

This document will:

- Provide guidance to develop and implement whole school attendance strategies.
- Summarise efficient and effective early intervention and support strategies.
- Encourage educational provisions to work collaboratively with a range of partners to support and promote the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people
- Outline the LA's role in dealing with non-attendance.
- Explain legal contexts such as the Attendance Pathway, Fixed Penalty Notices and Legal frameworks and provide guidance in relation to the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as a measure to improving attendance and safeguarding
- Provide an outline of the support available through the Education Welfare Service.
- Identify Schools responsibilities and parental responsibilities.
- Outline information which should be included in School Attendance Policies

- Provide school attendance codes and explanations with a clear definition of authorised and unauthorised absences
- Identify legalities around registration.
- Explore the use of data analysis to support positive attendance.
-

Legal Frameworks

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education:

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any additional learning need they may have.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.
- For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with parents, the school shares with them, and the local authority (LA), responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance. Schools are required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance of pupils. Statutory obligation apart, **the school is committed to improvements in attendance standards** as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement. Poor attendance is destructive on educational achievement, undermines the well-being of each pupil and demoralises staff.

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) of compulsory school age (5-16), receives efficient full-time education, suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any additional learning needs (ALN) the child may have. This can be through regular attendance at school or educated otherwise by the Local Authority. The law also permits parents to educate their child(ren) at home under the terms of Elective Home Education (EHE).

The LA has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and as a registered pupil at school means attending school regularly and on time.

Compulsory school age means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and are of compulsory school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.

If a registered pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent could be guilty of an offence under section 444 Education Act 1996.

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence);
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/ parent belongs;

- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child's home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA. The law relating to walking distance effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distance will be measured by nearest available walking route;

Only the registered school of the child can authorise an absence.

Registration

Schools are required under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies. No pupil should be marked present unless in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity. The register should not have missing marks. When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late but counted as present for the session. When a pupil misses registration, they should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/ phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine. Pupils should not have access to the register. The headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be added or removed from the register; this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.

In addition to twice daily registration in form groups, a class register is taken for every lesson throughout the day. These are checked by the Head of Year / Phase to identify possible truancy and any pupil found to have missed a lesson. More information and guidance on school attendance codes can be accessed at <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/guidance-on-school-attendance-codes.pdf>

It can also be found in Appendix 1. It provides specific guidance to schools around how to use the codes to record attendance and absence in schools. Estyn has identified that schools that have both quality assurance procedures in place (with a member of the senior management team responsible for overseeing the coding of attendance) and good systems in place to analyse data are able to adapt their approaches to improve attendance.

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial if poor attendance and punctuality within a school are to be tackled. It is vital that pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day.

All staff involved with the registration process should be made aware that the law is specific regarding the keeping of registers. Marking and keeping the register is of the utmost importance and it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

National Context

Attendance is key to whole school improvement and has direct influence on a pupils' learning, progress and well-being.

The Welsh Government Guidance document, *Inclusion and Pupil Support 2016*, provides advice and guidance and sets out responsibilities for maintaining high levels of attendance, positive behaviour and well-being of all pupils.

The All Wales Attendance Framework provides a toolkit on practice standards and guidance for Education Welfare Service practitioners. This key document aims to ensure greater consistency of practice throughout Wales and the toolkit usefully includes a section for schools that contains examples of strategies that can be employed to improve school attendance and manage lateness.

Local Context

Blaenau Gwent County Council is committed to supporting positive school attendance by developing and implementing, policies and guidance documents aimed at improving levels of attendance and well-being for schools; providers of EOTAS, pupils, parents, and carers, in order to improve learning, progress and well-being for all pupils.

All schools in Blaenau Gwent are served by a small team of Education Welfare Officers, who provide a link between the schools, education services, families, children, and young people. The early intervention and support provided by an EWO includes improving whole school attendance, regular attendance meetings with school links, supporting individual pupils / families, and acting on behalf of the Local Authority to meet its legal responsibilities. The EWS service follow the attendance pathway (Appendix 2) and offers advice, guidance, support, and signposting to other services, working closely with health services, careers, youth services, police, and social services, with a focus on early intervention and support.

Support for Schools

We support schools to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance including:

- Recognising the importance of good attendance
- Recognising the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts
- Recognising improving attendance is a school leadership issue.
- Ensuring all staff know the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced.
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Demonstrating the benefits of good attendance throughout school life
- Recognising that irregular attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process.
- Recognising children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

School Policies

Blaenau Gwent encourages each school to have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand. School policies should:

- Include the attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents,
- Outline the name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Provide a detailed timetable of the school day for parents including times for morning and afternoon registration
- Share information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis
- Include the school's day to day processes for managing attendance
- Address how the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance
- Outline the school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most
- Outline the school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence
- Include the point at which Fixed Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought
- Ensure compliance with all statutory requirements.
- Ensure that clear information is regularly communicated to parents and pupils.
- Collect and make effective and constructive use of attendance data.
- Contain clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness.
- Recognise the importance of early intervention.
- Make provision for first day of absence contact.
- Monitor post-registration truancy through the taking of class registers and spot checks.
- Be alert to critical times (include reference to supporting attendance in all transition plans)
- Identify a range of strategies to deal with absenteeism / lateness.
- Develop attendance incentive schemes which recognise pupils' attendance achievements.
- Consider the setting of targets for individuals, classes, year groups, etc.
- Establish procedures for identifying and reintegrating long-term absentees.
- Provide for regular structured meetings between school staff and the EWO.
- Follow the attendance pathway (appendix 1) before an appropriate referral is made to the EWS.
- Stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time (schools should grant leave for term-time holidays sparingly)
- Highlight how they use opportunities such as parents' evenings and the school prospectus / brochure to remind parents of the school policy on attendance;
- Involve governors in the creation and updates of the school policy
- Identify a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance.
- Ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated.
- Be regularly monitored and reviewed; and
- Take steps to create a culture which encourages attendance, addressing school-based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism, the curriculum, etc.

A model attendance policy can be found in appendix 3.

Each school will also be provided with an operational level agreement between the school and the EWS to ensure best practice. – appendix 4

Whole school attendance improvement strategies

Instil a staff mindset of high expectations around attendance.

- Establish a senior leadership team presence around school to support punctuality to school and each lesson.
- Make good attendance everyone's responsibility.
- Work closely with parents.
- Involve the local community.
- Give pupils a purpose to be in school each day.
- Offer pupils the tools to come to school.
- Provide secure conditions for learning.
- Use your exciting curriculum and four purposes to entice pupils
- Anticipate family patterns.
- Appoint an attendance lead who's passionate about high expectations.
- Include clear stages of action in your attendance policy.

Blaenau Gwent EWS also offer training and resources to schools to support and improve whole school attendance which can be requested via the EWO and these include - Whole school attendance improvement, Positive attendance workshops with Pupils, Coding information, Attendance pathway training, best practice etc.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Engagement is key to improving attendance.

Some key actions which can support positive attendance include the following:

- Building positive relationships when children first start school. Home visits provide the opportunity to meet parents in a more relaxed setting and to share information about the importance of good attendance. This also allows the school to have an understanding of the individual context of children and families within the school.
- Providing clear guidance and information on attendance and the school's expectations.
- Allowing parents to feedback their views on attendance and to be involved in co-constructing the policy and approaches that the school adopt.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. The impact of EBSA on young people is far reaching. Outcomes for young people who

display EBSA include poor academic attainment, reduced social opportunities and limited employment opportunities (Garry 1996, Pellegrini 2007, and Taylor 2012).

There are information booklets for schools, parents, children, and young people. This guidance can be found on Blaenau Gwent Website.

Literature suggests that children experiencing EBSA, experience a range of 'push' and 'Pull' factors: 'Push' factors (i.e., those that push the child towards attending school or towards staying at home) • 'Pull' factors (i.e., those pull the child away from attending school or towards home). The literature indicates that EBSA is most likely to occur when the risks are greater than resilience and when the 'pull' factors that promote school avoidance overwhelm the 'push' factors that encourage school attendance.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p><u>PUSH- TOWARDS ATTENDING SCHOOLS</u> e.g., academically capable, school dinner, friends like certain subjects</p> | <p><u>PULL FACTORS- PULLING AWAY FROM SCHOOL (home factors)</u> E.g., worried about parent. Difficulties sleeping Parental illness</p> |
| <p><u>PULL FACTORS- AWAY FROM SCHOOL (School factors)</u> Poor relationships with peers Struggling with work Disengaged from curriculum. Prolonged period of absence Noisy environment Clashes with teachers</p> | <p><u>PUSH FACTORS - TOWARDS STAYING AT HOME</u> Reduced anxieties about leaving the home. Reduced anxieties about going to school. Reduced pressure around academic work. Not having to complete homework. Reduced peer pressure</p> |

School plays a key role in the identification of children and young people who are currently experiencing, or at risk of, EBSA. It is important for schools to develop effective whole school systems to support young people, be vigilant to early indicators and employ a thorough assess, plan, do and review cycle placing the young person at the heart of the interventions. To break the cycle, schools should be looking to recognise the early warning signs: a change in attendance and/or punctuality, reduced engagement or negative talk about school, or a change in behaviour. It is important that this includes front line and support staff, as well as parents and families, as they are most likely to experience early signs before it reaches Head of Year/ALNCo /Headteacher etc. For schools with young people experiencing EBSA and struggling with attendance, it is the Headteacher's decision whether to authorise absence or not.

If a school decides to refer a student to the EWS where EBSA is an issue, the expectation would be that the school will have tried and exhausted an array of strategies to encourage and support the young person's attendance, including those outlined in Blaenau Gwent documents as well as having exhausted supportive interventions from other professionals prior to the referral to the EWS. Following referral, the allocated worker from the EWS can then assess whether there is a focus of work for the team and provide further advice.

Working with parents is essential to successful outcomes. While the focus is on the child, it is also important to remember that parents may need their own support and consideration should be made to support services.

When undertaking direct work with children and families at risk of EBSA, areas which can be explored include the child's:

- educational history/ their early experiences at school
- strengths, interests, and aspirations
- any potential changes or losses within the family or child's life (You could ask them to draw a family tree/ genogram).
- Relationships with other children both in and out of school/ any adults within school
- academic progress School should be aware if the child has identified ALN needs and should ask about these needs and the support in place. If there is no identified ALN school should ask if they have any concerns, or if the child has spoken about difficulties.
- the child's views- what are their specific fears/worries, what is going well in school (e.g., teachers, lessons, friends) Behaviour and symptoms of anxiety When s/he is worried what does it look like? What do they say they are feeling?
- Typical day – when they go to school and when they do not go to school
- How does their non-attendance impact on parents/ carers? And on other family members?
- Exceptions to the problem- Have there been times when s/he managed to get into school? What was different about those times? Previous attempts to address the problem What has been the most helpful thing that someone else has done in dealing with the problem so far? What has helped in the past when things have been difficult? What strategies have been most helpful so far in managing their anxiety?

Safeguarding and child protection

All schools and education settings have statutory duties to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of learners. All staff members must be aware of and understand how to contact and raise concerns with the designated safeguarding person for the school. Absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and tracking and monitoring attendance has a crucial safeguarding role. Absence can signal possible wellbeing issues or problems at home.

Keeping Learners Safe guidance states that:

- Education settings should use their attendance policy and practice to ensure they are in regular contact with parents if a child is absent from school without authorisation or if they have patterns of absence. The child's attendance record at school could be an indicator of safeguarding concerns and an opportunity to identify and deal with abuse such as child exploitation.

- If a child is absent without notification, it could also be without the knowledge of their parent or carer and could be an early sign that the child is missing from home or care. The education setting should ensure any absence is followed up quickly to ensure the child is safe and not missing from home or care.
- If the education setting identifies the child is missing from home or care they should refer to the Wales Practice Guide 'Safeguarding children who go missing from home or care'.

Schools should regularly review attendance data to identify and respond to children who are at risk. Schools should have first day absence reporting processes in place and processes for deciding whether welfare sightings are needed. These systems should ensure back-up staff are in place when key attendance staff are themselves absent.

Where a child is registered at a school and subsequently attends a setting such as EOTAS the original school should assume responsibility for checking the child's attendance (at both settings) daily.

It is good practice for all staff to share information when necessary and lawful and to work closely with the designated safeguarding person and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure that support for vulnerable learners is timely and joined up. One of the specific circumstances in which data protection legislation allows the sharing of sensitive personal information without the consent of the child or parent is to safeguard children and protect them and others from harm. Staff should be trained to understand when information should be shared with other stakeholders and what information may be disclosed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parent / Carer Responsibilities

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their child / children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn (parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children, including:

- take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- attend parents' evenings and other school events, if possible;
- ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- be aware of letters from school which their child brings home or alternative communications from the school;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;

Improving attendance is everyone's business.

- always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;
- confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;
- avoid booking family holidays during term-time.
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.
- make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

If a child misses school without an explanation from the parents / carer, or if the school is not satisfied with the explanation, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised', that is, truancy.

Although parents / carers may provide a reason for the absence, it is the school that decides whether the absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

If parents / carers think there may be a reason why their child does not want to go to school, they should speak to their child's class teacher for help and support in the first instance.

| ATTENDANCE % | LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES | OUTCOME |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 95-100% attendance | Best chance of success | Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity. |
| 90-95% attendance | At least 2 weeks of learning missed | Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work. |
| 85-90% attendance | At least 4 weeks of learning missed | Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work. |
| 80-85% attendance | At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed | Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning. |
| Below 80% attendance | At least 7 ½ weeks of learning missed | Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution. |

School and Governing Bodies Responsibilities

All schools are expected to develop processes that meet the needs of their pupils and contexts that include arrangements to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school attendance policy.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance.
- Complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session*
- Stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence.

Improving attendance is everyone's business.

- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance by the Governing Body
- Work towards ensuring all pupils are supported and valued and so want to attend school.
- Proactively manage lateness.
- Encourage parents to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason.
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents.
- Develop positive relationships with parents / carers and external agencies working with the family/ pupil.
- Monitor and evaluate the early intervention strategies adopted by the school.
- Where reasonably possible, hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners and agencies.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence.
- Support the EWS audit when requested.

Schools should identify a designated member of staff for attendance matters, including monitoring registers, liaise with teaching staff, meet with the local authority officer on a regular basis, refer to other appropriate agencies, refer to school nurse in regards to the validity of an illness, oversee the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance, arrange for attendance meetings in the case of repeated, unexplained absences, ensure the EWO's role is known and understood in school, and ensure all staff are aware that attendance is the responsibility of all staff.

Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

* Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is a legal offence not to maintain accurate registers.

Attendance Pathway

In addressing patterns of poor attendance, schools are responsible for closely following the graduated and escalated response as duly outlined within the Blaenau Gwent 'Attendance Pathway' document. The key elements are noted below:

Improving attendance is everyone's business.

- Schools to contact home on the first, second and third morning of absence (when no explanation is received).
- If no contact on the third day of absence then the EWO can do a welfare check providing school have exhausted all avenues.
- Initial attendance concerns, school to send out Letter 1.
- If no improvement, school to send out Letter 2.
- If no improvement, school to arrange AIM 1 (Attendance Improvement Meeting).
- If no improvement, school to arrange AIM 2.

EWO's will support the school with their attendance at AIM's when able to do so. If an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the school and the appropriate steps have been followed, then a referral will be made to Blaenau Gwent Education Welfare Service for further investigation – EducationWelfareService@Blaenau-Gwent.gov.uk

Local Authority Responsibilities - Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The role of an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is to address any issues or difficulties that might prevent regular attendance. They will explore the reasons behind school absence, offer information and guidance, undertake planned interventions, advise families about specialist support services and support referrals to appropriate services when required.

The EWS provides support to schools, pupils, and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism. EWO's identify barriers to accessing education and supporting strategies to encourage positive outcomes. If school attendance has not improved following EWO involvement, there is an expectation that legal action will be explored.

There is an expectation that all pupils, regardless of their individual circumstances or needs, can secure their entitlement to high quality learning, teaching and support. Regular attendance is therefore critical if all our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities and support provided. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to allow children to achieve their full potential during term time at school. Regular attendance also ensures that children are safe and lessens the opportunities to become involved in truanting and associated anti-social activities.

EWS case work is managed via a referral system, with threshold criteria set below 85% - the LA's attendance pathway, FPN Code of Conduct & referral system are updated and shared each term by link EWO's, all of which are informed by up to date WG guidance, research and are available via Hwb / SharePoint links.

EWS encourages collaborative working between schools, agencies, and pupils to support best outcomes. Agencies and support available include: School Nurse, Youth Service, Families First, CAMHS, Pastoral Support Plans (PSP's) and Youth Offending Service

Penalty Notices

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school and alternative provisions is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities

available to them. In law, an offence occurs if a parent / carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school / alternative provision and that absence is not authorised by the school. The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LAs) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include Penalty Charge Notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

If a pupil has

- a minimum of 10 sessions (five school days) that have been lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and this brings the overall pupil's attendance to below 90% in the school year (these absences do not have to be consecutive)
- unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term-time if the absences take a pupil's overall school attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive), or
- persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed at least 10 sessions of late arrival (U code) within a term; these do not need to be consecutive but should bring a pupil's overall school attendance to under 90% in the school year to date.
 - A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice;
 - This rises to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt;
 - If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42-days, the local authority must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.

The prosecution proceedings will be for the offence of failing to secure the child's regular attendance at school and not for non-payment of the penalty fine. The prosecution will be brought under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Withdrawal of the notice can only take place in limited circumstances as set out in the Code of Conduct.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to allow children to achieve their full potential during term time at school. Regular attendance also ensures that children are safe and lessens the opportunities to become involved in truanting and associated anti-social activities.

For further information on Penalty Charge Notices please refer to the Code of Conduct.

It is important to note that if there are no valid reasons for non - attendance then there are a range of legal measures that may be implemented by the LA; these can include the issue of FPN's, Education Prosecutions, Education Supervision Orders and School Attendance orders.

The Local Authority can apply for an Education Supervision Order under section 36 Children's Act 1989 if it believes a child of compulsory school age is not being properly educated. This can include irregular attendance at school.

