

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Draft

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

2022-27

This plan has been developed under the requirements of the Welsh Language requirements of Welsh Language Standard 145 under the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015.

This document is available electronically on Blaenau Gwent Council's website on '[The Welsh Language in Blaenau Gwent](#)' page and paper copies are available in Blaenau Gwent's local libraries and community hubs.

If you would like to receive a copy of this document in another format, you can contact the Policy & Partnerships Team by emailing pps@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or by writing to

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

This document is available in Welsh

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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce our second Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022/27.

The plan is aligned with the [Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2022/27](#) which recognises Welsh as being a key performance measure for achieving our priorities over the next five years, including contributing to the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) national well-being Goal of ‘*a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*’.

Developed alongside our local Welsh language organisations as well as our key stakeholders and partners during our formal consultation process, who are fundamental in helping us to achieve our objectives and intended steps, the plan clearly sets out our intentions for promoting the Welsh language, increasing its use and the number of Welsh speakers within our communities, places of work and educational settings.

Since our last plan Blaenau Gwent has made positive progress towards supporting Welsh Government’s [Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers](#). For example, planning approval has been granted for new Welsh Medium Primary School in Tredegar. The 210-place ‘seedling’ school demonstrates the Council’s ongoing commitment to increasing its Welsh education opportunities through the delivery of our [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022/32](#).

We look to build on our progress and will continue to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to increasing the use of the Welsh language over the next five years as well as raising its profile across Blaenau Gwent.

May I take the opportunity to thank everyone who helped support us in developing the plan.



Leader

Cllr Steven Thomas



Chief Executive

Damien McCann

1. Introduction

This is the Council's second Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022/27 which meets the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015. It has been developed following an assessment of progress against our first plan in-line with Welsh Language Standard (146). For further information please see Section 2, 'Assessing our progress: Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017/22'.

The plan is aligned and recognised within the [Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2022/27](#) and will support the Council's vision of '*Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open, and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities*'. In identifying Welsh as a key performance measure for helping us to achieve our priorities, positively demonstrates our commitment and continued support towards raising the profile and use of the Welsh language.

The five-year plan sets out our three objectives and our intended steps for promoting the Welsh language, increasing its use and the number of Welsh speakers within our communities, places of work and educational settings. For further information please see Section 4 'Our Objectives' and Section 10 'Our Action Plan'.

The plan has been developed alongside local Welsh language organisations, as well as our key stakeholders and partners during our formal consultation process. Recognising the value of joined up working in supporting the plans delivery as well as the continued involvement of people who live, work, or visit Blaenau Gwent. For further information please see Section 9 'Our Partners'.

2. Assessing our progress: Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017/22

Covid-19 (March 2020 – December 2021)

Please note that due to the global pandemic our statutory work, such as the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, was paused by the Welsh Language Commissioner to enable public service organisations to deal with the immediate response to the crisis and recovery planning, during this period.

This had a direct impact on the delivery of our five-year strategy and is reflected in our assessment.

To assess the progress made against our first Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017/22 we considered the following:

- Reviewed to what extent we achieved our three objectives, through the delivery of actions reported via our Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Annual Report.
- Reviewed feedback received from our Local Welsh language organisations and partners via the Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network.

For further information please refer to Annex 1.

3. An overview of Blaenau Gwent

Results from the 2021 Census found that Blaenau Gwent's population size has decreased by 4.2%, from around 69,800 in 2011 to 66,900. This is the second largest percentage reduction in population of 22 local authorities in Wales and Blaenau Gwent is one of only seven local authorities with a reduction in population. This also means that Blaenau Gwent now has the second smallest population in Wales, while in 2011 it had the third smallest population. Overall, in Wales, there was a population increase of 1.4%, increasing by 44,000 to 3,107,500.

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

The Well-being National Indicators Report fluency levels have remained stable at 10-11% across Wales since 2012-13. The percentage of people who can speak Welsh but not fluently is 24% (which has been increasing over recent years).

