



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council



WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2022-2027

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Foreword

This Welsh Language Strategy will run from July 2022 until June 2021. The main focus of this Strategy is developing the use and visibility of the Welsh language across the County Borough. Whilst focussing on this, the Strategy must be read alongside the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan as the two plans are coterminous and the actions of one support the other.

This Strategy is ambitious and we make no apologies for this. Merthyr Tydfil has a proud history of heritage and culture and has, in the past, had a very strong Welsh speaking community. It is our vision that the Welsh language is seen and heard on a daily basis across the County Borough.

We are proud of Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful and its focus on arts and culture in Theatr Soar and we are looking forward to seeing events once more being held there in the future.

Over the life of this Strategy, we aim to support ambitions of the Welsh Government's target of a million speakers by 2050 and the actions of this Strategy will go a long way to supporting that.

COUNCILLOR GERAINT THOMAS
WELSH LANGUAGE CHAMPION



Background

This is the second Welsh Language Strategy for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. It sets out the priorities for facilitating and promoting the Welsh language in Merthyr Tydfil amongst and across all partners. A summary of the actions undertaken as part of the previous Strategy can be found in Appendix 1.

The current financial situation faced by all local authorities' means that delivering the outcomes of this Strategy will be challenging, but it also presents good opportunities and firm foundations upon which to forge new and stronger partnerships, which will help the Welsh language to prosper across our County Borough. This Strategy is not one simply for the Council – it cannot be delivered by one organisation – it is a true partnership undertaking. It is recognised by the Council and indeed by partners themselves that the success of the Strategy can only be delivered by partnership working; partnership working between public sector partners; between the public, private and education sectors; but, most importantly of all, with the people of Merthyr Tydfil. These strong partnerships will showcase the Welsh language and Welsh culture as well as creating new opportunities for people to socialise, participate and express themselves in a bilingual atmosphere.

The planned growth in Welsh medium education in Merthyr Tydfil as well as the increased focus on a Welsh language continuum in all schools means more of our children and young people can become confident bilingual adults. Every child regardless of whether they attend Welsh or English medium education should leave school with Welsh skills. The Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 will play a key role in facilitating the growth in Welsh education as well as improving the standards in Welsh across education settings in the County Borough. The underlying action plans for this Welsh Language Strategy and for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will be fully linked so to ensure that the activities can be delivered together to achieve the greatest impact as we aim to increase the number of children and parents who learn and speak Welsh and have opportunities to use the Welsh language outside the school gates.

Why a Welsh Language Strategy?

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established a legal framework to impose duties on certain organisations to comply with standards in relation to the Welsh language by way of sub-legislation (Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015). The standards issued to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council listed in 'The Compliance Notice of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011' includes:

Welsh Language Standard 145

You must produce, and publish on your website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how you propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in your area; and the strategy must include (amongst other matters) - (a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and (b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target; and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).



Current Language Data

- In the census, which was undertaken in 2011 the number of Welsh speakers was 5,532 or 8.9%, this data is subject to change following the 2021 census ¹– **PLEASE NOTE THE PUBLISHED STRATEGY WILL INCLUDE THE MOST RECENT FIGURES EXPECTED MARCH 2022**
- On 31st December 2020, according to the annual population survey, the number of people who could speak Welsh in the County Borough was 12,600 or 21.7%²
- On 31st December 2020, according to the annual population survey, 19.8% of the population could read Welsh, 18.2% could write Welsh, and 23.9% could understand spoken Welsh.³
- On 31st December 2020, the frequency of the number of people speaking Welsh in Merthyr Tydfil on a daily basis was 8.1% ⁴
- Over the past five years the number of children transferring from Welsh medium early years settings has varied from 57.1% to 79.3%⁵
- Of the whole primary school population 13.3% attend Welsh medium education with approximately 97% of these transferring to Welsh medium secondary education outside the County Borough⁶
- In 2020/2021, 75 people across Merthyr Tydfil were accessing Welsh learner classes through Learn Welsh Glamorgan⁷

Policy Context

National

Welsh Language (No.1) Regulation Standards 2015

From 30th March 2016 all local authorities in Wales have a statutory duty to comply with new regulation Welsh language standards which explain how they as organisations should use the Welsh language in different situations.