Data Analysis

The school and Local Authority should regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.

The key to this is regular data analysis to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

This can include:

- The monitoring and analysis of weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support.
- Looking further into patterns of attendance within a session to ensure all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons.
- Using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors.
- Identifying the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those pupils.
- Conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmarking attendance data.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor the data to evaluate the impact of whole school and bespoke attendance efforts.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the governing body.

Reduced hours, flexi-schooling, study leave and blended learning.

Reduced hours or part-time timetables, as part of a pastoral plan, can help learners reintegrate into a school after a long absence or be a means of preventing greater absence, they have the overall effect of reducing time in school for learners with a possible negative impact on their progress and wellbeing.

Such arrangements should generally be a short-term measure, with the intention of returning to full-time education as soon as feasible. They should never be used as a means of managing behavioural issues. All learners are entitled to a full-time education and access to the curriculum. In addition, schools are required to deliver the curriculum, other than where exceptions apply.

Reduced hours arrangements should be recorded in a plan as a formal arrangement between the parents, the child, and the school, for example as part of a reintegration plan following exclusion (see Exclusions from schools and PRUs section 6.7), or a managed move arrangement (see Effective managed moves - appendices include forms MM1 and MM2), or as part of a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) or Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).

When considering placing a learner on a reduced timetable, the school should:

- evaluate the support already implemented and have a clear rationale for the proposed arrangements, such as EOTAS or blended learning provision, considering the needs of the learner
- consider the need for any additional interventions such as external behaviour support or family support.

Once it has been agreed a child had a reduced timetable, the school should:

- set out the new arrangements in a written agreement such as a Pastoral Support Plan signed by all parties and supplemented by supporting evidence from professionals such as CAMHS, health consultants or educational psychologist
- provide a detailed written action plan to education, and their parent, or young person with a named person responsible, clear objectives, targets and review dates and a time frame for expected return to full-time education
- liaise throughout with the parents or carers, gain parental approval and written permission,
- liaise throughout with the local authority, and all relevant agencies, and provide them and the EWS with a copy of the Pastoral Support Plan
- risk assess the safeguarding implications of the learner being out of school and arrange that the pupil is sighted virtually by a professional regularly if face to face attendance is not possible
- review the arrangements regularly
- maintain a formal record of all learners on reduced timetables, including the date implemented and review dates.

Where a reduced timetable has been agreed by all parties, the offer of provision may also include distance or blended learning through the school's online platforms to ensure continuity of learning. Schools should not use code B (approved educational activity that counts as present) when a pupil is studying at home as part of an agreed reduced hours or part-time timetable arrangement. When not in school, learners are unsupervised, and the arrangement does not meet the legal definition of approved educational activity. The authorised absence registration code C should be used when a pupil has been placed on an agreed reduced hours, part-time timetable.

Appendices

Appendix 1 WG Attendance Code Guidance



attendance code
guidance.pdf

Appendix 2 Blaenau Gwent Attendance Pathway



EWS Attendance
Pathway Document 2

Appendix 3 Model Attendance Policy



Model attendance
policy.doc

Appendix 4 Blaenau Gwent Operational Level Agreement



OLA.doc

Appendix 5 School Allocation List



Schools Served by
Officers from Septerr

Appendix 6 Whole School Attendance letter example



SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE letter 1

Appendix 7 First Day Absence Response Guidance



School First Day Call
Procedure.docx



Our First Day
Response Procedure:

Appendix 8 Reason for Absence Letter



Reason for absence
letter.docx

Appendix 9 Holiday Request Form



APPLICATION FOR ANNUAL HOLIDAY Leave Request for Authorisation



Accepting a Parental Request for Authorisation



Declining a Parental Request for an authorisation



Relevant Consideration.docx

Appendix 10 Extended Holidays Form



Microsoft Word 97 - 2003 Document

Appendix 11 Emotionally Based School Avoidance



Blaenau Gwent Inclusion Service EBS

Appendix 12 Reduced Timetables



Policy on Reduced Timetables.docx

Appendix 13 Pregnant School Girls Guidance



Pregnant school girls Guidance.docx

Appendix 14 Policy on Children with a Parent/relative in Prison



Policy on education of children with a parent/relative in prison

Appendix 15 School Attendance Self Evaluation



SEWC School Attendance Self Evaluation

Appendix 16 Register Inspection Template



register inspections sept 2023.docx

Appendix 17 Targeted Support Meeting Template



Targeted Support
Meeting for attendar

Appendix 18 Traveller Attendance Guidance



Traveller Attendance
Guidance.docx

Appendix 19 Children Missing from Education Policy



CME Policy
September 2023.doc

Appendix 20 Education Welfare Service Legal Policy



Blaenau Gwent
Education Welfare S

Appendix 21 Fixed Penalty Notice Policy



Blaenau Gwent FPN
September 2023.doc

Appendix 22 Parenting Contracts and Orders



Parenting contracts
and parenting orders

Appendix 23 Educational Neglect Policy



Education Neglect
Policy.docx

Appendix 24 BG Protocol for Schools with Lower than Expected Rates of Attendance



BG Protocol for
Schools with Lower t

Appendix 25 Elective Home Education Policy



Elective Home
Education Policy 202

Appendix 26 Cross Border Working Protocol



Cross Border
Working Protocol SE

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been designed to help support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of statutory legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010. It consists of 10 main sections as outlined below:

You are only required to complete Section 1, 2, 3 or 4, if relevant, and it is appropriate to do so.

You must complete sections 5,6 & 7 as they are mandatory.

- Section 1 - Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Section 2 - Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards
- Section 3 - Socio-economic Duty
- Section 4 - Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way
- Section 5 - Data
- Section 6 - Consultation
- Section 7 - Decision

| Lead Officer | Head of Service | Service Area & Department | Date |
|---|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Service Manager for Inclusion, Julie Sambrook | Interim Head of Service, Kelly Mackay | School Improvement & Inclusion | September 2023 |

Briefly outline the proposal indicating what change or decision is to be made, also provide any documentation that may be used to support this. **What is the proposal that needs to be assessed?**

Inclusion Strategy and associated Policies and Guidance including:

ALN Policy

ALN Early Years Guidance

Exclusion Guidance

EOTAS Policy

EHE Policy

The Inclusion Strategy is a reviewed document for 2023/24; this strategy encompasses all policies, guidance and processes within the Inclusion Service Area, which is multi-faceted and wide ranging; a selection of which, as listed above, have been reviewed and updated according to changes in Welsh Government guidance and the continuation of ALN legislation implementation.

Section 1 – Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

Briefly outline below if there will be any positive or negative impacts, on any groups of people with protected characteristics, who are covered by the Equality Act 2010, as a result of the proposal being considered.

| Protected characteristics | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
|---|--|--|---|
| Age <i>(people of all ages)</i> | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |
| Disability <i>(people with disabilities/ long term conditions)</i> | Yes | No | AS ABOVE |
| Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth)</i> | Yes | No | As above |

| Protected characteristics | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
|--|--|--|---|
| Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i> | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)</i> | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |
| Race <i>(people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds)</i> | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |
| Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i> | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |

| Protected characteristics | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
|---|--|--|---|
| Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender)</i> | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |
| Sexual Orientation <i>(lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other)</i> | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |

Section 2 - Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the [Welsh Language Standards](#) require the Council to have 'due regard' for any positive or negative impacts that proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language.

| Requirements | Does the proposal have any positive, negative, or neutral impacts with regards to the below? | What can be done to mitigate any negative impacts? | Please demonstrate any evidence used to form this opinion. |
|---|--|--|--|
| Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>For example, Standards 88 - 93 – policy development and review of existing policies)</i> | Neutral | | All policies are translated in to the Welsh language |
| What opportunities are there to promote the Welsh Language? <i>For example, status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i> | No - All policies are now translated in to the Welsh language | | |
| What opportunities are there for a person to use the Welsh Language? <i>For example, staff, residents and visitors</i> | Policies are provided in both English and Welsh Language | | |
| Is the Welsh language being treated no less favourably than the English language? | No | | |

Section 3 - Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only – Please refer to our Corporate Reporting Guidance)

Welsh Government's [Socio-economic Duty](#) provides a framework to ensure tackling inequality of outcome is at the forefront of decision making.

Please consider how your proposal could affect the following groups:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system
- People misusing substances

| Socio Economic Disadvantages | Will the proposal have a positive, negative, or neutral impact? | How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined? | Please highlight any evidence that has been considered (quantitative or qualitative) |
|--|---|---|---|
| Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i> | Positive | | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |
| Low and/or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i> | Positive | | |
| Material Deprivation <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e., financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i> | Positive | | |
| Area Deprivation <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i> | Positive | | |

| | | | |
|--|----------|--|--|
| Socio-economic Background <i>(social class i.e., parents' education, employment and income)</i> | Positive | | |
| | | | |
| Socio-economic Disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i> | Positive | | |
| | | | |

Section 4 – Children’s Rights Approach - [The Right Way](#)

The Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It places the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrates children’s rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Right Way focuses on three main them Participation, Provision and Protection.

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Protected characteristics | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|

| | the Children's Rights Approach? | | |
|--|---------------------------------|----|---|
| Participation (child or young person as someone who actively contributes to society as a citizen) | Yes | No | Person Centred approaches |
| Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop) | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. |
| Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination) | Yes | No | All of the policies reviewed are put in to place to ensure positive impact on all of the learners within Blaenau Gwent. The policies are reviewed to ensure that they include and are cognisant of any recent updates/guidance and legislation. Including safeguarding. |

Section 5 - Data

Please outline any data or evidence that has been used to develop the proposal. For example, this can be previous consultations, national/regional/local data, pilot projects, reports, feedback from clients etc.

| What data/evidence was used? - provide any links. | What were the key findings? | How has the data/evidence informed this proposal? |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Inclusion and Pupil Support WG 2016 https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-05/guidance-inclusion-and-pupil-support_0.pdf</p> | <p>1.1.2 Effective inclusive schools and local authorities have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coherent plans for the development of inclusion linked to school improvement strategies • key personnel to drive forward inclusion and school improvement • a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, as well as access to and recognition of extra-curricular activities • high expectations and targets for inclusion • strategies to address the training and development needs of staff and governors • clear strategies to listen to the views of children and young people in order to best meet their needs • proactive joint-working practices which involve parents/carers and partner agencies. | <p>Inclusion Strategy and associated listed policies, guidance and processes were developed using National Legislative Policy & Guidance in a Blaenau Gwent context. This has now been reviewed to ensure that BG Strategy still aligns.</p> |

ALNET 2018

Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners WG 2020

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/guidance-supporting-vulnerable-disadvantaged-learners.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/exclusion-from-schools-pupil-referral-units.pdf>

Legislative background for vulnerable learners. Preparing an approach from September 2020 on the back on COVID pandemic lockdown. Preparing for another lockdown and the use of blended learning.

Under section 52(4) of the Education Act 2002, headteachers, teachers in charge of a PRU, governing bodies, LAs and independent appeal panels must by law have regard to this guidance when making decisions on exclusion and administering the exclusion procedures and appeals. There is a strong expectation that the guidance will be followed unless there is good reason to depart from it. The guidance is not exhaustive and judgements will need to take account of the circumstances of individual cases. These procedures apply to all maintained schools, including nursery

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2023-06/consultation-document-belonging-engaging-and-participating-guidance_0.pdf</p> <p>https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-05/elective-home-education-guidance-may-2023.pdf</p> | <p>schools and PRUs, and all learners in them, including any who are below or above compulsory school age.</p> <p>Updates to attendance guidance</p> <p>Updates to EHE guidance regarding 'suitable education'</p> | |
|---|--|--|





| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them? | | |
| N/A | | |

N/A

Section 6 - Consultation.

Using the questions below please provide details of any planned consultations or consultations that have been undertaken to support the proposal, referring to the Gunning Principles as appropriate:

Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.

Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?

Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?

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Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision

Please consider the following questions:

1. Who did you consult?

Liaised with officers within School Improvement and Inclusion Team from Education Directorate and colleagues from the Social Services Directorate, Early Years.

DMT/CLT

2. When did the consultation take place and was adequate time given for a response?

Summer 2023

3. Was there enough information provided to respond effectively?

Yes

4. What were the findings?

Strategy and associated policies and guidance required reviewing and updating to reflect new WG guidance.

5. Have the findings been considered with regards to the decision?

Yes

Section 7 - Decision

Using the information you have gathered from sections 1-9 please state in the table below whether you are able to proceed with the proposal.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Continue with the proposal in its current form | Yes |
| Continue with proposal but take into account reasonable steps to mitigate any negative impacts of the proposal | N/A |

Please contact Policy & Partnerships should you require any further advice or guidance on completing your assessment via lissa.friel@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 17

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**
Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**
Report Subject: **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV): Gwent Regional Strategy 2023 – 2027**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr H Trollope, Cabinet Member People and Social Services**
Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services Governance and Partnerships**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance and Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 14.09.23 | 07.09.23 | | | 19.09.23 | 04.10.23 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with the '*Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV): Gwent Regional Strategy 2023 – 2027*' (Appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) is everybody's business. Individuals have a right to live, work and enjoy communities that are safe, and free from abuse and violence.
- 2.2 This Strategy will set out how we are looking at achieving this vision across Gwent, in the prevention of VAWDASV, protection from VAWDASV and support for those impacted by VAWDASV. It will show that across Gwent, partners, stakeholders and those with lived experience of VAWDASV are committed to collaborative working and joined up approaches to tackle issues of abuse and violence.
- 2.3 Due to regional movements in the period leading up to and in development of this Strategy, there has been a limited evidence base to truly understand local needs. Acknowledging the absence of quantitative and analytical data, this Strategy has been informed by the needs and demands of the sector through regional workshops and stakeholder meetings. Lived experience has also informed this Strategy through survivor engagement.
- 2.4 The six objectives outlined within the Strategy have been developed in the context of Welsh Government's National Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2022-2026. To achieve these objectives, priorities have been separated into two approaches:

Fundamentals (areas integral to successful change)

1. Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021 (Section 3)

2. Regional Structures Reform
3. Infrastructure for Regional Services and Delivery

Focus Areas (specifically reflecting the regional needs of the Gwent population)

1. Tackling Perpetration
 2. Children and Young People
 3. Misogyny and Harassment
 4. Multiple or Co-occurring Needs
- 2.5 The Strategic Plan outlines how we intend to achieve these priorities by 2027. Delivery of the priorities will be detailed within an Annual Delivery Plan, agreed each year through the governance structures in place for the region.

Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 This report was considered by the People Scrutiny Committee on 19th September 2023, and Option 1 was recommended for approval by Cabinet.
- 3.2 **Option 1**
For Cabinet to consider and approve the strategy.

Option 2

To consider the strategy content and suggest any areas for improvement relating to the three Fundamentals outlined paragraph 2.4 above (and below), prior to approval:

1. Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021 (Section 3)
2. Regional Structures Reform
3. Infrastructure for Regional Services and Delivery

Any suggested improvements to the Fundamentals will be considered under the respective VAWDASV sub-groups between September and November 2023.

4. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 4.1 The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council strategic representative on the VAWDASV Board is Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships; supported by Helena Hunt, Professional Lead Community Safety.
5. **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV): Gwent Regional Strategy 2023 – 2027

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV): Gwent Regional Strategy 2023 – 2027

This document is available in Welsh
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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Executive Summary

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) is everybody's business. Individuals have a right to live, work and enjoy communities that are safe, and free from abuse and violence.

This Strategy will set out how we are looking at achieving this vision across Gwent, in the prevention of VAWDASV, protection from VAWDASV and support for those impacted by VAWDASV. It will show that across Gwent, partners, stakeholders and those with lived experience of VAWDASV are committed to collaborative working and joined up approaches to tackle issues of abuse and violence.

Due to regional movements in the period leading up to and in development of this Strategy, there has been a limited evidence base to truly understand local needs. Acknowledging the absence of quantitative and analytical data, this Strategy has been informed by the needs and demands of the sector through regional workshops and stakeholder meetings. Lived experience has also informed this Strategy through survivor engagement.

The six objectives outlined within the Strategy have been developed in the context of Welsh Government's National Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2022-2026. To achieve these objectives, priorities have been separated into two approaches:

Fundamentals (areas integral to successful change)

1. Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021 (Section 3)
2. Regional Structures Reform
3. Infrastructure for Regional Services and Delivery

Focus Areas (specifically reflecting the regional needs of the Gwent population)

1. Tackling Perpetration
2. Children and Young People
3. Misogyny and Harassment
4. Multiple or Co-occurring Needs

The Strategic Plan outlines how we intend to achieve these priorities by 2027. Delivery of the priorities will be detailed within an Annual Delivery Plan, agreed each year through the governance structures in place for the region.

Although not specifically detailed within the Strategy, there will be definitive links across wider partners to embed VAWDASV as core business beyond the sector. These links include the regional Suicide and Self-Harm group, the IRIS programme in GP surgeries, Remote

Evidence Site under His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) and Local Criminal Justice Board to name a few.

Our Strategy is ambitious as challenges to tackling abuse and violence are becoming greater - strong leadership is required if we are going to achieve a whole system approach for VAWDASV to be everybody's business. For the next four years, the regional VAWDASV Board and Strategic Delivery Group are committed to ensuring that VAWDASV partners and stakeholders not only support the implementation and delivery of this Strategy, through contributing and developing evidence, but also take ownership and hold accountability under the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act, 2015. It is only in this way that we can support a Gwent population that is safe, healthy and free from abuse and violence.



Statement of Intent

This Strategy builds on the Gwent VAWDASV Strategy 2018-2023 which set out the regional integrated approach to stop violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and families affected by abuse, whilst also holding to account those who perpetrate such abuse.