The Annual Population Survey for Wales (July 2021 to June 2022) reported that 29.7% of people aged three or older were able to speak Welsh. This figure equates to around 899,500 people. This is 0.5 percentage points higher than the previous year (year ending 30 June 2021), equating to around 13,700 more people. Notably the lowest numbers of Welsh speakers across Wales are in Blaenau Gwent (11,000) which is also the lowest percentage at 16.6%.

The National Population Survey for Wales (April 2021 to March 2022) reported that in Blaenau Gwent only 12% (approximately 8,029) of the total population understands spoken Welsh with there being no significant change since the 16/17 survey results. Furthermore, only 10% (approximately 6,690) of the total population can read Welsh. This corresponds with findings that 61% (approximately 40,809) of the total population can only speak a little Welsh; and 81% (approximately 54,189) cannot speak Welsh.

Interestingly, the report also found that 97% (approximately 64,893) of the total population do not use Welsh as part of their everyday life, whereas the Census 2011 data reported that 7.8% of the total population speaks Welsh. Therefore, potentially nearly half of Blaenau Gwent's Welsh language speakers (3.8%, approximately 2,542) are not using their Welsh language skills. Further research to determine to what extent this is the case and the reasons why Welsh language speakers are not using their abilities as part of everyday life needs to be explored, however the findings could be an indicator of the potential lack of opportunity or confidence to use the Welsh language. These are the types of issues which this plan will look to address through proactive promotional campaigns to encourage greater Welsh language use.

According to the Pupil-level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2019-20, Year 1 Cohort (total of 728 pupils), 29 pupils (4%) are taught via the medium of Welsh. In-line with Cymraeg 2050 Strategy - the target is for 75 (10%) of Year 1 Cohort to be

taught via the medium of Welsh (6 percentage point increase). Furthermore, the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) 2019-20, reported that very few primary and secondary school practitioners identify as having high level Welsh language skills or being proficient. For example, within the primary phase only 12% can teach through the medium of Welsh (total staff 228, 27 can); within the secondary phase only 4% can teach through the medium of Welsh (total staff 82, 3 can); and within post-16 settings only 1% of staff have Welsh language fluency.

** This information will be updated when the Census 2021 data on Welsh language speakers is released.*

4. Our Objectives

Vision

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

Objectives

Blaenau Gwent has identified the following three Welsh Language Promotion objectives to work with our partners on:

1. We will promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language within families and the community.
2. We will increase the provision of Welsh language education and informal activities for children and young people.
3. We will increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace.

5. Our five-year target

Welsh Language Standard 145 sets out a requirement to set “a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area” by 2027 and “a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target”.

To meet a target of 46% increase of Welsh speakers by 2050, we would need to gain an additional 1,856 Welsh speakers against the 2021 Census' Blaenau Gwent baseline of 4,035.

Therefore, this represents an average annual increase of 66 additional Welsh speakers i.e., 4% of the target figure of an additional 1,856 in Blaenau Gwent for the next 28 years.

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

Positive steps towards increasing our Welsh language education provision have been achieved through our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, including the planning approval being granted for a new Welsh Medium Primary School in Tredegar. The 210-place 'seedling' school demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to increasing its Welsh education opportunities through the delivery of our [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022/32](#).

6. Legislative background

Welsh Language Standards

The Council has a legal obligation to produce this plan under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, Standard 145 and Standard 146 as set out below:

Standard 145

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

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

Standard 146:

Five years after publishing a strategy you must –

- (a) assess to what extent you have followed that strategy and have reached the target set by it, and
- (b) publish that assessment on your website, ensuring that it contains the following information –
 - (i) the number of Welsh speakers in your area, and the age of those speakers
 - (ii) a list of the activities that you have arranged or funded during the previous 5 years in order to promote the use of the Welsh language.

Welsh Government's [Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers](#)

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

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

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is ground-breaking legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales and create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. Achieving our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022/27 will help contribute to the national well-being goal for 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language', alongside other national well-being goals by supporting the achievement of Blaenau Gwent's Corporate Plan 2022/27.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets out to modernise the legal framework regarding the use of the Welsh language in the delivery of public services. In September 2015, the Council was issued its Welsh language [Compliance Notice](#).

