

Monmouthshire County Council

Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2020-2021



The vision for our county is of building sustainable and resilient communities. As part of this it is essential that we promote and protect culture, heritage and the Welsh language, encouraging people to participate fully in their communities. Monmouthshire County Council is committed to ensuring that people can interact with the council through the medium of Welsh.

This report reflects the council's progress on its Welsh language commitments under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards during the financial year 2020-2021.

This report is updated annually on the Council website by 30th June each year in compliance with Standard 158.

Legislative requirements

The standards as applicable to Monmouthshire County Council under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are to be found on our website at <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/monmouthshire-welsh-language/>

Translations

- Our process for translating documents, forms, leaflets, twitter and Facebook interactions etc. is excellent with a long-standing group of external translators commissioned to work to deadlines determined by clear prioritisation of work.
- We continue to monitor our website to ensure that any new pages come online in both Welsh and English. Monitoring of the website will always remain a priority due to the number of officers with the appropriate permissions to upload information and the sheer volume of work and use the annual Commissioner's audit to inform our conversations. We have also commissioned an external company to carry out an independent audit to complement that of the Commissioners. This identified a small number of areas where translations needed to be improved and it has been agreed that we will commission this piece of work on an annual basis to ensure that we are providing our information through the medium of Welsh and English to the residents of Monmouthshire.
- In the light of pressures on the Welsh Language Budget due to the sheer volume of translation requests council has agreed an increase of £22,000 per annum for 2021 – 2022 taking the overall budget to £81,000.

Workforce

- We continue to be pro-active with our recruitment process and use a Welsh Language skills assessment for all vacancies.
- Welsh Language training is offered to all staff whether as learners or for people with existing skills that have lost confidence in using the language (See Standard 170 (2) (b and c) for more detail). A pilot of the “Say Something in Welsh” (SSIW) fast track course is being organised with a cohort of 10 to evaluate its effectiveness. This complements the existing Cymraeg yn y Gweithle Mynediad, Sylfaen and Canolradd courses that are being funded by the council and attended on- line by officers of the council annually.
- Job vacancies advertised are monitored by the Welsh Language Translation Team to check for completed skills assessments at the point that they are received in the translation email in-box. An additional safety net is that the Welsh Language Officer upon receiving the authority vacancy list on a weekly basis checks on levels of compliance.
- All vacancies are classified as Welsh desirable as a minimum (Information regards recruiting to empty posts (*Standard 154, 170(c)*) detailed below).
- There remains a significant challenge in ensuring sufficient numbers of Welsh speaking front line staff to provide services through the medium of Welsh. There are difficulties of recruiting Welsh speakers to some of these specialist roles. Managers are mindful of the risks of having posts vacant for extended periods through not being able to appoint to Welsh Essential roles due to a low numbers of applicants. We aim to complement our group of fluent Welsh speakers through running the SSIW and running a Clwb Clonc to build the confidence of Canolradd speakers.

Customer Service

Our Welsh language line, established on the 4th July 2017, remains in operation and feedback from users is that is a valuable resource as it allows people to interact with the council through the medium of Welsh.

Between 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 there have been 74 calls to the Welsh language line.

The following is a list of the service required or the nature of the phone calls received by the Welsh line in the last financial year. This data will provide the basis to discuss the need for Welsh speaking staff in the areas with the greatest demand.

- Refuse/garden waste 28
- Communications Team 8
- Council Tax/rates/finance 7
- Human Resources 5
- CYP/Education 5
- Elections 3
- Grass Routes/Passenger Transport 3
- Social care 3
- Licensing 2
- Planning 2
- Environmental Health 2
- Highways 2
- Welsh Language Officer 2
- Countryside 2

In addition to telephony we have a fully bilingual App for customers to make payments and request services. We also have a chatbot which is fully bilingual.

Policy Making

Over the years the Council has developed an equality impact assessment procedure to accompany the Council's decision-making process. This document ensures compliance with the Policy Making Standards, equality legislation and the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It is compulsory for it to accompany any report going to cabinet or Council for decision with the intention to support effective decision-making and ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. All impact assessments are regularly monitored by a group of 4 officers to ensure that each assessment is robust and complies with legislation. The questions on the impact on the Welsh language include; opportunities to use Welsh and the negative or increased positive effect the decision may have on the language whilst ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English Language.