Our vision is for the region to be a safe place for all those impacted by VAWDASV - whether this be in the prevention of, protection from, or support to recover from VAWDASV. To achieve the vision, the Strategy creates a high level, single point of reference across the region for:

“Relevant Authorities” – a framework to support the requirements set out in the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

Wider stakeholders – a clear, co-produced and collectively agreed priorities and expectations to improve outcomes for all individuals and families experiencing any form of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Commissioners - whilst recognising that this is not a commissioning strategy, the content and associated strategic delivery plan should inform and influence Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence commissioning decisions and investment of resources across the region

Survivors - a transparent way forward, defining how we tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence to be held accountable in our implementation of this Strategy

It will also detail how the existing partnerships and collaborative working arrangements between non-devolved and devolved public bodies, statutory services, specialist sector and the third sector will be further developed and strengthened, to move towards a society where everybody is able to live fear free from violence and abuse.

It is intended that this Strategy and the associated focus areas and activities detailed within the region’s annual delivery plan, will support the Welsh Government and UK Government legislative, strategic and delivery framework to achieve the prevention of violence and abuse, the protection of victims and support for all those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Introduction

Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) is a complex landscape, but in Wales, the UK and across the world, VAWDASV is considered to be a violation of human rights and a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men. It happens to women because they are women, and women are disproportionately impacted by certain forms of violence.

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence includes domestic abuse (physical, financial and emotional), coercive or controlling behaviour, rape, sexual assault and sexual violence, stalking, harassment, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of 'honour', modern day slavery and trafficking, and sexual exploitation (including commercially through the sex industry, and sexual harassment).

VAWDASV has far reaching consequences for families, children, communities, and society. The direct harm to the health and well-being of victims is clear, and at its most severe can, and does, result in death. However, impacts are wide-ranging - not just on health and wellbeing, but also on poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and the economy. It is also important to note that VAWDASV not only affects adults who experience abuse in the home, in intimate or family relationships but children also - for the first time, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims in their own right. Wider family members can also be impacted by VAWDASV as well as the experience of abuse and violence often being perpetrated in public spaces impacting the wider community.

It is important to note that whilst this Strategy (as well as legislation and policy referred to), references violence against women and girls, it is because it is acknowledging the disproportionate experience of women and girls. It does not - in any way - negate violence and abuse directed towards men, boys and other genders, or violence and abuse perpetrated by women and other genders. This Strategy recognises that anyone (all genders, older people, young people and children) can experience and be affected by domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, sexual abuse, forced marriage, child sexual abuse, stalking and harassment, sexual harassment and exploitation and this can happen in any relationship regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or belief, income, geography or lifestyle.

Similarly, throughout this document, language will be used that readers may not identify or associate with. The Strategy uses commonly used language which is not defined by its term or wording. A Glossary is provided in the Appendix of this Strategy for further reference.

Legislative Context

Welsh Government has led the way in their tackling of VAWDASV in Wales; starting with the Right To Be Safe Strategy (2010) which was updated in 2016, published as the National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (2016-2021), following the enactment of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act'). The Act, which aims to improve:

- a) arrangements for the prevention of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- b) arrangements for the protection of victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence and
- c) support for people affected by gender-based violence, domestic abuse, and sexual violence;

places an emphasis on Relevant Authorities¹ responsibilities to achieve Welsh Government's vision to end violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales, and their ambition for zero VAWDASV.

This Strategy will also support the delivery of a number of key priorities across Welsh and UK Government. In considering this Strategy, context should also be given to the following legislation and its purpose:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – an Act that guarantees an independent Domestic Abuse Commissioner to be the voice that speaks on behalf of victims and survivors of domestic abuse. It also sets out the statutory powers available to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to raise public awareness and hold both agencies and government to account in tackling domestic abuse.
- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of those in Wales, through an approach of seven wellbeing goals that ensures public bodies think about the long term, work better with people, communities, and each other; looking to prevent problems and taking a more joined-up approach.
- The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 – providing a framework for care and support in Wales; improving the wellbeing of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming the way in which services are commissioned.

¹ Meaning of "relevant authority" - [Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/12/section-10)

- The Modern Slavery Act 2015 – providing the tools to fight modern slavery; ensuring perpetrators can receive suitably severe punishments for these appalling crimes and enhance support and protection for victims.
- Crime and Security Act 2010 – provides procedures for Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS).
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – making it a criminal offence to force somebody to marry.
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 – underpinning Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Orders and an FGM mandatory reporting duty.
- Serious Crime Act 2015 – supports punishment of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship and strengthened measures to manage people who commit sexual offences or those who pose a risk of sexual harm.
- Housing (Wales) Act 2014 – enshrines local authorities in preventing and alleviating homelessness.
- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 – improving how individuals rent, manage and live in rented homes in Wales, including support victims and survivors escaping VAWDASV and enabling perpetrators to be targeted for eviction.
- Equality Act 2010 – protecting individuals from discrimination in the workplace and wider society to strengthen protections and supports actions where there has been unlawful treatment of individuals.

Policy Linkages

Successfully implementing this Strategy requires coordination across several areas of policy. This Strategy will hold links to, and with, the following policy areas:

- Health

VAWDASV recognisably has an impact on mental health, often presenting as depression and anxiety, PTSD, and poor wellbeing. There can also be direct effects on physical health and reproductive health, as well as wider family wellbeing and public health. Aligning VAWDASV with health policies and long-term collaboration with GP's, Hospitals and Community Health Services is key to successful outcomes for the population. This Strategy will be coordinated in line with Welsh Government's 'A Healthier Wales' Plan (2018), Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy (Talk to Me 2) and Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010.

- Substance Use

Those who experience or perpetrate VAWDASV can often be entrenched in circumstances of harmful substance use. Links are therefore crucial on both a strategic and operational level, to ensure support for addressing presenting substance use needs, as well as looking to address underlying, long-term causality. Implementation of this Strategy will be approached with consideration of Welsh Government's Substance Misuse Delivery Plan and align with Gwent Substance use Area Planning Board policies.

- Housing and Homelessness

Preventing homelessness, protecting housing rights and provision of good quality, safe accommodation is vital to ensuring stability and safety for people experiencing VAWDASV. This Strategy will draw links with housing policy and implementation of local housing strategies to ensure housing support for all those who experience VAWDASV, including older people, individuals with protected characteristics and those with multiple or co-occurring needs.

- Social Services and Safeguarding

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures and All Wales Practice Guides provides a solid framework for safeguarding adults, children and young people who are at risk of harm, neglect, or abuse. Many people who experience or perpetrate VAWDASV often have historical or existing relationship with Social Services so this Strategy will be coordinated with the drivers within statutory services. As VAWDASV victims may require safeguarding arrangements, this Strategy will also demonstrate alignment with Gwent Safeguarding Board policies and procedures and robust multi-agency working through strategic leads and governance structures.

- Education

With the Curriculum for Wales guidance enabling each school to develop its own curriculum, education will be key to the prevention of future VAWDASV through 'healthy relationship' and early intervention work. This Strategy will link to Healthy Schools Coordinator provision and consider how the commissioning, planning and delivery of VAWDASV approaches in education can support the four purposes of curriculum design and skills that can be developed within learning.

- Equalities

The Gender Equality Plan; Framework for Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living; Race Equality Action Plan; LGBTQ+ Action Plan; guidance from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and Welsh Government No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Guidance will all underpin the delivery of this Strategy. There will also be links to structures that champion intersectionality and allyship (such as networks and forums), to ensure that this Strategy delivers for all across the region in the pursuit of its objectives.

UK Context

The success of this Strategy relies on acknowledging the UK context and how, non-devolved bodies² are key partners in tackling VAWDASV. To support a consistent approach between UK Government and local, devolved areas, this Strategy will be supported by the UK Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2021 and Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan 2022. Guidance that will also inform the implementation of this Strategy includes:

² Police Forces, Police and Crime Commissioners and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service



- *Controlling or Coercive Behaviour Statutory Guidance (April 2022)* which provides information on controlling or coercive behaviour, to assist the police, criminal justice and other agencies in identifying, evidencing, charging, prosecuting and convicting the offence as well as providing information on how to reduce the risk of harm to the victim and their family; provide support for the victim and their family, including how other agencies and support services can assist; and manage the perpetrator
- *Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations (December 2016)* which sets out what local commissioners (Police and Crime Commissioners, Local Authorities, or health commissioners) need to put in place to ensure their response to violence against women and girls is collaborative, robust and effective
- *Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme Guidance (March 2014)* (often referred to as “Clare’s Law”) which sets out procedures that could be used by the police to disclose information about an individual’s previous violent and abusive offending, where this may help protect their partner, or ex-partner, from violence or abuse
- *Multi-agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (July 2020)* issued under section 5C(1) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) and extends to England and Wales, setting out the responsibilities of agencies involved in safeguarding and supporting women and girls affected by FGM
- *Multi-agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews (December 2016)* which sets out the purpose of a domestic homicide review, conducting a review and involving family and friends
- *National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE): “Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working”* – guidance that covers planning and delivering multi-agency services for domestic violence and abuse; aiming to identify, prevent and reduce domestic violence and abuse among women and men in heterosexual or same-sex relationships, and among young people

Global Context

There is acknowledgement that VAWDASV is a global issue. The UK is a member of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (‘Istanbul Convention’) and this Strategy will root itself in the minimum standards of the convention to prevent, protect and support victims and prosecute perpetrators and offenders. It will also align with the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993), enshrined within the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (2015).

Regional Context

The Gwent region covers the five local authority areas of Blaenau Gwent (BGCBC), Caerphilly (CCBC), Monmouthshire (MCC), Newport (NCC) and Torfaen (TCBC). The region is culturally diverse and has socio-economically disadvantaged communities with 12% of Gwent defined as ‘most deprived’³. Across the five local authorities, there is an ethnic minority population of around 5.2%, rising to around 12.5% in Newport⁴. The geography of the region is also varied and includes rural countryside areas, urban centres and the most easterly of the South Wales Valleys.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
|  Area | The total area of Gwent is 158,500 hectares – approximately 7.6% of the total area of Wales. | | | | |
| | Blaenau-Gwent | Caerphilly | Monmouthshire | Newport | Torfaen |
| | 10,900 | 28,000 | 88,000 | 19,000 | 12,600 |
|  Population | The estimated population of Gwent is 594,164 , approximately 19% of the total population for Wales ¹ | | | | |
| | Blaenau-Gwent | Caerphilly | Monmouthshire | Newport | Torfaen |
| | 69,862 | 181,075 | 94,590 | 154,676 | 93,961 |

Source: Gwent Public Services Board Wellbeing Assessment (May 2022)

The most recent Wellbeing Assessment for Gwent (May 2022) noted that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence continues to be an issue across Gwent and there is a need for robust arrangements for the prevention, protection and support for individuals affected by such violence and abuse. The 2022 Population Needs Assessment confirmed the below priority outcomes for the region following engagement with citizens and partners⁵:

- Provide earlier intervention and safeguarding arrangements to potential victims through ‘Ask & Act’
- Safeguard victims, including men, through effective partnership support

Within the footprint of the region, there is also the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), Heddllu Gwent Police, the Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner

³ [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(full Index update with ranks\): 2019 | GOV.WALES](#)

⁴ [joint-strategic-equality-plan-2020.pdf \(gwent.police.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence - Gwentprb](#)

(OPCC), His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Under this footprint, Gwent has recently become a Marmot Region⁶, adopting the eight Marmot principles to reduce health inequalities across the region.

This Strategy acknowledges that the region's equality and diversity is not properly captured within its contents and there is a need to do more to understand equality and diversity in VAWDASV, as different and diverse communities will require varying responses and resources. As such, the VAWDASV Board are committing to understanding these needs and responding to them in the delivery of this Strategy.

Within the region there is also a range of existing activities, provision and support services in place to prevent, protect and support those affected by VAWDASV. Some of these include early intervention programmes, refuges, counselling services, multi-agency arrangements for the support and safety planning of high-risk victims and forums for identifying and disrupting perpetrators. This Strategy will continue to build on the good work that is being delivered in Gwent in pursuit of achieving the Strategy objectives.

⁶ [Gwent Marmot Region - Gwent Public Services Board Gwent Public Services Board \(gwentpsb.org\)](https://www.gwentpsb.org)

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Gwent

Prevalence and Scale

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are large scale, pervasive problems which, every year causes needless deaths and damage to thousands of lives across Wales. Whilst the incidence of VAWDASV is high, those who experience these forms of violence and abuse are known to under-report and official data therefore represents an under representation of the problem. Key data we have that confirms the prevalence and scale includes:

Domestic Abuse

21,558 Victims

Incidents

Jan '20 to Dec '22 (Source: Gwent Police)

16,342 Victims

Crimes

Honour Based Abuse (HBA)

109 incidents

Jan '20 to Dec '22 (Source: Gwent Police)

81 HBA crimes

Serious Sexual Offences

16,780

Jan '20 to Dec '22
(Source: Gwent Police)

Initial MARAC Referrals

864

2020

1,219

2022

(Source: Gwent Police)

Counselling for Sexual Violence & Abuse

921 Individuals (115 Children/Young People, 806 Adults)

Apr '21 to Mar '22 (Source: New Pathways and Cyfannol Women's Aid)

In the implementation of this Strategy, the prevalence and scale of VAWDASV across Gwent will be understood and monitored through ongoing cycles of needs assessments. In addition, recognising that there is a lack of data and statistics supporting prevalence and scale for the varying social constructs, consideration will be given during this Strategy as to how VAWDASV agencies and organisations can support improved data collection for more informed and accurate needs assessments.

Strategy Development

Methodology

To inform the development of this Strategy, information from the following sources were reviewed:

- Welsh Government Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence National Strategy (2022-2026)
- Gwent Wellbeing Assessment (published 5 May 2022)
- The most recent VAWDASV Needs Assessment (July 2020)
- Gwent Police Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Plan 2021-2024
- Needs mapping information submitted by Gwent VAWDASV sector providers (October 2022)
- Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Development Session (December 2022)
- Stakeholder Engagement Meetings (October to December 2022)
- Survivor Engagement Sessions (October to December 2022)

Findings

The region, like the rest of Wales, the UK and the world has recently experienced a pandemic, and a resurgence and recovery from COVID-19 is still to be wholly experienced. This recovery has also been impacted by the current cost of living crisis thereby enabling a 'perfect storm' of economic and societal challenges that are facilitating further gender inequalities. During engagement with stakeholders and survivors, the increasing pressure on services and resources, together with the complexity of cases, economic challenges and workforce resilience issues have been clear.

'We are seeing more people needing support, but our team are working on a reduced service offer because so many of us are unwell with Covid'

Practitioner from the Specialist Sector

'MARAC meetings have been occurring far more regularly in response to the increase in demand... on average, they are currently 140 MARAC referrals per month... in response to the influx in referrals, partners are feeling the pressure and are struggling to remain engaged in the MARAC process'

Information provided at VAWDASV Subgroup, September 2022

Across the region, the strain on public and specialist services, and the complexities that are now being faced - that need supporting and adequately resourcing - has been recognised by all stakeholders. Emerging themes and priorities identified by stakeholders as part of the methodology for this Strategy, included:

Violence Against Women

- There needs to be a better understanding of experiences of women and girls in relation to misogyny and workplace harassment
- Misogyny needs tackling – calling it out, challenging behaviour and attitudes, changing social norms, culture, and attitudes; treating misogyny as a hate crime
- Street harassment - uninvited attention from males where males do not see their behaviour as unacceptable, or as opportunistic chance to target vulnerable women
- No male accountability for behaviour – women have to protect themselves rather than males changing their behaviour or championing behaviour change across their peer groups, social circles etc.
- Stalking and associated risks needs more resource, especially where the Internet of Things (IoT)⁷ is part of stalking, and in its continued development at pace, technology cannot be escaped. For example, targeting social media, sharing information and photos, revenge porn, young people not recognising the consequences of engaging in some social media activities (e.g., sharing pictures)
- Lack of trust in police – people having confidence to report, confidence of getting a response (criminal justice) and abuse of power
- Workplace harassment – supporting the response to build trust and prevent abuse of power
- A need for awareness of support available to prevent, protect and support victims of violence against women, aside from police and criminal justice processes
- Online abuse is becoming more prevalent and inappropriate behaviour being seen at younger ages (role modelling from reality TV, social media, music lyrics) – impacting on healthy relationships for young people at a peer and child-parent level
- Lack of understanding around Honour Based Abuse (HBA), forced marriage and FGM which is leading to difficulty in identification, response and understanding ‘what works’
- Coercion and control – double edge through technology as well as in person
- Huge demand on MARAC – number of referrals, complexity of cases, high level numbers
- Bystander/Allyship as a response to awareness raising, challenging attitudes and behaviours and support to report

⁷ Internet of Things include physical objects (or groups of such objects) that have sensors, processing ability, software and other technologies that connect and exchange data with other devices and systems remotely via the internet or other communication devices (e.g., smart speakers, home security cameras, smart devices, Hives, Air Tags)

Domestic Abuse

- Needs to be a whole family approach to supporting domestic abuse – victim, perpetrator and child/young people; tackles perpetration as well as support for victim and wellbeing of family; prevents main parent/caregiver being viewed as incapable of, or having poor parenting skills trying to keep child(ren) safe
- Housing supply is an issue – move on options are limited and people are in refuge longer than they need to be which prevents access for those who need it
- Limited engagement with/from health in identification of support, response and collaboration with other agencies across the sector, outside of GP based IRIS⁸ programme
- Coercion and control – awareness and information needed on controlling behaviours versus coercive behaviours and perceptions of these in relationships
- Consideration of links between domestic abuse, substance use and mental health (multiple or co-occurring needs) – services offer support on presenting need so can see demand on mental health, substance use, VAWDASV services and police but needs aligned approach
- Repeat victims of domestic abuse – not clear on what support is available or poor support is offered because professionals do not know individual is repeat victim so whole picture not understood to provide appropriate support
- DASH as a risk assessment tool – may flag other forms of VAWDASV but focus is on the reported issue; can often miss nuances of relationship issues or richness of information to be disclosed
- Strangulation (non-fatal) needs further learning to prevent and support
- MARAC demand – increase in referrals and under-resourced MARAC team
- Child/adolescent on parent violence – gap in services; delayed reporting; minimisation where child on parent or intrafamilial abuse or violence to protect perpetrator
- Perpetrators presenting as victims can lead to mistrust in services for actual victims