The aim of the Welsh Language Standards is to:

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

The measure also established the role of an independent Commissioner for the Welsh language whose aim is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language via the following two principles:

- 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 the Welsh language if they choose to do so

Welsh Government's [More than just words 2022/27](#)

Welsh Government's More than just words 2022/27 is a Welsh language plan for health and social care which aims to ensure people can access the care they deserve and require in the preferred language choice. It aims to improve and promote Welsh language services across all health settings, in recognition of this helping to improve well-being outcomes for individuals in-line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Under the Act's Code of Practice, local

authorities are required to ensure Welsh language services are included within service planning and delivery and that services are offered in Welsh, to Welsh speakers, without them having to request it as required by the 'Active Offer'.

7. Policy background

[Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2022/27](#)

Our Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision, values, and priorities for 2022/27. It sets out the main priorities we will be delivering against to begin transforming Blaenau Gwent into a more prosperous and welcoming area and how we intend to achieve real outcomes for our local people and communities, now and in the future. The plan is a requirement under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act intends to make the Council think more about the long term, work better with people and communities, look to prevent problems, and take a more joined-up approach.

Our four main priorities are:

1. Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent.
2. Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities.
3. An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place
4. Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent, and resilient

We have identified the achievement of our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022/27 as being integral to the delivery of our corporate priorities. Including Welsh as a key performance measure, reflects our commitment and continued effort to improve our Welsh language service offer; increase the use of Welsh and the number of people with Welsh language skills in our area, despite the area having the lowest number of Welsh language speakers. For further information, please see Section 3 'An Overview of Blaenau Gwent'.

[Blaenau Gwent's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022/27](#)

The School Standard and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to prepare and introduce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WESP sets out how the local authority will carry out its education functions to improve and increase the use of Welsh in Education over the next ten years. The plan will contribute towards the achievement of this plan and Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 – 1 million speakers initiative.

[Blaenau Gwent's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24](#)

The plan sets out our equality objectives which aims to strengthen and advance equity across all our service areas to deliver outcomes of equality for residents, communities, staff, and visitors in-line with our Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality (Wales) Act 2010. We recognise achievement of our equality

objectives will help to achieve delivery of our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022/27 objectives and vice versa.

8. Our consultation method

In meeting the requirements of Welsh Language Standard 146 the Council undertook a review of its first Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017/22 to assess the extent we met what we said we would do to promote and increase the use and number of Welsh speakers in our area.

To help us do this we considered key data and information (quantitative research) as well as proactively engaged our local partners and key stakeholders to gain citizen and professional insight to determine what we did well; where we can improve and whether there are any gaps in our approach to achieving our target.

Our consultation method was delivered in two phases:

Phase One – Informal consultation (November 2020 – February 2021)

Led and facilitated by our partner Menter Iaith BGTm, the Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network group was established in November. The group held its first meeting online and held a workshop to discuss feedback gathered from a preliminary survey to reflect on progress against our first Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017/22 and to consider opportunities for developing our second Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-27.

General feedback

- Better promotion of the formal strategy (more visible to the public).
- Need for measurable targets and regular action plan progress evaluation.
- Better alignment with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
- Action to map programmes and projects already being delivered.
- More information about partners and local Welsh organisations (e.g., Blaenau Gwent Welsh Society).

Achieving our targets

- Welsh in the workplace – promote Welsh language training being available during work time.
- Community – support community and cultural events which promote the use and awareness of the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education.
- Children & Young People, Family – Greater promotion of support available for non-Welsh speaking parents and extra-curricular activities.

Ideas on changing attitudes towards the Welsh language

- Develop promotional videos in English which showcase local Welsh-speakers stories; cultural history; and why the language is important.
- Ensure all children learn Wales's National Anthem.

Suggestions on how the local authority can support local groups to increase the community use of Welsh

- Community grants or rewards scheme for local Welsh language groups.

- Create informal chat groups and run /support events (e.g., Welsh festivals).

Additional consultation feedback on Blaenau Gwent Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022/32 via the Welsh in Education Forum was also considered and used to inform our review.