The duties which come from the standards mean that organisations should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, together with promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language.

¹ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Census-Welsh-Language/welshspeakers-by-localauthority-gender-detailedagegroups-2011census>

² <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language/annualpopulationsurveyestimatesofpersonsaged3andoverwhosaytheycanspeakwelsh-by-localauthority-measure>

³ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language/welsh-skills-by-la>

⁴ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language/welshfrequency-by-la-year>

⁵ Source: Internal

⁶ Source: Internal

⁷ Source: Learn Welsh Glamorgan



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This Act aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act will make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. One of the seven Wellbeing goals listed in the Act is “A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language”.

Cymraeg 2050 (2017)

This ambitious strategy calls for a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The challenge of achieving this calls for far-reaching changes across Wales, not just in Merthyr Tydfil. Boundaries need to be pushed and ambitious action taken to enable more people to learn and use Welsh.

More than just words (2016)

‘More than Just Words’ is the Welsh Government’s strategic framework for improving Welsh language services in health, social services and social care. This is vital in ensuring positive well-being outcomes for individuals, something which underpins the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. The Codes of Practice under the Act require local authorities to ensure Welsh language services are built into 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’.

Regional

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board

Cwm Taf Public Services Board was established by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Act makes all the public bodies involved think more about the long term, work better with people, communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach to its work. Our overall aim is for Cwm Taf to contribute to the seven national wellbeing goals for Wales.

Local

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council’s Corporate Plan 2021 - 2022

The Council’s Focus on the Future document has four themes, to include;

- Best Start to Life
- Working Life
- Environmental Well Being
- Living Well

The document is due for renewal in March 2022 and reference to the new Plan will be outlined when the WLS is published.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 10 Year Plan September 2022 – September 2032

This far-reaching Plan aims ‘To continue to grow opportunities for Welsh medium education across the County Borough, supporting families and professionals to develop their skills in the use of Welsh so that they are more confident to use the language wherever they are.’



Raising Attainment Raising Standards Strategy (RARS) (2021-2026)

The Learning Department of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council launched its RARS Strategy in 2021. Linked to this is improving standards for Welsh education from birth to adulthood. One of its aims is to provide more opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh in an informal environment through working with Welsh language partners in Merthyr Tydfil.

Other Council Plans

The importance of promoting and supporting the wider use of Welsh will be reflected in all main departmental plans within the Council eg The Cyfarthfa Plan.

Vision

Merthyr Tydfil: #Shwmaeronment – a County Borough where the Welsh language is heard, spoken and celebrated through all walks of life.

Main Target

To increase the frequency of the number of people speaking Welsh in Merthyr Tydfil on a daily basis to at least 10%.

The ambitions of the Strategy will be considered under three strategic aims underpinned by the overarching theme of Partnership. The three strategic aims are that:

- children and young people have plenty of opportunities to use Welsh every day;
- Merthyr Tydfil is a County Borough which has the Welsh language as an integral part of its social and civic activities; and
- there is an increase in the use of Welsh across all whole workforces.

For ease of reading these will be summarised as:

- Children and Young people
- Community and Family
- Workforce

Partnership

As a County Borough, the success of the five Year Welsh Language Strategy vision depends on collaborative working with our partners and stakeholders (see Appendix 2). Merthyr Tydfil's Welsh Language Forum - Fforwm Sirol Merthyr Tudful, which includes representation from Welsh language partners of Merthyr Tydfil, will undertake a key role in implementing and monitoring this strategy on behalf of their organisations. Alongside this steering groups of wider partners including services from within the Council will further support the facilitation of the Strategy.



Children and Young People

By the end of five years more children and young people will be able to, and will decide, to use Welsh outside the school gates and in a social setting. Please note many of these are replicated within the WESP.

The main priorities are to:

- promote the benefits of Welsh medium education to the wider community of Merthyr Tydfil and support the implementation of the WESP;
- improve provision in and standards of Welsh in both Welsh medium schools and English medium schools as outlined in the WESP;
- develop opportunities for children and young people in English medium settings to positively connect with the Welsh language outside the school setting;
- improve rates of progression between Welsh medium early years setting to Welsh medium primary schools;
- increase the provision of Welsh medium extra-curricular activities and opportunities for children and young people through working with partners; and
- encourage more schools to participate in a wide range of bilingual cultural activities.