Sexual Violence

- Women and girl's safety – at night (with a specific reference to training across the night-time economy (e.g., Taxi Drivers, Door Security Staff, Bar Staff) around identifying vulnerabilities); in communities; sexual harassment in public; inappropriate touching in street and schools; sex trafficking; street-based work; male misogyny and attitudes of 'entitlement to sex'; abuse of power within professions (e.g., sexual favours)
- Sexual exploitation – through peer relationships, intimate partner relationships, for commercial purposes or via dating sites
- Lack of widespread understanding of prevalence and type of sexual violence issues

⁸ [Iris Programme \(llamau.org.uk\)](http://Iris Programme (llamau.org.uk))

- Abuse through technology – threats to disclose messages or images, online sexual exploitation and radicalisation of young people who are particularly susceptible (leading to child sexual exploitation)
- Gateway offences (offences, or first-time offences, where consequence or punishment is light) offers to identify early indicators and progression of sexual violence (e.g., exposure)
- Social media contributing to ideologies and modelling of behaviours that are inappropriate and unacceptable, glorifying behaviours and putting pressure on young people – sexting; grooming; access to pornography; Only Fans content; a risk that social media behaviours are becoming normalised and accepted
- Lack of understanding and support for young people displaying problematic or harmful sexual behaviours
- Lack of understanding around choice in relationships (young people and adults) – consent versus coercion
- Lack of models or programmes available for perpetrators of sexual violence – no health services or support available for people who have, or might commit sexual offences
- Sexual offences viewed as police responsibility – rape team within police but lack of programmes or resource for perpetrators where there is no conviction
- Lack of acknowledgement around the complexity of trauma and support required for victims of sexual abuse or violence
- Increase in ‘incel’ ideology and cultures – moving away from ‘incel’ forums that are filled with self-pity towards grievances against women and girls, misogyny and advocating graphic sexual violence

Intersectionality

- More male victims coming forward but still unconscious bias in response
- Data showing increase in older people now reporting they are victims
- Elder abuse - opportunities for older people to come forward to report controlling or abusive behaviours; can be experiencing abuse or violence from older child living at home; increase in domestic homicides in older people (50+ years old) in region
- Preventing VAWDASV perpetrated in care homes – psychiatric units, refugee centres, older persons care home (i.e., institutionalised settings)
- Rough Sleepers – support to escape exploitation in adolescence, street-based exploitation, street drinking if individuals are not able to access refuge
- Engagement with minority ethnic groups as well as those with protected characteristics (deaf, LGBTQ+, disability, Gypsy Roma Travellers accessing support or fleeing communities) needs to be properly considered
- Seeing more and more funding opportunities requiring services to be ‘by and for’ or led by individuals with lived experience
- Difficult to meet the needs of everybody in refuge – language, cultural sensitivity

- More resources to support same sex relationships where there is domestic abuse/violence and transgender victims – people and services often not knowing or being resourced to support as situations do not fit into ‘norms’
- Older people – wanting acknowledgement and support for historical incidences of sexual violence of abuse

Accessibility

- Resources do not match the scale and ambition of tackling issues
- Evidence of increase in older people being victims of domestic homicides and not all services being accessible for all ages (e.g., older people experiencing abuse or wanted to flee are considered for residential home when not suitable)
- Funding issues post pandemic, cost of living crisis and continued economic challenges being faced and sustainability of services
- Too much compartmentalisation within funding and political oversight (social care, health, justice) – need to be more collaborative with streamlined approaches and joined up support
- Impact of challenges and issues leads to increase in statutory services threshold
- Access to refuge if in full time work or no access to public funds – can prevent people from fleeing or leave them at risk of homelessness, being ‘bounced’ around services and agencies
- Need funding that supports flexibility to provide equal access to resourced services – currently not equal across rural areas
- Implementation of Domestic Abuse Act and resource requirements – extending time period for domestic abuse related common assault; children and young people identified as victims in their own right; non-fatal strangulation offence

Workforce Resilience

- Recruitment and retention of sector staff is a huge issue – combination of Covid burnout, salary offers (lack of value on roles and salaries), impact of cost of living and mental demands of role
- Time required to familiarise and implement training undertaken, knowledge and skills developed (i.e., dedicated time post training to research, shadow, experience and implement to strengthen response and support continuous service improvement)
- Cultural competence is needed to be able to identify, respond to and support Gwent’s diverse cultures
- Requirement for public health approach, trauma informed approach, equalities approach and being led by lived experience but no capacity to become trained and no resource to implement these approaches successfully and meaningfully

- Professionals are passionate and committed to their delivery and making a difference, but challenges make it difficult to create environments that better support staff

Specific Considerations

Proposed legislation that was also heavily referred to throughout this Strategy development, which will require specific consideration for Strategy and policy alignment, governance, action, and resource implications in addressing VAWDASV across the region included:

Serious Violence Duty

The Duty covers the requirements set out in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (2022) for specified authorities⁹ within a local government area, to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence¹⁰; including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area.

The Duty does not require the creation of new multi-agency structures as existing local structures can be used to comply with the requirements of the Duty, but essentially, specified authorities must work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in their local areas and, ultimately, improve community safety and safeguarding.

Online Safety Bill

The Bill introduces new rules for firms which host user-generated content, i.e., those which will allow users to post their own content online or interact with each other, and for search engines, which will have tailored duties focused on minimising the presentation of harmful search results to the users. Platforms that fail to protect people will need to answer to the regulator and can face heavy fines or in serious cases, be blocked. All platforms in scope will need to tackle and remove illegal material online, particularly material relating to child sexual exploitation and abuse. The new online safety laws will make the internet a safer place for everyone in the UK, especially children.

Victims Bill

Published in May 2022, this draft bill when legislated will affect all victims of crime, but it is anticipated those most affected will be victims of serious crime, including VAWDASV. The draft Victims Bill includes measures that will:

⁹ Specified Authorities include Police, Justice (Probation services and Youth Offending Teams), Fire and Rescue, Health and Local Authorities

¹⁰ Whilst the Duty does not specifically have to include domestic abuse and sexual violence, the region's partners will look to see how this can be included within the Strategic Needs Assessment

- amplify victims' voices and make sure victims are at the heart of the criminal justice system
- improve support for victims to cope and recover from the impact of crime and enable them to engage with the criminal justice system
- strengthen transparency and oversight of criminal justice agencies at local and national level so that victims' experiences support them to engage, and remain engaged with, the criminal justice system

These measures will help victims to have confidence that there is the right support available and that if they report crime, the criminal justice system will treat them in the way they should rightly expect.

Public Sexual Harassment

In 2022 the Home Office consulted on the option of creating a new public sexual harassment criminal offence. With the vast majority of respondents considering public sexual harassment to be a widespread problem (despite already being illegal), it will now be made a specific offence with a maximum sentence of two years. This commits the government to pursuing new legislation which builds on the intentional 'harass, alarm, distress' definition first established in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 as well as setting out new guidance for Police and Prosecutors on sexual harassment.

Survivors As Experts

In understanding the emerging themes and priorities for VAWDASV across the region, stakeholders acknowledged the importance of survivors as experts. Survivors' voices are central to providing a perspective that no agency can realise unless they have mechanisms within their organisations for the development and delivery of services led by people with lived experience. In the development of this Strategy, survivors have told us what works well across the region, as well as the challenges they experience.

The responding officers were absolutely fantastic. Even though I was hysterical and all responding officers were male, when trying to calm me down no one was condescending. They listened to what I had to say, answered any questions I had and told me what would happen next

*Victim who had been assaulted by her partner
and locked herself in a different part of the house until help arrived*

When I left my abuser I was housed in a temporary flat but this left me isolated. I was nervous, on my own and had been brainwashed. I'd lost my independence. I started to talk to neighbours but later learned that there was a perpetrator upstairs in my block after he committed a really serious offence. It frightened and retraumatised me. Was there any thought or consideration given to my circumstances and who I would be living around when I was housed there? If you are a victim of domestic abuse housing should consider this

Survivor Voice, October 2022

Survivor engagement as part of this Strategy development has been rich and insightful. The voices of those with lived experience has been reflected throughout and will continue to influence regional delivery plans, developments and focus areas.

It is important to note that there was no consultation with male survivors as part of this process. The reason for this was twofold. Firstly, there are limited services that are supporting male survivors and secondly, those identified did not want to participate. Similarly, survivors of sexual violence are under-represented due to the barriers they face in engagement activities (e.g., risk of re-traumatisation and higher levels of support needed). This means there are significant gaps in knowledge; however, in the delivery of this Strategy and regional work, there will be a commitment to supporting engagement and participation by all survivors, with an emphasis on creating suitable opportunities for engagement where they do not already exist.

Survivor engagement will primarily be achieved through existing structures, including the Gwent Police Survivor Engagement Network, the National Strategy workstreams for Survivor Engagement and groups and forums that exist within specialist sector organisations. In addition to these forums, this Strategy will prioritise on-going engagement, participation – and where possible – co-production with survivors and individuals with lived experience through the following commitments:

- supporting organisations and providers to **embed a culture** of engagement and participation for ongoing development of services or response to VAWDASV
- facilitating support to **overcome structural barriers** that can exclude or hinder participation
- **welcoming different practices** and models of participation; especially those that support participation from seldom heard communities, black and minority ethnic groups and individuals with protected characteristics or communication difficulties
- **supporting reviews** on the effects and impact of participation to increase accountability to survivors, supporting outcome focused approaches

Noting the ambition to embed equality and diversity within the delivery of the Strategy across the region, survivor engagement in the coming years will consciously uphold principles of inclusivity to support survivor voice by individuals with protected characteristics. Links will also be made with existing forums (e.g., Children’s Commissioner, Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s Office and Welsh Government Children & Young People Blueprint workstream) to ensure the voices of children and young people are also reflected in our work.

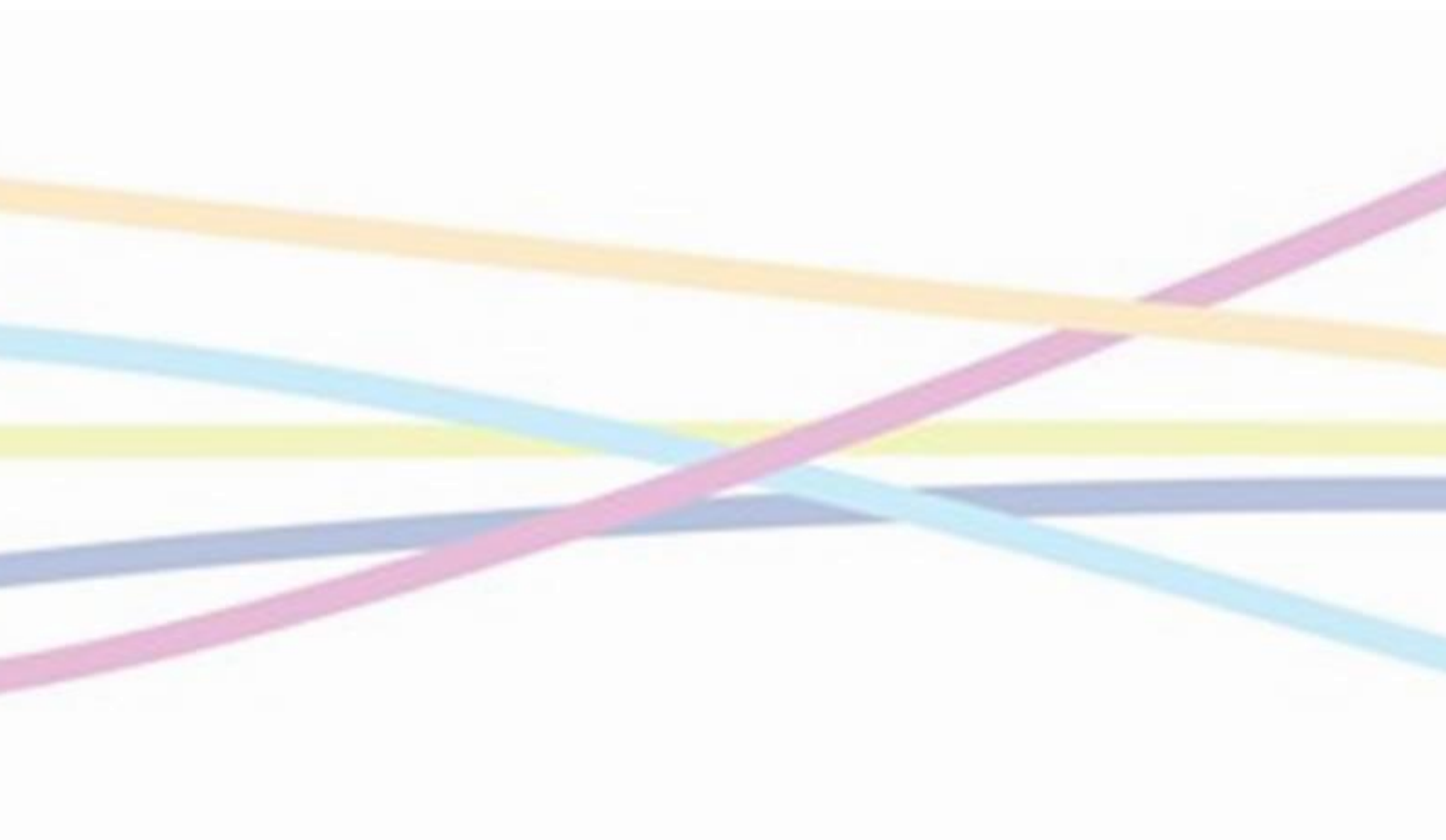
This Strategy acknowledges the vital importance of collaborating with survivors who are ‘experts by experience’ in terms of what has worked for them, their pathways through services and how easy (or difficult) it has been to find the right service and move towards independence and freedom from abuse. Key issues, challenges and concerns raised by survivors are essential for continuous improvement of services.



Survivor Engagement Session, October 2022

Survivor engagement success will be determined by the following measures:

- there has been engagement from the outset
- survivors were well represented and more than just one or two 'token' members
- there has been a real say in decisions
- opportunities exist to meet regularly and receive updates on actions and progress
- activities are safe, inclusive, and meaningful
- recognition is provided for subject matter/lived experience *and* contribution to results



How We Will Tackle VAWDASV

Aligned to the National Strategy, Gwent will adopt the following six objectives, mapped to the three aims of the Act:

Prevention

Objective 1

Challenge the public attitude to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh population through awareness raising and space for public discussion with the aim to decrease its occurrence.

Objective 2

Increase awareness in children, young people and adults of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and empowering them to positive personal choices.

Protection

Objective 3

Increase the focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending.

Objective 4

Make early intervention and prevention a priority.

Provision of Support

Objective 5

Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

Objective 6

Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength-based, inter-sectional, and responsive services across Wales.

These objectives will be pursued in an approach separated into:

- three 'Fundamentals' (i.e., areas integral to successful change in achievement of the vision and Objectives) and
- four Focus Areas, that specifically reflect the regional needs of the Gwent population.

1. Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Section 3)

The Domestic Abuse Act became law in England and Wales on 30 April 2021. Whilst the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 will continue to hold precedence in Wales, the legislating of the Domestic Abuse Act has an impact on the core business and service delivery of statutory VAWDASV agencies across the region. Under the Act, there is now:

- A legal definition of domestic abuse which recognises children as victims in their own right
- A legal duty on councils to fund support for survivors in 'safe accommodation'
- A guarantee that all survivors will be in priority need for housing
- New criminal offences including coercive control, non-fatal strangulation, threats to disclose private sexual images

This has an impact for Relevant Authorities (i.e., local authorities) as defined under the VAWDASV Act as well as public bodies who deal with VAWDASV (e.g., Police) and the third sector who are often grant funded to provide specialist, high quality, expert support to victims and survivors.

Acknowledging the resource required to initiate changes across statutory agencies to successfully implement the Domestic Abuse Act, this Strategy will prioritise supporting Relevant Authorities to fulfil the legal requirements of domestic abuse which recognises children as victims in their own right. In pursuing this Fundamental, the following will be progressed:

- An evidence-based needs assessment on children and young people impacted by VAWDASV, to link with Marmot principles and include:
 - an analysis and understanding of services to support children, young people and families
 - the identification of gaps and areas for specialist service development to further inform the Strategy direction and act as a baseline
- Raising awareness of services, pathways of support and interventions for children and young people impacted by VAWDASV
- Collaborative commissioning and/or grant funding of services, pathways of support and interventions where gaps are identified
- A review of the role of public services for the further development of partnership working (e.g., Operation Encompass, multi-agency safeguarding hubs) to meet the needs of, and support children and young people impacted by VAWDASV

The above will be enabled through close working between the regional Safeguarding Board, existing regional partnership working arrangements and further expanding joint and inter agency working to ensure effective protection and support of child victims.

2. Regional Structures Reform

In December 2021 the Gwent Public Services Board agreed a comprehensive governance review of Community Safety, incorporating Substance use Area Planning Board delivery and VAWDASV delivery across Gwent. Alongside this review, the region has also reviewed and consulted on its Wellbeing Plan, become a Marmot Region¹¹ and also begun planning for the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty and subsequent Strategic Needs Assessment. On a national level, the roll out of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) will also commence in 2023.