Data required each year from 1 April – 31 March

The report presents data on the required indicators in the following fields in compliance with Standards 158,164 and 170:

- Information on complaints (*Standard 158(2); 164(2); 170(2)(d)*)
- Information on staff language skills (*Standard 170(2)(a)*)
- Welsh medium training for staff (*Standard 170 (2)(b+c)*)
- Recruiting to empty posts (*Standard 154, 170(ch)*).

Complaints relating to the Welsh Language Standards

In 2020-2021 we did not have any formal complaints from members of the public in relation to the Welsh Language Standards. All Informal complaints or observations received were addressed by the Welsh Language Officer to a satisfactory conclusion.

Staff Welsh language skills

Welsh Language Skills of Employees as at 31/03/21 (not including school- based staff)

Staff Competency	Mynediad Beginner	Sylfaen Advanced beginner	Canolradd Intermediate	Uwchradd Advanced	Rhugl Fluent	Total
Welsh Language skills	173	32	18	6	35	264

Welsh language spoken skills by service area at 31 March 2021.(Not including school-based staff)

	Mynediad Beginner	Sylfaen Advanced beginner	Canolradd Intermediate	Uwchradd Advanced	Rhugl Fluent	Total
Children and Young People	7	1	2	0	1	8
Social Care and Health	54	9	6	0	17	81
Enterprise	82	16	10	2	8	117
Resources	11	2	0	2	1	17
Chief Executive Officers Dept	19	4	0	2	8	33
Total	173	32	18	6	35	264

Recruitment

Job application processes are fully accessible in Welsh in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and every single vacancy is advertised bilingually regardless of the Welsh assessment made and thereby goes over and above the requirement set by the standards allocated to us.

Below are the details of advertised posts in 2020 – 2021.

	2019-20	2020-21
vacant/new posts advertised	362	166
vacant/new vacant posts advertised that had 'Welsh language skills essential'	1	1
vacant/new vacant posts advertised that had 'Welsh language skills desirable'	351 (97.0%)	165 (99.4%)
vacant/new posts advertised specified as posts where it is 'necessary to learn Welsh-language skills when someone is appointed to the post';	0	0
The number of vacant/new posts advertised from 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 that 'did not require Welsh language skills'	10 (2.8%)	0 (0%)
The number that did not include an assessment	0	0
The number not stated	0	0

Here are the details of schools advertised posts in 2020 – 2021.

	2020-21
Schools vacant/new posts advertised	35
Schools vacant/new vacant posts advertised that had 'Welsh language skills essential';	7
Schools vacant/new vacant posts advertised that had 'Welsh language skills desirable or desirable but not essential'	28
Schools vacant/new posts advertised where it is 'necessary to learn Welsh-language skills when someone is appointed to the post'	0
Number of schools vacant/New posts advertised that did not require Welsh language skills	0
Number that did not include an assessment	0
Number not stated	0

Welsh medium training for staff

In 2020 - 2021, staff have been attending Welsh Language sessions and all are financially supported. This includes fees, books and the time to attend and study:-

- **12** members of staff enrolled for the Cwrs Mynediad Year 1 Cymraeg yn y Gweithle 2 hour 30 week course provided by Coleg Gwent Welsh for Adults.
- **2** members of staff enrolled for Sylfaen 1
- **7** members of staff enrolled for Sylfaen 2
- **3** members of staff enrolled for Canolradd 1
- **1** member of staff enrolled for Uwch part 2 (after work).
- Staff are funded to attend Coleg Gwent Welsh Weekend Courses should they chose to in addition to the normal weekly courses.

More opportunities are to be offered and fully funded from September 2021 or if opportunities arise before. As previously mentioned, we will set up a “Say something in Welsh” fast track pilot with a cohort of 10 fully funded staff. The take up this year has been less than in the previous 9 years due mainly to the pandemic and the need for staff to change roles to provide additional support to the public.

Vocational and community Training

The council has a programme of vocational (external and in-house) training and training provided to members of the public through our Community Education Service. All fluent Welsh speaking staff have been informed that they have the right to have this training provided through the medium of Welsh as have members of the public through the booking procedure but as yet we have not received any requests.