Phase Two – Statutory consultation (December 2022)

Our statutory consultation period was supported by an online survey, workshops, and a range of informal engagement activities during December 2022 which was promoted extensively through social media and via our established groups and networks.

Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders listed below as well as our partners (please see Section 8 'Our Partners'), we also undertook targeted engagement to ensure we were reaching key community groups and residents to get involved and share their views on our draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022/27:

- Corporate Leadership Team & Wider Corporate Leadership Team
- Blaenau Gwent Council Staff
- Members
- Blaenau Gwent Secondary & Primary Schools (pupils & parents)
- Blaenau Gwent Community Hubs
- Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network - Workshop
- Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Forum - Workshop
- Gwynllyw Secondary School (pupils & parents)
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- (Blaenau Gwent Welsh Society)
- Grŵp Deddf
- Cymdeithas Cymraeg Blaenau Gwent
- Youth Forum & Blaenau Gwent Youth Network
- Older People's Network
- Blaenau Gwent Citizen Panel
- PSB Engagement Group
- Blaenau Gwent Local Delivery Partnership

We received 39 responses to our online survey. The feedback was considered and used to inform the development of our final plan. A summary of findings is as follows:

- Overall, there was positive feedback received about the plans use of language. People told us it was concise, easy to read, and understandable.
- People were supportive of our target but noted we could be more ambitious. People told us the plan should focus on education and learning for adults.
- Some people shared concerns towards having a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for Blaenau Gwent and it being made a priority against

other current pressing issues (for example, Cost of Living crisis), given Blaenau Gwent has the lowest number of Welsh speakers within Wales. This feedback has been considered and indicates the need to prioritise a positive change in attitude towards the Welsh language in the area as an action across all three of our objectives.

- Objective one - 67% of participants voting somewhat to fully supportive.
- Objective two - 80% of participants voting somewhat to fully supportive.
- Objective three - 75% of participants voting somewhat to fully supportive.

9. Our partners

We know by working together with our partners and key stakeholders we will be able to achieve more. Below is a list of some of the key organisations, agencies and groups who will help support us to deliver the aims and objectives of this plan:

Menter Iaith BGTM

Menter Iaith is a voluntary organisation aimed at promoting the Welsh language.

Menter Iaith BGTM was established in 2007 making it one of the youngest Welsh Language Initiatives, or 'Mentrau Iaith' amongst the 22 that exist across Wales. The Menter serves three counties – Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, and Monmouthshire.

Practically, the 'Mentrau Iaith' were established to arrange a variety of events for people of all ages, background, and linguistic ability to enjoy and socialise in Welsh including parents, families, children and young people, adults, and learners. The Mentrau offer community events and activities to promote use of the Welsh language.

Urdd Gobaith Cymru

Urdd Gobaith Cymru is a National Voluntary Youth Organisation with over 55,000 members between the ages of 8 – 25 years old. Since 1922, they have provided opportunities through the medium of Welsh for children and young people in Wales to enable them to make positive contributions to their communities.

Mudiad Meithrin

Mudiad Meithrin was established in 1971 to help nurture a rich landscape of Welsh-medium play and learning experiences for children from birth to school-age.

A voluntary organisation who is passionate about celebrating and encouraging the use of the Welsh language.

Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network

Led and facilitated by Menter Iaith BGTM, the network brings together a mix of organisations and agencies who directly support the promotion and use of the Welsh language, including key local authority services, and Blaenau Gwent citizens to support the delivery of the Welsh language Promotion strategy.

The purpose of the group will be to support the monitoring and evaluation of progress against delivering the plan on a quarterly basis. Linking with Blaenau Gwent Council's corporate performance management arrangements.

Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Forum (WEF)

Led and facilitated by Blaenau Gwent Council, the Welsh in Education Forum is the strategic driving force behind the Council's 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022/27 (WESP) whose role is to monitor and evaluate progress.

The forum meets every term, with dedicated sub-groups taking place in and around meetings, to focus on specific themes. The Forum provides a formal channel of communication between key partners and stakeholders, who work collectively towards achieving the vision, aims, objectives strategic priorities and targets set out within the plan and Blaenau Gwent Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022/27.

