



AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date Written	15 th August 2019
Report Author	Kerry O'Donovan
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	9 th September 2019

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Speak My Language Action Plan

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 In April 2018 the Wales Audit Office published a national report called Speak my language: Overcoming language and communication barriers in public services.
- 1.2 The report looks at how public bodies, particularly local government and NHS bodies providing front line services, provide interpretation and translation services for British Sign Language and other languages to enable people facing these communication barriers to access services.
- 1.3 The report has been presented to the Council's Corporate Management Team where it was agreed that an action plan would be developed to respond to the requirements of the report.
- 1.4 Working with services across the Council an action plan has been developed, attached as Appendix 1, which is structured around the following areas:
 - Community Cohesion.
 - Schools.
 - The Council's corporate website.
 - Complaints.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 Audit Committee receives the action plan and notes its content.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In April 2018 the Wales Audit Office published a national report called Speak my language: Overcoming language and communication barriers in public services. The report can be accessed by following the link: <http://www.audit.wales/publication/speak-my-language-overcoming-language-and-communication-barriers-public-services>
- 3.2 The report looks at how public bodies, particularly local government and NHS bodies providing front line services, provide interpretation and translation services for British Sign Language and other languages to enable people facing these communication barriers to access services.
- 3.3 The report is written in the context of complying with the following legislation:
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
 - Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
 - Welsh Government policies on refugees and asylum seekers.

4.0 ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 The report has been presented to the Council's Corporate Management Team where it was agreed that an action plan would be developed to respond to the requirements of the report.
- 4.2 Working with services across the Council an action plan has been developed, attached as Appendix 1, which is structured around the following areas:
- Community Cohesion.
 - Schools.
 - The Council's corporate website.
 - Complaints.
- 4.3 The action plan will be regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure that it responds to the requirements of the Wales Audit Office national report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications identified in this report. Any financial implications arising from the report will be reported to Cabinet/Council as appropriate, including potential options for funding.

ELLIS COOPER
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COUNCILLOR ANDREW BARRY
CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE
& CORPORATE SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Wales Audit Office Report - Speak my language: Overcoming language and communication barriers in public services	April 2018	Wales Audit Office website
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

APPENDIX 1**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO
THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT: SPEAK MY LANGUAGE**

No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Officer / Team
Community Cohesion			
1	Develop an effective engagement strategy / mapping exercise to gather a better understanding of the communication needs of the diverse local population of Merthyr Tydfil.	March 2021	Cwm Taf Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator
2	Provide different effective media strategies / signposting opportunities for service users who do not speak English or Welsh as their main language.	March 2021	Cwm Taf Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator
Schools			
3	Deliver training for school-based staff who work with children for whom English or Welsh is not their first language. The training addresses specific teaching strategies (reading, phonics, writing, speaking and listening, etc.) and pedagogy.	Ongoing	English as an Additional Language Team
4	Provide Polish translation service.	Ongoing	English as an Additional Language Team
Council's Corporate Website			
5	Act on recommendations from Socitm and SiteMorse quarterly reports. (Socitm – Society of Information Technology Management) (SiteMorse is a leader organisation in website accessibility)	Quarterly	Web Development Team Leader
6	Review and implement corporate website to 'A' standard of WCAG 2.1. (WCAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)	August 2020	Web Development Team Leader
7	Review and implement corporate website to 'AA' standard of WCAG 2.1.	April 2021	Web Development Team Leader
8	Publish an Accessibility Statement for the Council's corporate website.	August 2020	Web Development Team Leader
Complaints			
9	Train new staff who work with front line services the complaints process for both Social Services and Corporate Complaints and where the information can be accessed in both English and Welsh.	Immediate	Complaints Officer

No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Officer / Team
10	Update the complaints procedure forms with details of the new advocacy service to support both Adults and Children whilst making a complaint for those who require support.	Immediate	Complaints Officer
11	Provide complaint information in alternative languages i.e. Polish and Portuguese.	Immediate	Complaints Officer
12	Ensure all staff within the Complaints Department have a knowledge of language translation procedures for any complaints received where English is not the first language.	Immediate	Complaints Officer
13	Ensure all staff within the Complaints Department have a knowledge on how to access a Welsh speaker if requested by a complainant.	Immediate	Complaints Officer