The development of this Strategy has been a timely parallel to these changes. It has been recognised that these wider regional reforms offer an opportunity to effectively implement a VAWDASV structure and landscape that co-exists and intersects with other regional structures, to enable true sustainable and collaborative working in the pursuit and achievement of the aims of the VAWDASV Act. In-line with these regional reforms, the following will be pursued in the achievement of this Fundamental:

- Building VAWDASV into governance arrangements within wider strategic areas currently subject to reform, to effectuate robust and well-grounded infrastructure for supporting victims and survivors and tackling perpetration
- Reviewing the new regional structures for partnership delivery of sustainable services (both core and commissioned)

3. Infrastructure for Regional Services and Delivery

The region benefits from a range of services and support for victims, survivors, and perpetrators of VAWDASV, with the specialist and third sector delivering the majority of these. This delivery includes community provision, safety planning, counselling services, wellbeing projects, refuges, educative interventions as well as evidence-based programmes. Services available are funded through prescriptive parameters that prevent connectedness, flexible approaches and collaboration. The funding is often of a short-term nature and this can hinder the ability of organisations in their efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

¹¹ [Gwent Marmot Region Launch Event - Gwent Public Services Board Gwent Public Services Board](#)

Under the VAWDASV Act, Relevant Authorities have statutory obligations to prevent, protect and support victims of VAWDASV. This Fundamental will therefore focus on:

- Establishing 'benchmark' needs assessments that outline problem profiles, prevalence, scale, good practice and resource deficits
- Regularly reviewing and updating needs assessments to support responses to 'live' priorities
- Establishing a VAWDASV Commissioning Group with Relevant Authority and commissioning cross-sector representation, for a focus on maintaining, sustaining and developing VAWDASV services
- How the region can move towards VAWDASV services and delivery embedded in a whole system approach

Focus Areas

The following Focus Areas have been identified in the development of this Strategy:

1. Tackling Perpetration

Currently, there are limited programmes available across the region to tackle perpetration and challenge those who perpetrate in changing their behaviours. This is primarily because of funding as well as a lack of evidence-based programmes for domestic abuse and sexual violence perpetration for both adults and children/adolescents/young people.

Working with perpetrators is fundamental to successfully tackling VAWDASV and reducing the number of VAWDASV victims. However, it requires a whole system approach to achieve true early and effective intervention and opportunities to divert perpetrators. To tackle perpetration across Gwent, this Focus Area will prioritise:

- Undertaking a regional needs assessment that will inform a whole system approach to tackling perpetration, which includes:
 - Collaborative working arrangements to enable the disruption of perpetrators
 - Identification and response to serious and serial perpetrators
 - Evidence-based adults and children/young person VAWDASV perpetrator programmes (i.e., 'What Works' in tackling perpetration)
 - Mapping of perpetrator services and programmes to inform commissioning arrangements and sustainable funding influencing
- Understanding victim data from perpetration of VAWDASV, for commissioning of perpetrator services and programmes

Through collaborative working with partners and providers across the criminal justice system, social care, third sector and within communities, we will ensure that perpetrators of VAWDASV in Gwent are dealt with appropriately, provided the opportunity to break cycles of perpetration through behaviour change and that survivors and their children are given protection against further abuse. These priority areas will meet strategy Objectives 3 and 4.

2. Children and Young People

Key to breaking generational cycles and mitigating Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is understanding the needs of children and young people. This includes acknowledging the impact on them as witnesses (they are now recognised as victims in their own right under the Domestic Abuse Act 2022), supporting a response when they have experienced VAWDASV, or recognising and challenging societal ‘norms’ that lead them to engage in unhealthy attitudes, behaviours and relationships. Wales has long been committed to children’s rights and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Children’s rights are already enshrined in Welsh law (Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011) with the measure placing a duty on Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC when developing or reviewing legislation and policy.

Prevention of VAWDASV can be initiated in school-age children and young people through education. Hafan Cymru’s Spectrum Project¹² supports a whole school approach to healthy relationship education with the new Curriculum for Wales Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code providing the mandatory elements for RSE learning in schools. However, development of this Strategy has informed that the needs of children and young people are significant; they are being exposed to abuse at home, they are perpetrating abuse against their parent(s)/caregiver(s), they are experiencing abuse and harassment in schools and they are engaging in controlling and harmful peer relationships, not recognising such due to social media, online content, and lack of positive modelling. Therefore, more needs to be done in the region to protect and support children and young people from becoming victims of VAWDASV. To better prevent, protect and support VAWDASV in children and young people, this Focus Area will prioritise:

- Empowering and educating young people to support VAWDASV prevention and early intervention; especially for young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), those in education other than at school (EOTAS) provision or those with additional learning needs
- Challenging unhealthy attitudes and behaviours through education and empowerment
- Encouraging reporting to understand causes and prevalence to support actions towards prevention and early intervention

¹² [Spectrum Project - Educating schools in Wales about Domestic Abuse and Healthy Relationships.](#)

- Developing a 'Knowledge Hub' of evidence-based programmes and interventions for children and young people
- Ensuring the voice and experience of children and young people impacted by VAWDASV in the development of planning and delivery of services
- Grant funding programmes for children and young people aged between 3 and 21 years old

Working closely with professionals in education, social care, police and youth/community-based services, we can challenge perceptions, increase awareness and empower personal choice to promote sustainable wellbeing and safety in the next generation. These priority areas will meet strategy Objectives 2, 4 and 6.

3. Misogyny and Harassment

Misogyny is rife within society with attitudes of toxic masculinity, victim blaming, and inequalities linked to protected characteristics (i.e., race, disability etc.), contributing to negative behaviours increasing the existence of VAWDASV; for example, casual misogyny permeating the workplace and harassment in public spaces.

Challenging misogyny is a huge feat demanding whole society education, awareness raising and public discussion. It requires 'calling out' and directly challenging those who perpetrate misogyny and misogynistic behaviours in order to make women feel safe. Currently, expectations are placed on female victims to 'protect themselves' from misogyny or harassment, both within the workplace and public spaces. To start the fundamental shift required and begin to tackle misogyny and harassment, this Focus Area will prioritise:

- Communication and campaign activities that raise awareness of misogyny and harassment, creating a stigmatisation to decrease occurrences
- Encouraging reporting of harassment to understand causes and prevalence
- Learning from culture reviews within other charitable, public and private bodies; building on the work that is being done more widely outside the region
- Supporting Relevant Authorities to identify and implement a response for instances of workplace harassment
- Supporting identification and reporting of abuse of power, position or perpetration by public bodies

Central to successfully achieving the above priorities will be a clearly communicated and effective response by public bodies and Relevant Authorities to disclosures. This Strategy, through its partnership and governance arrangements, will ensure that all victims who take the step to report their experience, can be confident and trust public bodies in their

commitment to end misogyny and harassment. These priority areas will meet strategy Objectives 1.

4. Multiple or Co-occurring Needs

VAWDASV can impact on many areas of life. It can introduce or affect additional challenges (e.g., mental health) as well as contribute to further issues (e.g., homelessness, poverty). Currently, VAWDASV is primarily responded to via a compartmentalised approach, supporting the presenting needs of victims and current behaviours of perpetrators.

To successfully tackle VAWDASV, a contextual approach is needed that considers support needs inter-linked with, or those that compound VAWDASV. These needs include mental health, substance use, homelessness/housing, exploitation (included those exploited through sex work), employment, poverty and access to finances or financial support. Across the region, services are seeing an increase in individuals with multiple or co-occurring needs, so addressing VAWDASV alongside the multiple needs that exist is going to need multi agency intervention. However, the systems, pathways and solutions are not currently established to provide this level of support effectively. To begin to address this gap, this Focus Area will prioritise:

- Training the sector to understand trauma informed approaches to respond appropriately to VAWDASV
- Exploring cross-specialism roles that support a ‘No Wrong Door’ approach
- Strengthening collaboration between agencies and providers to enable effective and responsive services
- Facilitating networks, communication pathways and resources to address and support solution focused approaches to barriers encountered

VAWDASV is “everybody’s business” and so it should not be the responsibility of a single organisation to support or address VAWDASV. It requires multi-agency commitment and collaborative working to achieve long-term, sustainable change for individuals and society. These priority areas will meet strategy Objectives 4, 5 and 6.

In addition to the Fundamentals and Focus Areas, the foundations of this Strategy will be rooted in ensuring that professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims, survivors, and perpetrators. This will be achieved through the National Training Framework and Specialist Syllabus training offer.

National Training Framework

The National Training Framework (NTF)¹³ outlines Welsh Government’s requirements for training on VAWDASV across public services and specialist third sector. Under the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015, Relevant Authorities have a legislative duty to ensure that all their employees complete this training to fulfil their statutory obligations. Consisting of six groups, the Framework provides minimum mandatory training of professionals aligned to their roles:

| Group | Training | Audience |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | E-learning | All Public Service Professionals |
| 2 | Ask & Act | Professionals who are likely to be in jobs where VAWDASV is an issue for their client group |
| 3 | Ask & Act Champions | Individuals in roles which require them to do more than “Ask and Act” and those who perform a “Champion” role |
| 4 | Specialist Sector | Professionals whose client group is specifically those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence |
| 5 | Managers of Specialist Sector | Service managers working in the violence against women, domestic abuse & sexual violence sector |
| 6 | Public Service Leaders | Strategic Leaders who have a responsibility to foster a culture and infrastructure in which violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are acknowledged as issues which may affect the workforce, the client group and friends and family |

Specialist Syllabus

This Strategy will also support the delivery of Specialist Syllabus training that is mapped to the Framework and additional training commissioned by Welsh Government. Training will be reviewed on an annual basis but will consist of an offer that supports the development of skills, knowledge and experience needed of professionals, to identify and deliver support that meets regional needs.

Cross Cutting Themes

Appreciating that VAWDASV traverses a number of themes, there are key areas that will also cut across the success of this Strategy. These are:

¹³ [National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence | GOV.WALES](#)

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The region's MARAC's have seen a huge increase in referrals recently. The meetings, which share information on the highest risk domestic abuse cases, have seen additional pressures on police, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors who sit in MARAC's. MARAC is a crucial area of business for protecting and supporting victims of VAWDASV.

Safeguarding

The region currently benefits from strong working relationships and robust arrangements with the Gwent Safeguarding Board. Aligning safeguarding and VAWDASV processes, this Strategy will focus on the following areas to strengthen responses to VAWDASV across the region:

- Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR)¹⁴
- Elder Abuse and VAWDASV in Older People
- Transitional Safeguarding
- Suicide and Self Harm Prevention

Multiculturalism and Intersectionality

Gwent has a diverse population and crucial to understanding and addressing VAWDASV across communities, is acknowledging cultural beliefs and recognising the impact of discrimination and disadvantage that intersectionality can bring. To fully support victims and survivors of VAWDASV, this Strategy will establish the structures to clearly understand the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic people, disabled people, children, older people and LGBTQ+ communities to support more responsive services.

Strategic Planning

Effective strategic planning is key in tackling VAWDASV as part of a whole systems approach. Through existing regional platforms, this Strategy will seek to influence policies and strategies across safeguarding, community safety, substance use, housing, health, police and probation to improve the planning, integration and collaboration in response to VAWDASV. This will be achieved through enacting a clear vision and working across these fields to share knowledge to influence thinking.

Commissioning

Welsh Government's Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales will provide the parameters and principles for commissioning of VAWDASV services

¹⁴ [Single Unified Safeguarding Review | GOV.WALES](#)

that are funded via the Welsh Government VAWDASV regional grant. However, it should be recognised that VAWDASV services across the region are enabled through a range of funding streams. Relevant Authorities and public bodies commit a significant amount of funding to mitigate the effects of VAWDASV across the region, with funding also coming from Supporting People; Housing; Social Care; Police; Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC); Home Office; Ministry of Justice; and grants or contracts specialist or third sector organisations can secure. Whilst funding services, programmes, support or interventions in this way can lead to a lack of sustainability, inequity and inconsistency in delivery, it also brings much needed funding and support to the region to tackle VAWDASV through specific expertise (e.g., IDVA and ISVA services).

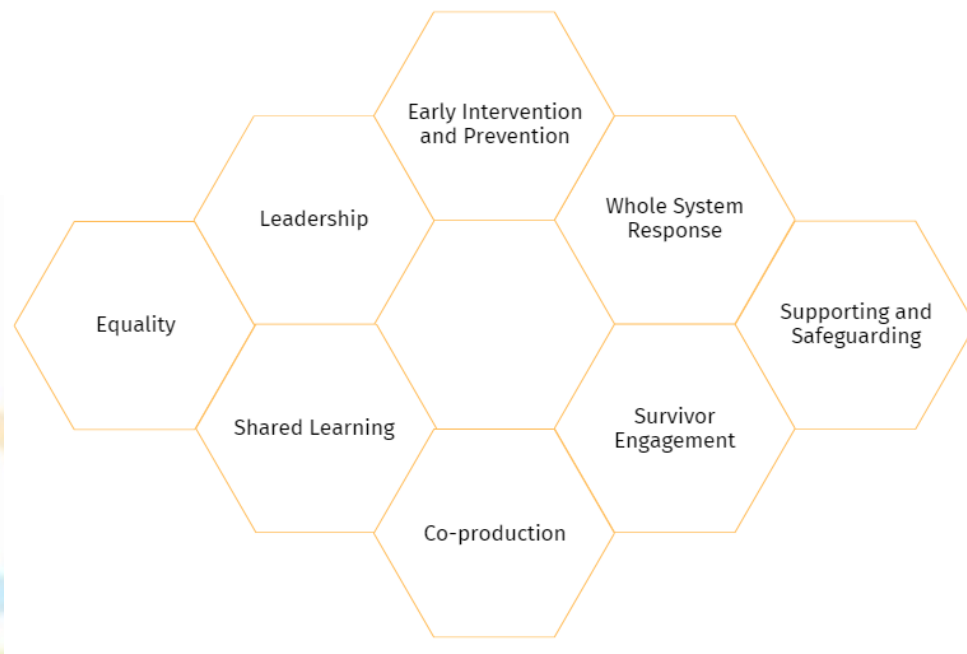
This Strategy will ensure that across the sector and beyond, Commissioners are informed about VAWDASV, where the links are to their area of work and understand their responsibilities for better investment. This will be achieved through the following commitments under the governance arrangements for the region:

- Strengthening collaboration and working arrangements with key Commissioners in health, housing and substance use to inform planning and budgeting to ensure VAWDASV is complemented in other areas
- Collaboration and equal partnership across appropriate agencies to ensure the effective investment in responses to VAWDASV and enable integrated pathways of support that promote prevention and earlier intervention
- Not undertaking commissioning activities in silos to support specialist provision linking with mainstream provision and services
- Providing all survivors, including children and young people, equal access to holistic appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength based, and trauma informed, gender responsive services across the region
- Engaging with and be informed by survivors, including children and young people, to inform needs analysis, service design and whole system responses
- Understanding the expertise of the specialist sector to inform needs analysis, service design and whole system responses
- Understanding where good services are already being delivered, in accordance with recognised standards and consider how best to facilitate service
- Where possible, providing stability to the sector in terms of duration of contracts or agreements

How Will We Deliver This Strategy?

Strategy Principles

The implementation of this Strategy and achievement of its objectives will be underpinned by the following principles:



- **Early Intervention and Prevention** – the foundation for the effectiveness of the strategy as part of a public health approach to violence
- **A whole system response** – recognition of the different and distinct elements and responses required to meet needs of survivors for all forms of violence against women, sexual violence and domestic abuse
- **Supporting and Safeguarding** - ensuring that all individuals who are safeguarded from violence and abuse, receive an efficient, effective and coordinated response and are supported to access a range of services to meet their needs
- **Survivor Engagement** – where survivors are involved, heard and are central to why we are making the changes needed
- A commitment to **Co-production** - solution focused approaches where people are given equal status and are meaningfully involved at all stages
- **Shared Learning** - promoting a culture of continuous improvement, reflection and review to improve outcomes for victims and survivors
- **Equality** – a positive approach to diversity, ensuring this Strategy is responsive to all; as well as equally accessible provision across the region to meet needs
- **Leadership** - a need to ensure regional to local continuum, accountability and clarity of direction

Multi-Agency Working, Partnerships and Collaboration

Collaborative work in relation to VAWDASV is often focused on multi-agency fora which bring organisations together to support and case manage those at risk of harm or abuse, as well as those who are at risk, or are perpetrating abuse or harm. The region has benefited from strong collaboration and partnership working arrangements for many years. Across the region, partners are committed to tackling VAWDASV and as such, there is commitment at strategic leadership level and operationally to drive forward work plans, progress and enable effectiveness in the response to VAWDASV and delivery of services. In the implementation of this Strategy, collaboration, partnership arrangements and multi-agency working will continue to include the following, to improve services for victims and survivors:

- Representation within the regional governance structure and arrangements from all Relevant Authorities and public bodies; devolved and non-devolved
- Commitment by all partners at a strategic level to ensure resources are utilised according to the needs of the local communities
- Supporting innovative practices and ideas to provide a complete package of support for those who need it
- Acknowledging and further facilitating the expertise and knowledge that the specialist services and sector brings

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence impacts upon all services, not least adult and children's social services, housing, criminal justice, education, the police, health services, and voluntary and community organisations. This strategy will further enable a coordinated community response within Gwent to reduce the prevalence and impact of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and increase the awareness and ability to act swiftly and effectively within communities and professionals. Specifically, collaboration will support mechanisms to remain dynamic, continuously enabling seamless and integrated provisions, for example:

Police and Office for Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

Strategically, collaboration will focus on alignment of strategies to achieve greater impact and lobbying Relevant Authorities and wider partners in improving their response to VAWDASV using data and trend information to influence and attract commitment. It will also support joint funding and commissioning arrangements supporting value for money processes and avoiding duplication of services. Operationally, multi-agency working will facilitate links between the Public Protection Unit, Rape and Serious Sexual Assault, Management of Serious or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) and Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Team to support information sharing, risk assessment approaches and effective pathways for those requiring support for VAWDASV.

One of the historic challenges of the region has always been the difficulty of defining and agreeing across partners and agencies, the definition or meaning of early intervention and prevention. A shared understanding of prevention is required across the sector to properly determine where and how partners, services and implementation of this Strategy fits within the prevention of VAWDASV agenda. The Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) adopts a public health lens across three tiers of intervention that supports a systematic, whole society approach to the prevention of VAWDASV. Therefore, this Strategy will hold alignment with this approach and interpretation of prevention as follows:



Source: Violence Prevention Unit website

National Programmes

There are also national programmes in existence that further support collaboration across the region and strengthen partnership working for on-going contribution to achieving the aims of the Act:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Preventing ACEs and breaking generational cycles of ACEs can have significant benefits for individuals and families as well as wider communities. This Strategy will support the focus and emphasis of mitigating and preventing ACEs. This will be achieved through partnership working structures that support learning and commitment that enables partners to become more ACE informed in their responses to VAWDASV.