Targets (see also the WESP)

- By 2025 all young people to leave school with a qualification in Welsh
- By 2027 all English medium schools to have achieved the Gold Award Cymraeg Campus
- By 2027 all Welsh medium primary schools to have achieved the Siarter Iaith Gold Award
- By 2027 at least 90% of children transfer from Cylchoedd Meithrin into Welsh medium education

Community

By the end of five years the visibility of the Welsh language in the community will be strengthened and supported.

The main priorities are to:

- provide opportunities for families to use Welsh together.
- support partners to increase outreach activities and develop opportunities to showcase Merthyr's extensive Welsh language history and heritage.
- increase the visibility of the Welsh language within the County Borough to reflect the Welsh language community through existing planning mechanisms to include tourism and heritage.
- increase opportunities for people to receive Health & Social Care Service in Welsh through implementing the More than Just Words Strategy.
- in partnership with Learn Welsh Glamorgan and Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful, provide opportunities for learners in the community and the local authority to practice their Welsh in an informal environment.
- in conjunction with partners Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful, Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Learn Welsh Glamorgan, promote the use of the Welsh language in all events that take place across the County Borough.



- through working in conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Library Services provide Welsh medium and bilingual activities for the community.
- working in collaboration with all the Welsh language partners organise family fun days or evenings to use and take the Welsh language out to the community.

Targets

- At least two community events each year promoting the use of the Welsh language are delivered by each partner
- Increase the numbers of events across the County Borough that include a Welsh language or Welsh culture aspect
- Increase the use of the Welsh language on signage across the County Borough (businesses, care homes)

The Workforce

By the end of five years more people within the workforce of the Council and wider will be confident in using Welsh as part of their day-to-day activities.

The main priorities are to:

- ensure that all members of the Council workforce complete at least Welsh Level 2.
- ensure compliance against the Welsh Language standards across Council services.
- encourage Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council partner organisations to provide Welsh language training and Welsh language awareness training to all staff.
- increase the number of Welsh speakers within the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and partner organisations.
- enable and support fluent staff, as well as staff who are learning, to use the Welsh language in the workplace, and encourage partner organisations of the Council to adopt the same approach.
- work with Learn Welsh Glamorgan and Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful to increase the number of staff working in the Council who are confident in using Welsh.
- in conjunction with a range of partners provide Welsh language training to young people whilst they are in education for them to be able to develop their skills to gain employment through the medium of Welsh.
- ensure Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and businesses in Merthyr advertise increasing numbers of posts where Welsh is essential for the job and the workforce is seen as a bilingual organisation.

Targets

- Increase the number of staff able to communicate confidently through the medium of Welsh by 15%.



ACTIONS TO SUPPORT FIVE YEAR WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2017 -2022

In July 2017 the Welsh Language Strategy was launched – #SHWMAERONMENT. As part of this, a competition was held with primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil to design a logo for the strategy. The logo now is currently promoted across the County Borough to promote the use of the Welsh language and is used at events when implementing the Strategy.

Gwyl Solar – In July 2017 Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful held a Welsh language event – Gwyl Solar to raise awareness of the Welsh language in Merthyr Tydfil. All Welsh language partners in Merthyr Tydfil participated in the event.

Folly Farm – In August 2017 Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful organised a visit to Folly Farm by for children aged between 3 and 15 years old and young mothers with small children.

Welsh Learners – In November 2018 a group of Welsh learners from the Council attended a Welsh language event at Saint Fagan’s National Museum of History. The event “Llwybrau Llafar” was organised by Dysgu Cymraeg Cenedlaethol specifically for Welsh learners to practice their Welsh in an informal environment setting.

Clwb Dysgu Cymraeg Calfaria – In January 2019 a Welsh Learners Community Group was established – Clwb Dysgu Cymraeg Calfaria. This is supported by the Council and the group meet every Tuesday evening. The purpose of this is to allow the community to learn Welsh in an informal situation.

Diwrnod Shw’mae Su’mae – On 15th October 2019, the Council organised it’s first ‘Diwrnod Shw’mae Su’mae’ event to promote the Welsh language in the County Borough. The event focused on Welsh medium education with children from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhyd Y Grug and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Santes Tudful participating. This event was organised in partnership with Cymraeg Byd Busnes, Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful and Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg.