Blaenau Gwent Welsh Society

All Blaenau Gwent Secondary and Primary Schools

Urdd Club in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw

[Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone - Coleg Gwent](#)

[Learn Welsh Gwent](#)

[Blaenau Gwent Council's Family Information Service](#)

RhAG (Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg / Parents for Welsh Medium Education)

Rhywdlaith Regional Network

The Rhywdlaith Network is made up of council members and Welsh Local Government Association members, including national park authorities, and fire and rescue services with guest speakers being invited when necessary and was established in December 2021. The purpose of the network is to provide opportunities to share good practice, and to discuss ways of overcoming common challenges and share strategic ideas to support greater engagement with the Welsh language.

Grŵp Deddf

Grŵp Deddf as their motto 'working for the language' would suggest is a group that acts as a support network to officers with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Welsh Language Standards across South East Wales. The group was established in 1998 and since the implementation of the Standards, they have expanded considerably. There are now 50 different member organisations, including the Welsh Government, Local Government, the health sector, education institutions, national organisations, emergency organisations and partner organisations.

Regional Officers Network – More than just words

[Gwent Public Services Board](#) & Blaenau Gwent's Local Delivery Partnership

10. Delivering Our Objectives – Action Plans

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

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| Children and Young People | |
| Objective 2: <i>To increase the provision of Welsh language education and informal activities for children and young people</i> | |
| Indicator(s): | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children in WM early year provision • Transition rates from WM primary to WM secondary | |
| 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 2.1 | Increase the early year's provision offer to stimulate parental demand |
| Action 2.2 | Increase transition rates from Welsh-medium nursery provision to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg |
| Action 2.3 | Raise the profile and levels of participation for Welsh-medium education |
| Action 2.4 | Promote extra-curricular Welsh language/bilingual activities and social opportunities for children and young people from both Welsh medium and English medium schools |
| Action 2.5 | Promote opportunities for parents/carers/grandparents to improve their Welsh language / bilingual skills to support their children through Welsh / bilingual education |
| <p>Partners: We will be working with the following partners to achieve this objective:</p> <p>Children, young people and adults in Blaenau Gwent, Coleg Gwent, Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Learn Welsh Gwent, Menter Iaith, Aneurin Leisure Trust, Mudiad Meithrin, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, South East Wales Regional Forum, Blaenau Gwent Council's Family Information Service, RhAG (Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg / Parents for Welsh Medium Education), Welsh Language Youth Forum, Grŵp Deddf, Corporate Equality Network, All Schools, Welsh Language Commissioner's Office</p> | |

Welsh in the Workplace

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

Indicator(s):

- 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:

- 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 |

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

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

Monitoring Arrangements

We will track our progress against the delivery of the plan by considering a range of performance data, including a review of key indicators we have identified within our strategy on a quarterly basis, including information provided via our business planning arrangements.

This will be monitored by a new Corporate Equality/Welsh Network which is to be established to support the delivery of these two statutory policy areas. Representation on the group will include middle to senior managers from key service areas, including the Professional Lead for Engagement, Equality & Welsh, who are instrumental in supporting us achieve our objectives through action and will be accountable for ensuring the Council is meeting its requirements under the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015.

The Corporate Equality/Welsh Network will work alongside the Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network and will also play an important role in helping to monitor performance on a quarterly basis as well as acting as the driving force for supporting the delivery of our action plans over the next five years.

Also, the Council's Welsh in Education Forum who monitor the implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022/32 will provide key performance data (such as monitoring the provision of Welsh-medium education) for review. This is also reported annually to Welsh Government, with reports being taken via the Council's political processes annually, as well as the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme Board and Admissions Forum.

All our quarterly performance information will be collated and used to inform our Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report (Welsh Language Standards 158, 164 & 170) which is to be published in June each year up to 2027. The annual report will be presented for review via our professional and democratic arrangements, including our Corporate Leadership Team and scrutiny process via Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet as part of their annual work programmes.