Violence Prevention Unit (VPU)

The VPU in Wales works with partners and service providers to deliver programmes and projects that ensure violence prevention activity in Wales is effective and sustainable. The VPU take a public health approach to preventing violence, seeking to understand the causes of violence based on evidence and using this evidence to develop interventions focused on the underlying causes of violence. As the VPU also evaluate these interventions before they consider scaling up each one to help more people and communities across Wales, they support the capacity building required to develop a whole system response to the prevention of violence.

Criminal Justice in Wales Remote Evidence Sites (RES)

The region benefits from one Remote Evidence Site that supports alternative settings for victims of VAWDASV, including children, to give evidence to Magistrates and Crown Court hearings. Under the partnership arrangements of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), VAWDASV partners will implement the national RES Protocol to support the operational processes', principles and responsibilities to continue enabling survivors of VAWDASV to access justice and achieve best evidence.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse. Operation Encompass ensures that there is a simple telephone call or notification to a school's trained Designated Safeguarding Lead /Officer prior to the start of the next school day after an incident of police attended domestic abuse where there are children related to either of the adult parties involved. This sharing of information enables appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

Children are negatively impacted by experiencing domestic abuse and without early intervention and support this negative impact can last through a child's life course. Domestic abuse can impact upon social, psychological, physical, emotional and behavioural outcomes with an often-negative impact upon a child's academic success. This Strategy will continue to support Operation Encompass aims across Gwent, by directly connecting police and schools, to:

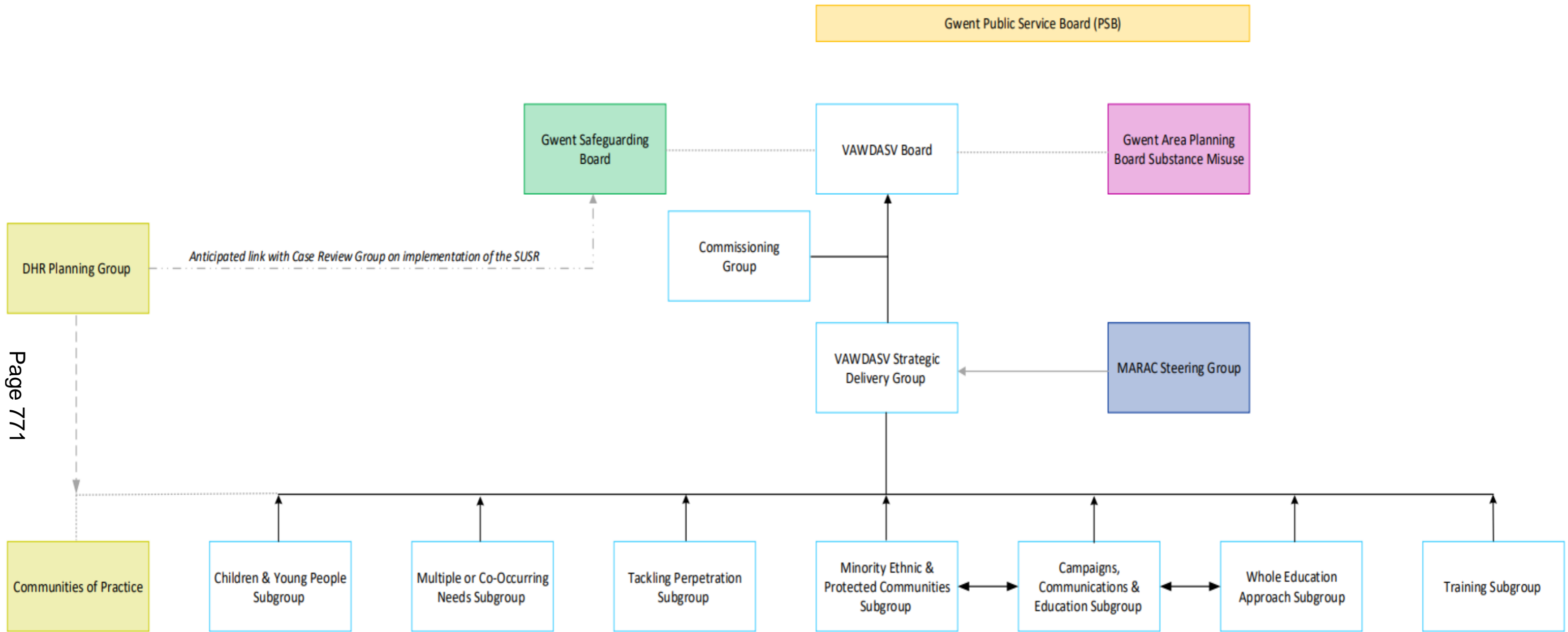
- secure better outcomes for children
- enable schools to better understand the impact living with domestic abuse has upon children
- help schools to better understand a child's lived experience and to therefore be able to support and nurture each child, making a child's day better and giving them a better tomorrow

Governance Arrangements

Strong leadership is required to embed violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as “everyone’s business” that requires all areas of public policy to address. Subsequently, ownership of this Strategy must sit at the highest level to secure robust strategic buy in from partners and ensure a significant contribution to shape and improve the delivery of services for those affected. The direction and oversight of this Strategy sits within the structure outlined below. However, in progressing the actions under Fundamental 2 (regional structures reform), the governance for VAWDASV will continue to evolve beyond the arrangements below to intersect with Community Safety, Substance use, Safeguarding, Criminal Justice and Gwent Public Services Board structures to achieve a strong public service approach.



Gwent Regional VAWDASV Governance and Reporting Structures



VAWDASV Board

The VAWDASV Board will hold representation of Relevant Authorities and statutory bodies directly responsible for upholding and implementing the statutory obligations and guidance under the VAWDASV Act. Collectively, members of the Board will ensure that the relevant functions of the Act are upheld across the region, ensuring the need to remove or minimise any factors which increase the risk of violence against women and girls, or exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims. A key role of the Board will be the implementation of the Strategy, which is a statutory requirement placed on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards under Section 5 the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

In recognition that effective implementation of the Act and its statutory guidance must, by necessity, involve all Relevant Authorities, the membership of the Board will include representation from the five Gwent local authorities, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Welsh Ambulance Service (as an NHS Trust). Local authority representation will include social care, education, community safety, safeguarding, substance use and housing. To enable whole system change and support a public health approach, senior leaders from VAWDASV related statutory bodies (i.e., Police, Probation and Office for Police and Crime Commissioner) will also hold Board membership.

Linked to the regional reforms, it is anticipated that the VAWDASV Board will become accountable to the Gwent Public Services Board.

VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Group

The VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) will be the key driver in the delivery of this Strategy and the implementation of the annual delivery plans. As a senior group, the SDG will directly coordinate the work of the subgroups that report to it and oversee the progress and outputs of the relevant work plans across the region. SDG membership will consist of senior managers across Relevant Authorities, specialist and third sector and public bodies who will have the ability to raise any issues, contribute to discussion (offering challenge where appropriate), ensure dissemination of information, commit to partnership working and collaboration and hold authority and decision-making powers to act upon requirements of their individual organisation.

Commissioning Group

The Commissioning Group will be an integral function to the long-term and sustainable commissioning of high quality, collaborative services in the prevention, protection and support for victims affected by VAWDASV. The Commissioning Group will comprise of multi-sector representation where VAWDASV is present (e.g., social care, health, preventative services, substance use). The purpose of the Commissioning Group will be twofold:

1. To collectively plan for the design and delivery of sustainable VAWDASV services across the region, embedding the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales Statutory Guidance¹⁵
2. Decision making in respect of grant funding and allocation of grants providing to the region by Welsh Government.

The Commissioning Group will typically report into the VAWDASV Board but will have close links with SDG and the subgroups as these will inform the evidence-base and provide the work direction for the Commissioning Group.

Subgroups

Acting as enablers to this Strategy and reporting to the VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Group will be several subgroups. These subgroups will exist for the duration of this Strategy with their workstreams dictated by the Focus Areas and subsequent annual implementation plan. Across the three-year period, there will be flexibility to review purpose and/or change the considerations of subgroups to remain dynamic in their focus but as a brief overview, subgroups parameters will cover:

Children & Young People – whole system approaches to supporting children and young people affected by VAWDASV, whole system approaches to addressing abusive behaviours and perpetration by children and young people and development of a regional ‘Knowledge Hub’; capturing best practice, gaps in delivery and areas for influencing regional policy considerations

Multiple or Co-occurring Needs – identifying and addressing the gaps to meet the needs of those that experience multiple barriers to accessing services. As a minimum, this subgroup will have representation from health, substance use, housing and third sector providers

Tackling Perpetration – providing the structure, focus and direction for identifying and disrupting perpetration and understanding ‘what works’ with perpetrators

Minority Ethnic and Protected Communities – to improve the recognition, reporting and response to VAWDASV in relation to minority ethnic groups and protected characteristics (e.g., honour-based abuse, disability) to strengthen multi agency response as well as providing scrutiny and challenge to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion in services across the region

Campaigns, Communication & Engagement – the development, planning and implementation of campaigns, awareness raising and engagement of the public on VAWDASV

¹⁵ [statutory-guidance-for-the-commissioning-of-vawdasv-services-in-wales.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/statutory-guidance-for-the-commissioning-of-vawdasv-services-in-wales.pdf)

Whole Education Approach – holding oversight of the regional response to the Whole Education Approach Guidance from Welsh Government, ensuring the recommend elements are considered and monitored as well as co-working with the Children & Young People Subgroup to address national areas of concern around children and young people (e.g., peer on peer sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours¹⁶)

Training – holding the oversight of the National Training Framework in Gwent, advising and arranging training plans and assessing need and solutions for Specialist Syllabus training requirements

In addition to the above subgroups, the regional structure will also include a:

Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Planning Group – taking learning from DHR findings and looking at what information and at what level needs to be disseminated, how and to whom in light of the review and developing an action plan to implement this. In the context of changes afoot with the introduction of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR), this group will also consider how the learning can be shared with the Wales Safeguarding Repository for the learning to be incorporated beyond the region

Communities of Practice forum – a new, more focused way of working, providing opportunities for Practitioner’s to build confidence, skills and knowledge, collaborate and network across the sector. Communities of Practice will support engagement with providers, survivors, voices from seldom heard communities and experts to share experiences, problem solve and enable better visibility of and access to available support; ultimately facilitating a more joined-up experience to deliver prevention, protection and support for VAWDASV within the community

¹⁶ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-report/we-dont-tell-our-teachers-experiences-peer-peer-sexual-harassment-among-secondary>

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan below outlines how the Fundamentals and Focus Areas will be prioritised across the region for the next three years. A Delivery Plan will be produced on an annual basis to reflect the actions required, expertise needed and establish how progress will be measured to achieve the goals under each year of the Strategic Plan.

Fundamentals

| | Goals | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Section 3) | Undertake an Evidence-Based Needs Assessment on Children and Young People impact by VAWDASV | Collaborative Commissioning of Services to Address Gaps | Collaborative Commissioning of Services to Address Gaps |
| | Raising Awareness of Services, Pathways of Support and Interventions for Children and Young People Impacted by VAWDASV | | Reviewing the Role of Public Services for Further Development of Partnership Working to Meet the Needs of Children and Young People |
| Regional Structures Reform | Embedding VAWDASV into Governance Arrangements in Community Safety | Reviewing Structures for Partnership Delivery of Sustainable Services | |
| | Embedding VAWDASV into Governance Arrangements in Gwent Public Services Board | | |
| | Supporting the implementation of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) | | |
| Infrastructure for Regional Services and Delivery | Establishing 'Benchmark' Needs Assessments that Outline Prevalence, Scale, Good Practice and Resource Deficits | Reviewing and Updating Needs Assessments to Support 'Live' Priorities | |
| | Establishing a VAWDASV Commissioning Group | Focus on Maintaining, Sustaining and Developing Services | Planning and Methodology for Whole System Approach VAWDASV Services |

Focus Areas

| | Goals | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| Tackling Perpetration | Undertaking a Regional Needs Assessment That Will Inform a Whole System Approach to Tackling Perpetration | Planning Solutions in Response to Regional Needs Assessment | Commissioning of Perpetrator Programmes and Interventions |
| | | Supporting Identification and Response to Perpetration Identified in Education Based Settings | |
| Children and Young People | Empowering and Educating Young People to Support VAWDASV Prevention and Early Intervention | | |
| | Developing a 'Knowledge Hub' of Evidence-Based Programmes and Interventions for Children and Young People | Developing a 'Knowledge Hub' of Evidence-Based Programmes and Interventions for Children and Young People | Commissioning of Programmes and Interventions for Children and Young People |
| | Developing a Framework for Participation and Child/Young Person Voice for the Planning and Delivery of Services | | Influencing and Planning for Sustainable Funding of Children/Young Person Programmes and Interventions |
| Misogyny and Harassment | Delivering Campaign and Communication Activities that Raise Awareness of Misogyny and Harassment | | |
| | Supporting Identification and Reporting of Workplace Harassment | | |
| | Supporting Identification and Reporting of Abuse of Power, Position or Perpetration by Public Bodies | | |
| Multiple or Co-Occurring Needs | Developing Collaboration Arrangements between Agencies and Providers to Establish and Support Cross Specialism Trained Practitioners | Establishing Pathways and Resources to Support Solution Focused Approaches to Challenges that Exist | Influencing and Planning for Continued Sustainability of Collaboration Support Services |
| | Understanding Trauma Informed Approaches Required to Appropriately Respond to VAWDASV Issues Where There are Co-existing Support Needs | | |

Annex A: Definitions and Glossary

Definitions

Violence Against Women

Violence against women is defined by the United Nations and others as acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence against women shall be understood to encompass but not be limited to:

- a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Domestic Abuse

The UK Government definition of domestic abuse is 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.'

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 sexual violence means sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature. The act further defines sexual exploitation as something that is done to or in respect of a person which warrants an offence under Part 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This includes the following definitions:

- a) Rape - when a person intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with his penis when that other person does not consent to the penetration, and/or he does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.
- b) Assault by penetration - the intentional sexual penetration of the vagina or anus of another person with a part of the person's body or anything else, when that other person does not consent to the penetration, and/or he does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.
- c) Sexual assault - a person intentionally touching another person sexually in a manner to which the other person does not consent to the touching, and/or the person does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.

- d) Child sex offences - rape or any sexual activity with a child, familial child sex offences and meeting a child following sexual grooming.

Sexual Harassment

The legal definition of sexual harassment is when someone carries out unwanted sexual behaviour towards another person that makes them feel upset, scared, offended or humiliated. It is also when someone carries out this behaviour with the intention of making someone else feel that way.

Harassment

Harassment is used to cover the 'causing alarm or distress' offences under section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and 'putting people in fear of violence'.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding). The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family).

Honour Based Abuse (HBA)

Honour-based abuse is a crime or incident committed to protect or defend the 'honour' of a family or community.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons". Female genital mutilation is an act that is an offence under sections 1, 2 or 3 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Gender Based Violence

Gender-based Violence is violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation.

Glossary

Ask and Act

A process of targeted enquiry across the Welsh Public Service in relation to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

BME

Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic is the terminology used to describe people of non-white descent.

Incel¹⁷

Incel is short for Involuntary Celibate. People who define themselves as incels say they cannot get a sex life despite the fact they want to be in a relationship.

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA)

Trained specialist worker who provides short to medium-term casework support for high-risk victims of domestic abuse.

Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA)

Trained specialist worker who provides support to victims/survivors of rape and sexual assault.

MARAC

A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Victim/Survivor

The term used to describe the person who is potentially experiencing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Other terms encompassed may include; 'service user' 'client' and 'patient' and reflect the terms used by different organisations to define their relationship to the person at risk. In practical terms it is suggested that the person experiencing these issues selects the term they prefer, where a term is required.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Specialist Sector

Third sector organisations whose core business is Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

¹⁷ [Incels: Inside a dark world of online hate - BBC News](#)

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Agenda Item 18

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.09.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 22.09.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **4th October 2023**

Report Subject: **Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy Review 2024 – 2025**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Sue Edmunds, Cabinet Member People and Education**

Report Submitted by: **Interim Corporate Director of Education – Luisa Munro Morris
Service Manager for Education Transformation and Business Change – Joanne Watts**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| ✓ | 31.8.23 | 07.10.23 | | | 19.09.23 | 04.10.23 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the views of Cabinet, in relation to the review of Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy for the 2024/25 academic session. The Council is required to adopt and publish the policy document by 1st October 2023.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Councils have a duty to publish their home to school and post 16 transport policies in accordance with section 12(5) of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (“the Measure”), and the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (the “Regulations”). The Council’s policy must be made available by the 1st October preceding the academic year to which the policy relates. Under the Regulations and the Welsh Government’s Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 (the “Guidance”) the information must be made available:

- a. on the Council’s website;
- b. to parents on request.
- c. public libraries; and,
- d. distributed to parents of pupils who are in the final year of school and may transfer to another school or educational establishment.

- 2.2 The current policy was published on 1st October 2022, for implementation from September 2023 for the 2023/24 academic session. Blaenau Gwent Council provide free transport for children attending their nearest suitable school, where the distance from home to school is over the specified walking distance detailed below:

- more than 1.5 miles from home for children aged under 8 years
- more than 2 miles from home for children aged 8 years and over

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is more generous in respect of home to school transport entitlement than the Welsh Government statutory limits. The recommended Learner travel Measure guidance is 3 miles for secondary school age pupils and 2 miles for primary school pupils, this costs the Authority approximately an additional £385,000 annually. The Council also offers a non-statutory travel grant for Post 16 learners of £150, this costs the Authority approximately £68,000 annually.