St David’s Day Event – In 2020, a St David’s Day event was held on March 2nd at The College, Merthyr in partnership with the College and Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful. The Deputy Welsh Language Commissioner attended with senior elected members. Children from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Santes Tudful also took part in the event.

Being Bilingual Booklet – In July 2020 a working group was established to create a [Being Bilingual Booklet](#). This marketing booklet provides information and advice to current and prospective parents on the benefits and advantages on sending their children to Welsh medium education. It provides information from birth up until adulthood on organisations nationally and locally on where to obtain resources and any questions on Welsh medium education and includes quotes from parents and pupils from Merthyr Tydfil who have received their education in Welsh. A group of partners was established to create this booklet including Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful, Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and relevant officers from the Council.



Diwrnod Shwmae Su'mae – In October 2020 to build on the success of the previous Diwrnod Shwmae Su'mae an event was organised in partnership with members of the Welsh Education Forum. Due to the pandemic, the event took place online. The day again promoted the use of the Welsh language from children and young people, the community, the workforce and the family. The viewings of performances on social media ranged from 254 to 2.1k. The event also had positive television coverage.

Welsh Language Carol Concert – On December 17th, 2020 a Welsh language Carol Concert was held on You-Tube. There were items from the community, staff of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and eight schools. The event received 1,332 views.

#SHWMAERONMENT – In March 2021 a #SHWMAERONMENT event was organised to promote the use of the Welsh language across the County Borough within families, children and young people, the community and the workforce, once again online due to the ongoing pandemic. The event started on St David's Day and ran over three weeks where a few videos a day were shown on social media platforms. The number of views reached 3.4k and the event was seen by the public as far afield as America, Australia, and other countries. All secondary schools, two early years settings and 12 primary school participated in the event by providing a video promoting the Welsh language. As part of the event a marketing competition was launched to all schools in the County Borough to create a banner to promote the Welsh Language Strategy. The winning entries came from Pen y Dre High School, Abercanaid Community Primary School and St Mary's RC Primary school. This event also had television coverage.

Welsh Second Language Afon Taf Primary Cluster Event – In July 2021 in conjunction with the Urdd, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council organised two events with the cluster primary schools of Afon Taf High School. Sports activities were organised to provide children the opportunity to hear and speak the language in an informal setting.

Welsh Learners of the Council (The workforce outcome) – As part of the provision of Welsh language workplace training opportunities several officers have taken part in the Cynllun Siarad / Speaking project. This project helps learners gain confidence in using the language outside of the working environment, and in normal, everyday situations, for example such as meeting for coffee and lunch. They meet almost anywhere as long as they are in public places. They are teamed up with a Welsh speaking officer who has agreed to provide 10 hours of "one to one" time with the learner over a period of 10 weeks.

Working in partnership with Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg the Council also continues to provide ongoing social opportunities for learners to listen and practice their Welsh, for example:

- Through groups of learners attending the "Jonathan Show" on S4C.
- Coffee mornings and festive events being held at Canolfan Soar in Merthyr Tydfil.

There are currently 10 members of staff in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council learning Welsh at the following levels:

- Six at Intermediate 2
- Three at Intermediate 1
- One at Entry 1

Currently 13 members of MTCBC staff are identified as fluent Welsh speakers.



KEY PARTNERS**Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful**

Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful work closely with the local Welsh medium schools to ensure that children and young people have access to high quality participatory arts opportunities and cultural experiences. The main aim of the organisation is to promote and increase the use of Welsh in the community. They provide and host a wide range of courses, workshops, performances, clubs and recreational opportunities for children, young people, adults and families to enjoy.

Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful is based in Canolfan and Theatr Soar in Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tudful, a Welsh language and cultural hub in the heart of Merthyr's Town Centre. While Canolfan Soar is home to all of the Welsh language organisations that serve the Merthyr Tudful Borough, Theatr Soar has enabled the Menter Iaith to reach out to the wider Merthyr Community. Organisations based at Canolfan a Theatr Soar include:

- Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful – community participation
- Lingo Soar Cyf. – Welsh translation service
- Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg – Welsh learning
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru – Youth work
- Mudiad Meithrin – Cylch Meithrin Soar
- Helo Blod – Language use in business

Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful offers a wide range of volunteering and work experience opportunities for adults and young people. Canolfan a Theatr Soar support the use of Welsh in the community by offering a safe and comfortable environment where people and families can forge new friendships and join new networks that broaden horizons. The Welsh language is seen as an enabler that enriches our community

Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG)

Parents for Welsh Medium Education exists to support and promote education through the medium of Welsh throughout Wales and to ensure equal opportunities for those who wish their children to be taught through the medium of Welsh.