- 2.3 The policy has been reviewed by the Education Transformation, Inclusion and Transport teams (please refer to **Appendix 1** for the revised draft document). The changes and additions are detailed in red within the appended policy document. A summary of the changes/additions is as follows:
- 2.4
- The date has been amended to reflect the academic year to which the policy applies (the academic year proceeding the year within which the policy is published);
 - Section 3.0 'Who qualifies: The Main Criteria – has been updated to allow an element of LA discretion on distance limits up to approximately 0.1mile in exceptional circumstances and when would be considered to be in the learner's best interests;
 - Section 4.0 'Additional Learning Needs' - has been updated in line with the latest ALN reform developments and learning from the current policy year;
 - Section 7 'Discretionary Welsh Medium Nursery Transport' has been amended to accommodate the further primary provision at Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar
 - Section 8.11 'Pupils Under 16 years Attending Vocational Training Provision' has been updated to clarify the policy in relation to ALN pupils
 - Section 9.0 'Post 16 Travel' has been updated to clarify the policy in relation to ALN pupils
 - Section 10.2 has been amended to 'Extreme Weather' from its previous categorisation of 'Severe weather'
 - Section 11 'Glossary of Terms' has been updated to incorporate the Vulnerable Learner Panel

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The People Scrutiny Committee on 19th September 2023, recommended Option 1 to Cabinet.

3.2 **Option 1:** That Cabinet considers and approves the Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2024/25 (**Appendix 1**).

Option 2: That Cabinet considers the Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2024/25 (**Appendix 1**) and suggests any amendments to be incorporated prior to approval.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 Education is a strategic priority for the Council and key to achieving the outcomes within the Council's Corporate Plan. Home to School Post 16 Transport Policy is an essential component of Education and seeks to ensure equality of access to education settings throughout the borough. In addition, implementation of the policy will contribute to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 4.2 The revised policy is fully compliant with section 12(5) of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 ("the Measure"), and the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (the "Regulations").
- 4.3 The Welsh Government's Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 (the "Guidance") requires that the Council's policy must be made available by the 1st October, the year preceding the academic year to which the policy applies.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

- 5.0.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to determine and publish the Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy by 1st October 2023, for the 2024/25 academic session. Any changes made to the policy should take account of the following:

- Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 ("the Measure")
- Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (the "Regulations")
- Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 (the "Guidance")
- Welsh Government School Admissions and Admissions Appeal Code's (2013)
- Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2022-32)
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act (2013)

- 5.0.2 Therefore, if the policy does not progress within the programmed timeframe, the Council will not be compliant with section 12(5) of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 ("the Measure"), and the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (the "Regulations"). In addition, the Council would fail to take account of recent developments relating to key areas of dependency on a local, regional and national basis; i.e. developments aligned to the Welsh Government Additional Learning Needs Act, Code and associated regulations, along with the Blaenau Gwent admission policy developments. The results of which may negatively impact upon both service users in terms of service and satisfaction and services in terms of operational issues and budgetary constraints.

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

- 5.1.1 The policy seeks to ensure that there is an appropriate framework to aid delivery of the services. The Home to School Transport budget out-turn

position for 2022/23 was £2.7m (after the use of £450,000 of funding from reserves) against a budget of £2.2m.

5.1.2 The Home to School Transport budget is approximately £3.3m for 2023/24, this is following the award of a £682,000 cost pressure in the budget setting process in relation to the uplift in contract prices awarded to contractors as a result of the fuel crisis. The Council received a number of requests from operators for an increase in the historical contractual rates as a result of the fuel crisis. This was agreed to ensure continuity of the home to school transport service.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 If the policy is not taken forward within the specified timeframe, there is a risk that the Council will not be compliant with their statutory duty in respect of home to school transport. Therefore, the policy has been reviewed and is being taken via the Council's political processes within the required timeframe, to ensure that the publication date of 1.10.23 can be met.

5.3 ***Legal***

5.3.1 The Council have a statutory duty to comply with Welsh Government legislation in line with the administration and review of statutory home to school transport policy arrangements.

5.3.2 Following approval, the policy will be translated into Welsh to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards from the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

5.4.1 The policy document and associated procedures have been developed by the Education and Environment Directorates, in partnership with Social Services. The Service Manager for Education Transformation and Business Change and Transport Officer monitor implementation of the policy and undertake annual reviews in order to inform future policy development.

5.4.2 Transport service operations are undertaken by a dedicated team who sit within Community Services - Highways and Development. The team work closely with Education who hold budgetary responsibility for the service and manage policy development and review processes, along with Social Services who review and determine transport arrangements for their clients and families – particularly Children Looked After (CLA) in consultation with the aforementioned directorates.

5.4.3 The Education Directorate Management Team along with Wider Corporate Leadership Team, have a key role to play in ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented and reviewed in accordance with relevant strategy, policy and regulatory frameworks.

5.5 ***Health and Safety***

5.5.1 There are no direct implications of this report, all health and safety issues raised as part of the operation of the Home to School Transport service are

discussed with Corporate Health and Safety colleagues as and when they arise.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

- 6.1.1 The Council currently operates home to school transport provision for both mainstream pupils, and pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) attending special schools and resource bases, via contracted providers. There are currently 30 providers contracted to deliver home school transport for 1,594 pupils, across 96 established routes.

We procure and monitor 30 operators providing transport for 94 contracts. This includes mainstream, Welsh-medium, faith education and specialist provision for ALN

We transport to: 19 schools within Blaenau Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone (Ebbw Vale Campus - Post 16) and 8 out of county schools
Over 1600 school pupils use Home to School transport:

Over 270 ALN pupils

Over 1300 mainstream pupils

We provide support for over 550 Post 16 students living in Blaenau Gwent, they are provided with a discounted bus ticket or travel grant.

The provision of home to school transport changes on a frequent basis in line with demand and new applicants especially in respect of Additional Learning Needs pupils.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

- 6.2.1 The policy has been reviewed in order to ensure that there is service user clarity in relation to roles, responsibilities, expectations, and awareness. The review process also takes account of key local, regional, and national policy and legislative developments. It is therefore anticipated that the existing high levels of client and customer satisfaction will continue, along with improved operational delivery.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

- 6.3.1 The policy underwent extensive consultation throughout the summer period 2018, the outcome of which has aided the annual review process in subsequent years.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

- 6.4.1 The policy will cover home to school and post 16 transport provisions for the 2024/25 academic session. The document takes account of key policy and legislative requirements, and annual reviews will continue to be programmed for the foreseeable future taking on learning from previous years.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

- 6.5.1 The policy will support the Council to carry out effective home to school and post 16 transport arrangements: whilst mitigating the risk of service and

service user conflict, along with complaints and appeals relating to policy gaps and issues.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 Key management and operational staff across the Council are involved in a detailed review of the document on an annual basis i.e., Education, Social Services and Procurement, along with Community Services - Highways and Development. The review process seeks to ensure compliance with Welsh Government legislation, and ensure that key local, regional, and national policy developments are accounted for, whilst also taking on board learning from the previous academic session.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

6.7.1 The policy is cross-cutting in the sense that it impacts upon Education, Community Services - Highways and Development, Procurement and Children's Services; therefore, service area involvement is key to effective policy implementation.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

6.8.1 Home to school and post 16 transport will be considered in line with the readiness assessment process, to inform development and delivery of the BGCBC Decarbonisation Plan.

6.9. ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

6.9.1 A full EqIA was undertaken and presented in line with the statutory consultation in 2018. Subsequently, annual screening assessments are carried out, which determine that there is no adverse impact upon any of the protected characteristics, and a positive impact upon disability, with specialist and bespoke transport arrangements in place for learners whose needs warrant it. In addition, EqIA screening is undertaken on a case by case basis as required. The policy seeks to ensure equality of access to education for Blaenau Gwent learners. Please refer to **Appendix 2** for the completed impact assessment. The policy aims to secure equality of access based upon distance and need in respect of pupils and students with ALN. Therefore, the impact overall is neutral.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy is reviewed on an annual basis in line with lessons learned, key policy, strategy, and legislative reviews/developments.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- **Appendix 1 – Revised Policy 2024/25**
- **Appendix 2 – Socio-economic Duty Impact Assessment**

Home to School & Post 16 Transport Policy **2024/2025**

Reviewed: **August 2023**
Adopted:

Should you have any queries relating to this policy please contact:

Education Transformation Team
Anvil Court
Abertillery
NP13 1DB

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

Telephone Number: 01495 355132 / 01495 355470

Should you have any queries relating to the provision of your child's transport or require support in making an application please contact:

Transport Team
Anvil Court
Abertillery
NP13 1DB

Email: hometoschooltransport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Telephone Number: 01495 311556

Blaenau Gwent has introduced an on-line application system for parents to apply for Home to School or Post 16 transport for their child(ren). Please visit the link below via the webpage:

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/schools-learning/school-transport/>

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1.0 Introduction

This policy document has been produced by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in compliance with the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, 2008.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that relevant information around home-to-school and post 16 transport arrangements is available to parents/ carers, pupils and partners. The Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Council has developed a code of practice, to support safe travel arrangements. The code of practice forms part of the application process and ensures that both learners and operators are aware of the expectations upon them, whilst accessing/ providing transport.

- [School Travel - Code of Good Practice \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](http://blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

2.0 Background

The Council has a duty to provide transport in accordance with Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, 2008.

The distance by which entitlement to transport is calculated is defined as the walking distance of the shortest available route, that is deemed to be safe. Route designation is carried out in accordance with the risk assessment procedure as detailed in the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance (2014).

Under section 32 of the Education Act 2002 (which was amended by section 21 of the Measure), Councils have the power to change school session times, **if the change is considered necessary or expedient to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel, or to make travel arrangements more effective or efficient.**

3.0 Who Qualifies: The Main Criteria

Blaenau Gwent Council will provide free transport for children attending their nearest suitable school, where the distance from home to school is over the specified walking distance detailed below:

- more than 1.5 miles from home for children aged under 8 years (at the commencement of the academic year) but of statutory school age. Any transport awarded will remain in place for the whole of the academic year
- more than 2 miles from home for children aged 8 years and over (at the commencement of the academic year).

Distances are measured by using the Council's Digital Information Mapping System, to determine the shortest available safe walking route between the home address and the main gate of the school to be attended. **The Local Authority can use discretion on approving transport within approximately 0.1 mile of the above distances**, based on the existing Home to School Transport distance criteria identified above - Transport will only be approved where there is already an existing provision with capacity in place.

Parents are able to choose an English-medium, Welsh-medium or a denominational school for their child. The child will qualify for home to school transport to the appropriate catchment area of the school. When the catchment area school is full and unable to admit a pupil, free transport will be provided to the next nearest available school that has room to take the child, as long as the home is 1.5 miles or more away from the school for pupils under the age of 8 years, or 2 miles for pupils aged 8 and over.

The provision of free school transport will be arranged to coincide with the start and end of the normal school day and shall be provided during the school term time. Home to School transport is not provided for breakfast clubs, after school clubs or summer schools.

Transport will be provided from pick-up points at approved bus stops on the nearest public transport route to the learner's home, where possible.

*All awarded transport will be reviewed periodically in line with changes to circumstances relating to the pupil(s) transport requirements.

4.0 Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The Council believes and promotes independence for all learners. This encourages independent living as well as health and well-being.

In line with the ALNET, the LA will need to consider supplying transport for all pupils with ALN to the end of the academic year following their 19th birthday. The Council will provide transport assistance for pupils with ALN in line with the following eligibility criteria:

- if the pupil qualifies on distance grounds;
- if transport is identified by the ALN team as being a requirement irrespective of distance, due to the nature of the pupil's medical need, additional learning need and/or disability; or,
- if it is determined by ALN team that there is no suitable education provision within the Borough which meets the needs of the pupil. In such circumstances, the Council would seek to source a suitable out of county placement.

*The above arrangements will be subject to review in line with any changes to the pupil's circumstances which may affect their transport entitlement or requirement.

If parents choose a school other than the school named by the Council's ALN team, it is the parent/carers responsibility to secure transport arrangements for their child and cover the associated costs.

4.1 Requests for Transport: ALN Provision

Pupils requiring ALN transport who live more than 1.5 miles (for those under 8 years of age) or more than 2 miles (for those aged between 8-16 years of age) from their nearest agreed ALN provision, will automatically qualify for free home to school transport.

*Please note - in instances where the school is a parental choice and not the provision determined by the ALN Panel, **no transport will be provided**.

The Council has established a process in order to assess the travel needs of children who may require ALN transport, as follows:

- All placements agreed by ALN Panel for pupils with ALN, need to be considered by the Transport team to ensure the eligibility criteria has been met.
- If it is identified that transport is required, the application form will be completed on line by parents, once confirmation of placement has been given and returned to the ALN team for approval and this will then be sent to the Home School Transport team to procure transport.
- Individual pupil risk assessment forms will only be completed if requested by a parent/carer, or if the pupil has needs that warrant completion of this form, e.g. profound and multiple learning difficulties. The ALN team will coordinate completion of the form this will then be discussed at the Joint Education / Home to School Transport meeting. The meeting will determine the pupil's transportation needs, along with the type of transport required.
- The Transport Team require 15 school days upon receipt of the Pupil Transport Request Form, in order to arrange transport. Where the transportation needs of the pupil requires the Council to tender and/or source specialist training, the timeline will be in excess of 15 days and determined on a case by case basis.

Where transport has been agreed, the Transport Officer will contact the parent and inform them of the arrangements. In cases where transport requests for ALN pupils is refused, parents/carers will receive notification from the ALN team, also indicating their right of appeal.

4.2 Residential School Placements not in the County Borough

Pupils with complex additional learning needs may require residential school placements. Residential placements are determined by the Social Services Complex Case Panel, with associated requirements considered on a case by case basis. When considering placement, the cost of transport will be taken into account.

Transport can be provided for residential placements as follows:

- Weekly or fortnightly boarding – transport for the pupil to return home weekly or fortnightly during term time.
- 38-week termly boarding – transport at the beginning and end of each half term and one additional return journey per half term.
- 51/52 week residential placements – one return journey per term.

5.0 Transportation of Children Looked After (CLA)

Children's Services will determine if it is considered appropriate for a child looked after (CLA) to attend a school other than the nearest suitable school to their residence, due to:

- the need to maintain continuity in education; and,
- or maintain contact with siblings and friends.

Transport for children who are looked after will be funded and coordinated by Children's Services with the exception of those cases, whereby placement is agreed by Education with a clear rationale, based on the educational needs of the pupil.

Requests for transport for CLA with ALN will be co-ordinated by the CLA Education Coordinator; however, where placement requests are agreed by the ALN Panel based on meeting the pupils needs, these requests will be funded by Education and administered by the Transport Officer in accordance with the Belongings Regulations. The on-line transport application will be completed by the CLA Education Coordinator along with some completed pro-forma, which will be submitted to the Transport Officer and copied to the ALN team, detailing the associated requirements.

In cases where children looked after reside and are educated outside of Blaenau Gwent; transport arrangements will be the responsibility of the Local Authority within which the pupil resides.

Transport is not routinely provided in circumstances where a child or children looked after are in respite accommodation. If it is possible for existing school transport to accommodate the pupil(s) to and from the respite provision without delay or deviation from the route, this can be considered, subject to regular review. Requests must be made to the Transport Officer in advance (where appropriate) and not drivers/escorts/operators directly.

6.0 How to Apply for Home to School Transport

Application forms for transport assistance can be obtained via the following one of two methods:

- You can apply online by accessing the Blaenau Gwent Website: www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk and selecting "My Services" register, Schools and Learning and completing the Home to School or Post 16 transport application form.
- If you do not have internet access, then you can still apply by contacting the Councils Contact Centre on 01495 311556 who will complete an application form on your behalf over the telephone.

The Council aims to process all applications received within 10 school days, unless specialist provision is required which may exceed the 10 days' dependent on the pupil's need.

7.0 Discretionary Welsh- medium Nursery Transport

In line with the Council's desire to promote access to Welsh-medium education, provided that there is capacity within the current transport arrangements, the Council will offer free transport for nursery pupils who reside over 1.5 miles from their home address to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg and **Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar**.

This discretionary nursery provision may be withdrawn on the basis that it reduces availability of transport places for statutory aged learners.

8.0 Transport Considerations

8.1 Change of Address - Transport Arrangements

Pupils studying for their GCSE exams in years 10 or 11 who change address after the autumn half-term in year 10 will be entitled to free school transport - **usually a bus pass, the Council does not have a duty to provide a separate taxi**; providing that the new address is **over 2 miles walking distance** from their current school. Transport can also be provided on an existing contract. The entitlement to free transport is provided in this instance, if the pupil attended their catchment area school prior to the move. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the pupil is able to access the designated pickup and drop off points if using existing transport, and the pupil is able to access designated bus stops for season ticket holders.

8.2 Schools with Multiple Campuses/Sites

For multi-site/campus schools, if the campus nearest to the pupil's home is unable to offer a place and an alternative campus or site is offered which is over the distance criteria, then free home to school transport will be provided.

8.3 Permanently Excluded & Managed Move Pupils

If a secondary age pupil has been permanently excluded from school, the Council will provide a bus pass to support change of placement as agreed / necessary. If a primary age child has been permanently excluded from school, the Council will provide appropriate transport as agreed/ necessary. Transport and/or bus passes will only be provided for pupil's that enrol at an alternative mainstream setting within Blaenau Gwent.

Where a secondary aged pupil has moved schools as agreed via the managed move process, bus passes will be provided to enable the pupil to attend the newly agreed setting. If a primary age pupil has moved schools as agreed via the managed move process, the Council will provide appropriate transport as agreed/ necessary.

*The above will not be applicable in instances whereby parents have elected for their child to change schools.

8.4 Before & After School Activities

If a pupil attends breakfast club or after school activity/club, then it becomes the responsibility of the parent/carer to transport their children to and from activities outside of the normal the school day.

8.5 School Trips

On occasions when school trips fall outside the normal school day, pupils in receipt of free home to school transport will need to be collected from the school as per the arrangements in 8.4 above.

8.6 Escorts

All drivers of home to school transport provision and accompanying escorts are required to have enhanced Disclosure Barring Scheme (DBS) checks. The Council may provide more than one escort on transport should the need arise to do so. All arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The transport provider may change throughout the time a pupil receives Council transport – meaning that drivers and escorts may change; however, where possible, continuity of drivers and escorts will be provided by contracted providers of transport.

8.7 Travel Assistance Reimbursement

Fuel expenses can be claimed in circumstances where appropriate transport cannot be provided, and the need of the pupil is such that the parent/carer may be required to transport their child. For pupils with ALN, this will be assessed via the ALN team in partnership with the Transport Officer and agreed in writing in advance of finalising arrangements.

8.8 Pupils on Exchange Visits

The Council does not provide transport assistance to pupils on exchange visits.

8.9 Pupil Attendance

In circumstances where a pupil is in receipt of free home to school transport and is not attending school regularly, the Council can withdraw the travel offer. This will be determined on a case by case basis. Parents/carers of those found to be in breach of the travel offer due to attendance issues; will resume responsibility for ensuring the travel arrangements of pupils to and from school. This process will be overseen by the Education Welfare Service.

At the end of each term, the transport team will provide the Education Welfare Service with a list of pupils that fall into the above category and attendance will be reviewed against the pupil's records. Where pupils are identified the following process will be followed:

- Contact made with parents to discuss transport issues
- Warning issued to parents of the intention to withdraw transport if no improvement
- Attendance reviewed at the end of the following half term.
- If there has been improvement transport continues but if not transport offer withdrawn

8.10 Preferred Schools/Parental Choice

Parents/carers who choose a school other than the nearest suitable catchment school are responsible for getting their child to and from the school throughout the time that their child attends the school. This is also applicable for pupils with additional learning needs; please refer to section 4.3 for more information.

8.11 Pupils Under 16 years Attending Vocational Training Provision

Blaenau Gwent Council does not provide transport for pupils of compulsory school age attending a training provision **unless placed by ALN or VLP panels, at those panels the decision will be made with regards to the form of transport.**

8.12 Dual Residency

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child and the child is permanently resident at more than one address, the Council will provide transport from both addresses, as long as they are both in the catchment area for the school concerned and are located over the required qualifying walking distance.

8.13 Rural Areas/Transport Links

Where appropriate, the Council will use its discretion in determining whether or not a taxi link will need to be provided to an existing bus service for those pupils living in rural locations.

8.14 Temporary Medical Conditions

The Council understands that in some circumstances the health of a mainstream pupil may restrict use of mainstream transport, due to a temporary medical condition. In these instances, individual assessments will be undertaken to determine associated transportation need and risk.

If an ALN pupil has a temporary medical condition, transport may be provided on request from either the ALN team or the Education Welfare team. Transport arrangements provided on medical grounds will be reviewed regularly.

Requests for long-term transport due to a medical condition must be made to the Council's transport team and accompanied by a letter from the pupil's consultant. The request must outline the pupil's medical condition and health risks encountered should they be required to walk to and from school.

The Council will not accept requests directly from GPs.

8.15 School Organisation Proposals

The Council will provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age, where the closure of a school results in a learner being transferred to another school. Learners already on the register of the closed school will be provided with free transport to the new catchment school or the nearest school, subject to meeting the policy's distance criteria - until the learner finishes education at that school. If the learner leaves this school, entitlement to this discretionary provision will end.

9.0 Post 16 Travel

9.1 Transport Entitlement

All students living in Blaenau Gwent will be provided with a discounted bus ticket or travel grant to the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Ebbw Vale Campus as their designated Post 16 provider; or, the nearest institution where their course is available depending on the following criteria:

- students must be between the ages of 16 to 19 (under 19 prior to the 1st September of the commencement of their course) to qualify;
- students shall reside in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent;
- students must reside 2 miles or over (nearest walking distance) from their nearest college campus; and, the students should attend a full time course which requires attendance of 16 or more hours per week or a minimum 4 days' attendance per week at the institution.

Students and pupils aged 19 or over at the commencement of the course are not eligible for travel assistance from the Council and in these circumstances, they are advised to contact their respective college for details of any available transport provision.

All transport for Post 16 pupils including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), is agreed on a case by case basis by the ALN team in consultation with the Transport Officer. The Council may provide transport up to a maximum of three years.

The criteria for Post 16 ALN transport is as follows:

- if the student qualifies on distance grounds;
- if transport is identified by the ALN team **in conjunction with Education Transformation team** as being a requirement irrespective of distance, due to the nature of the student's additional learning need or,
- if it is determined by ALN team **in conjunction with Education Transformation team** that there is no suitable college provision within the Borough which meets the needs of the **ALN** pupil. In such circumstances, the Council would seek to source a suitable out of county placement.

*The above arrangements will be subject to review in line with any changes to the student(s) circumstances which may affect their transport entitlement or requirement.

9.2 Travel Grant

The Council's present policy is to provide travel assistance to those who meet the criteria up to a maximum of £150 per academic session. This will be paid termly as follows: £50 autumn, £50 spring and £50 summer.

9.3 Welsh Medium/Faith Education

Pupils who wish to undertake their Post 16 studies via the medium of Welsh or attend a Faith school are required to travel further distances for their education, with no direct public service bus routes. These students have the opportunity to utilise the existing contracted bus provision in lieu of the Travel Grant, if appropriate.

9.4 How to Apply

Applications for transport assistance are available on Blaenau Gwent's website. Parents/Students can submit an application for transport assistance at any time, however, there is always an increase in demand prior to the start of an academic year and parents are advised to allow additional time. The Council sets a target to process all applications received within 10 school/college days, unless specialised provision is required.

Further information can be found on the following website www.coeggwent.gov.uk and <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/schools-learning/school-transport/>

10.0 Procedures

10.1 Safe Walking Routes to School/Learner Travel Arrangements

Safe Walking Routes to school are assessed individually by the Transport Division in line with Welsh Government Learner Travel Measure (2014). A route is considered to be **suitable** if it is safe for a child/young person to walk alone or with an accompanying adult, where appropriate. It is recognised that occasions may arise when routes may become hazardous. In these circumstances, the Council reserves the right to provide free home to school transport for distances below the discretionary limits in the interests of the safety of the relevant learners. The Council will assess route safety through using clear Council criteria and a determination will be made on a risk assessment basis, where necessary.

10.2 Extreme Weather and COVID-19 Emergency Response

Extreme weather **conditions** may impact on Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's ability to provide Home to School Transport safely. In such circumstances, the safety and wellbeing of the children and transport providers remains our key priority. Where **extreme** weather results in the requirement to cancel transportation, the school will **attempt to** notify parents at the earliest **opportunity** to avoid unnecessary disruption.

Up to date **school closure** information is posted on the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's website during periods of **extreme** weather conditions.

If the Home to School Transport provision is cancelled, the Education Transformation team and Transport Officer will advise schools, as best they can, when transport services are likely to resume. During these periods, **if the school is closed, the Local Authority/School** will aim to keep parents/carers informed of developments.

If transport is cancelled due to extreme weather, the following is applicable:

- where a route is cancelled and a parent/carer takes the decision to transport the child themselves, the parent/carer remains responsible for the return journey or any subsequent costs should a return journey not be possible;
- if a child is unable to attend school due to **extreme** weather, the parent/carer remains responsible for their child; and,
- out of hours' emergency contact can be made with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council through the main contact centre – 01495 311556

In line with the COVID-19 Pandemic, any changes to the provision of home to school and post 16 transport will be communicated with schools, colleges and families of pupils/students accessing transport provision. Changes will be reflective of the latest Welsh Government Guidance.

10.3 Exclusions from Home to School Transport

The Council has an approved travel behaviour code that covers all home to school transport provision. All parties will be required to sign the Blaenau Gwent Transport Behaviour Contract prior to approval of transport provision.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council reserves the right to refuse travel assistance where a child/young person's behaviour is such that, it is unacceptable in line with the travel code and/or presents a significant health and safety risk, or whereby excessive and purposeful damage to vehicles has been identified. In these instances, the **School or** Transport team will issue warning letters and parents will receive no more than four letters. The behaviour management process is as follows:

- **Stage 1** - Initially raising the concerns/issues
- **Stage 2** - Informal warning indicating the remedial steps taken and the potential of transport removal
- **Stage 3** - Final warning indicating that transport will be removed.
- **Stage 4** - The school jointly with the Transport team will issue the final letter confirming the removal of transport, citing the reasons for the removal, the date of the proposed removal and the parental route of appeal.

If a pupil is refused/ excluded from transport due to behavioural issues, parents/carers then become responsible for their child's attendance at school and any transport required.

Any wilful damage that incurs cost to the transport provider for either repair or cleaning remains the responsibility of the parent/carer of the pupil concerned. Continued or repeat behaviour that result in wilful damage can result in exclusion from home to school transport.

Please note should a situation arise during transportation, which constitutes a health and safety hazard, pupils can be removed from the vehicle with a police presence **if deemed necessary**, and further transport provision withdrawn with immediate effect pending investigation.

10.4 ALN Transport Issues & Exclusions

The Transport team will monitor and review issues and incidents relating to ALN transport, and determine with relevant professionals i.e. the school and ALN team, any reasonable adjustments required to accommodate the pupil(s).

In cases whereby there are recurrent issues behavioural or other, which mean that:

- the planned transport arrangements no longer meet the needs of the pupil; and/or,
- there are health and safety risks to both the pupil and contractor

The Transport team will look to work with the school in first instance. Where there are behavioural issues which present health and safety concerns, letters will be issued parents informing them of the issues concerns and Council's intention regarding the management or removal of transport, and/or employing suitable alternative solutions. No more than four letters will be issued prior to the removal/refusal of transport. The behaviour management process is as follows:

- **Stage 1** - Initially raising the concerns/issues
- **Stage 2** - Informal warning indicating the remedial steps taken and the potential of transport review/removal
- **Stage 3** - Final warning indicating that transport will be removed.
- **Stage 4** - Transport will be suspended and parents notified in writing, pending detailed assessment of the risks and transportation needs of the pupil. A Review Group will then be coordinated by the Transport Officer, with representation from relevant services and professionals, in order to determine a suitable solution.

If a pupil is refused or excluded from transport due to behavioural and/or other issues, parents/carers then become responsible for their child's home to school transport requirements, until a suitable solution has been found.

Any wilful damage that incurs cost to the transport provider for either repair or cleaning remains the responsibility of the parent/carer of the pupil concerned. Continued or repeat behaviour that result in wilful damage can result in exclusion from home to school transport.

10.5 Safeguarding

The safety of children and young people on home to school and/or post 16 transport is Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's first priority. In particular, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will ensure that:

- all providers are contracted for the provision and must ensure to comply with the terms and conditions set out within their contract

- should the Council identify any safeguarding concerns relating to a particular provider or associated member of staff, the process will be managed in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures;
- all drivers and escorts have been checked and cleared by the DBS;
- all drivers and escorts will have access to safeguarding training and **must** report any concerns that they may identify to the Transport team, the school and where appropriate, the Police and/ or Social Services without delay;
- all drivers and escorts carry a form of identity;
- lap and diagonal seat belts are provided on all contract vehicles;
- car seats/booster seats are provided in accordance with current Government legislation - this is the responsibility of the parent/carer;
- the Council will provide specialist equipment only when pre-agreed upon or as identified as part of a review;
- parents/carers of primary pupils are responsible for ensuring that there is a responsible adult to collect their child/children upon drop-off each day;
- parents/carers of pupils in receipt of ALN transport, are responsible for ensuring that there is a responsible adult within the home at pick-up and upon drop-off each day;
- drivers and escorts receive appropriate training and are familiar with safety and emergency equipment;
- drivers, escorts and operators are aware of their duties, particularly in emergency situations; and,
- wheelchair occupants must be correctly restrained. Wheelchairs will need to meet specific authorised crash test requirements (this specification can be confirmed directly by the user in conjunction with our Transport team).

10.6 Home to School/College Transport - Code of Good Practice

Across all of home to school transport provision and post 16 learning, the Council operates a **Code of Practice** for pupils, students, parents, schools and transport operators. The code of practice can be found on the link below;

http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Schools_and_Learning/SchoolTransport_CodeofGoodPractice.pdf

10.7 Free Transport - Right to Withdraw

The Council reserve the right to withdraw awarded transport, if an error is made or where legislation has changed which affects the entitlement of a pupil or pupils using school transport. The Council will honour the transport provision for that pupil(s) for the remainder of the academic half-term, during which the awarding error was identified, or that legislation became effective.

All awarded transport is reviewed periodically.

10.8 Appeals Procedure

Where the one of the following circumstances apply:

- a child or young person is not eligible for travel assistance;

- a change in transport arrangements has been made and the parent/carer notified; and,
- transport has not been agreed.

Parents/carers may ask for the decision to be reconsidered whereby an appeals form will then be issued. Parents/carers may then highlight exceptional circumstances they wish to be considered in relation to their entitlement.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Education Transformation team, and wherever possible forwarded by recorded post to ensure delivery/tracking. All appeal related correspondence should be addressed to:

Education Transformation Manager
Anvil Court
Abertillery
Blaenau Gwent
NP13 1DB

Appeals will then be considered by the Appeals Panel, who look to determine the level of prejudice to the child should they not be granted transport. The prejudice will be considered in relation to the impact in terms of:

- distance
- disability; and/ or,
- medical considerations on the advice of a consultant. **Medical notes from GP's will not be accepted.**

Parents will have 10 working days to submit an appeal from the date that the refusal letter was issued. Their appeal will then be heard within 30 working days from the specific closing date indicated within the refusal letter.

10.9 Monitoring Procedure

All vehicles will be made available for random checks by Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and/ or another appropriate body, when required. Any complaints received by the Council concerning services or vehicles will be investigated in line with the Council's complaints policy. In the event of the complaint being upheld, the necessary and appropriate steps will be taken in accordance with the contract or as a matter of urgency and will be reported in a timely manner to the Education Directorate's Management Team (DMT).

The Council will undertake random checks to contracts, to ensure that they are being operated in accordance with the Council's terms and conditions. As part of this monitoring exercise, the following checks will also be made:

- punctuality;
- adherence to route;
- size of vehicle;
- licences; and,
- staff DBS checks are in place.

All of the above are designed to ensure safe and stress free travel.

11.0 Glossary of Terms

| | |
|---|--|
| Additional Learning Needs (ALN) | A pupil who has an identified additional learning need |
| Catchment Area | A marked out geographical area made up of the streets around a school. |
| Catchment Area School | A school within the catchment area |
| Children Looked After | Children who are in the care of, or 'accommodated by', a Local Authority. |
| Child Protection | Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. |
| Designated Area | A geographical area, which is usually made up of Parishes served by a voluntary aided school (see section 2.2 for Faith/voluntary aided schools). |
| Nearest Suitable School | For transport purposes, the nearest suitable school may not be the catchment area school. |
| Officer Review | The process of someone within the Council looking again at an application for transport assistance. |
| Parent/Carer | Anyone who is responsible for the care of a child. We use the same definition as stated in the Education Act 1996. |
| Preferred School | Parents have a right to say they prefer a school other than the catchment area school. This is known as 'a preferred school'. This school will remain a preferred school when parents apply for help with transport, throughout the pupil's attendance. |
| Pupil | A young person who is of compulsory school age, which is the term after the child's fifth birth day and before the last Friday in June in Year 11. |
| Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children | Protecting children from abuse and neglect, preventing impairment of their health or development and ensuring that they receive safe and effective care to enable them to have optimum life chances. |
| Shortest Walking Distance | The shortest safe walkable route between the main access to and from your private property, such as your front gate or the top of your drive and the nearest school gate. |
| Special Transport Needs | Some pupils may have special transport needs that come from a disability or an additional learning need. |
| Statutory Walking Distance | As set out in section 2, in accordance with the definition provided in the Education Act 1996. |
| Student | A young person who attends a sixth form or college beyond the statutory school age, which is the last Friday in June in Year 11. |
| Suitable Walkable Route | A route where a child can walk to and from school safe from traffic – with the parent or another 'responsible adult' if the parent decides this is needed. If a parent cannot do this, the Council is not responsible for escorting your child to school. |

11.1 Blaenau Gwent Schools

Blaenau Gwent has the following schools and provision for pupils:

- **Community Maintained Schools** – schools managed by the head teacher and governors, in partnership with the Council. The Council arranges admissions.
- **Voluntary-aided Schools** – schools supported by the relevant Religious Board and the Council jointly. The governors will normally employ all staff and manage admissions. These schools are sometimes called ‘faith’ or ‘denominational’ schools.
- **Foundation Schools** – schools maintained by the Council but the governors are responsible for admissions. For transport assistance purposes, all pupils attending Foundation schools are treated in the same way as pupils attending community schools.
- **Resource Bases** – some mainstream schools have Resource Bases which are Council funded provisions that meet the additional learning needs of pupils whose needs cannot be met in mainstream classes. Resource Bases have a higher level of staffing providing more specialist support to meet pupil need. Pupils access mainstream classes where appropriate and placement into a Resource Base is determined by the Council’s ALN Panel
- **Special School** – a school which caters for pupils with additional learning needs whose needs cannot be appropriately met in a mainstream or Resource Base setting. Special schools receive pupils with a degree of disability and placement is agreed through the Council’s ALN Panel. The Council arranges admissions for all special schools.
- **Pupil Referral Units** - cater for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural Difficulties and provides short term, as well as longer term placements. The Council arranges admission through the Council’s ALN Panel.
- **All Through School 3-16 model** – where there are more than one campus or site associated with the school. The school is responsible for admissions for all site allocation.
- **Welsh Medium School** – caters for children who are being taught through the medium of Welsh as their first language.

For more information on Blaenau Gwent Schools, please refer to the Blaenau Gwent Starting Schools Booklet, which can be found on the Councils website, via School Admissions.

Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)

Welsh Government's [Socio-economic Duty](#) provides a framework to ensure tackling inequality of outcome is at the forefront of decision making.

Please consider how your proposal could affect the following groups:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system
- People misusing substances

| Socio Economic Disadvantages | Will the proposal have a positive, negative, or neutral impact? | How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined? | Please highlight any evidence that has been considered (quantitative or qualitative) |
|--|---|---|--|
| Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i> | Neutral | N/A | |
| Low and/or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i> | Neutral | N/A | |
| Material Deprivation <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e., financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i> | Neutral | N/A | |
| Area Deprivation <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i> | Neutral | N/A | |
| Socio-economic Background <i>(social class i.e., parents' education, employment and income)</i> | Neutral | N/A | |

| | | | |
|--|----------------|------------|--|
| Socio-economic Disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i> | Neutral | N/A | |
|--|----------------|------------|--|