Merthyr Tydfil Public Library

The library has a large selection of Welsh or bilingual books – there are many with simple Welsh and English words side by side so parents can begin to learn the language alongside their children.

Well-Being Merthyr

Wellbeing @ Merthyr (previously Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust), is a not-for-profit charitable company with responsibility for delivering leisure and cultural services within the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.

Cymraeg i Blant

Cymraeg i blant is a national scheme that supports parents to follow a bilingual journey by choosing Welsh medium childcare and education for their child.



Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin

Mudiad Meithrin is a voluntary organisation and is the main provider of Welsh-medium early years care and education in the voluntary sector. Their aim is to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years care and education experiences through the medium of Welsh.

Cylchoedd meithrin, day nurseries, cylchoedd Ti a Fi and after school clubs are some examples of the type of settings that are members of Mudiad Meithrin. There are five early years settings in Merthyr.

Urdd Gobaith Cymru

The Urdd is the largest youth organisation for children and young people in Wales with over 50,000 members. 30% of all Welsh speakers in Wales aged between 8-25 are members. The Urdd has 260 staff, 100 volunteers, 900 branches, with 200 branches in the community. In addition, there are 150 sport clubs that meet weekly.

Urdd Gobaith Cymru's aim is to provide the opportunity, through the medium of Welsh, for the children and young people in Wales to become fully rounded individuals, developing personal and social skills that will enable them to make a positive contribution to the community.

Adult Community Learning

The Merthyr Tydfil Adult Community Learning (ACL) Partnership is a longstanding community partnership that serves the county of Merthyr Tydfil. The three main learning providers are Merthyr County Borough Council, The College Merthyr Tydfil and Adult Learning Wales. In addition to the three main providers, the Merthyr Tydfil Adult Community Learning Partnership has a wide membership base with representation from Welsh for Adults, Canolfan Soar, Department for Work and Pensions, the voluntary sector, housing associations, and providers of support for health and mental health (eg. MIND). These partners deliver a range of accredited and non-accredited qualifications, informal learning, personal and peer support, as well as advice and guidance.

Learning providers offer a broad spectrum of courses and qualifications, which includes the Welsh Language. However, all partners are committed to promoting the Welsh Language even if they do not themselves provide language courses. All partners are obliged, through the ESTYN Common Inspection Framework, to promote and embed the "Welsh Dimension". This ranges from a low-level inclusion of Welsh vocabulary in lessons – to bilingual provision. In addition to this, tutors will promote the "Welsh identity – linking this to culture, history and events.

The College, Merthyr

The main post-16 provision for young people in Merthyr Tydfil, they deliver education and training from post-16 A levels and vocational courses and apprenticeships through to university level and professional qualifications, including Foundation Degrees, AAT and PGCE.

National Centre for Learning Welsh

The Centre is a national body responsible for all aspects of the Welsh for Adults education program. It operates as a body at arm's length from Welsh Government and has a clear vision for the future. The Centre will:

- be a visible institution setting a national strategic direction for the Welsh for Adults sector.
- provide leadership for Welsh for Adults providers.



- raise standards in teaching and learning in Welsh for Adults.
- develop an engaging, appropriate and high quality national curriculum and produce resources suitable for all kinds of learners.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh provider in Merthyr is University of South Wales Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg.

The Learn Welsh Glamorgan Centre is a one-stop shop if you want to learn or improve your Welsh, providing courses at all levels across the area, with a wide choice of days and times. There will be opportunities to meet other learners in day schools, block courses, coffee mornings, book clubs, dinner clubs and much more. The University of South Wales delivers courses in Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Bridgend on behalf of the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil

Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) is the County Voluntary Council (CVC) for the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil and has existed since 1997. VAMT has a membership of over 250 third sector organisations and has contact with over 500. VAMT is a part of Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) which is a network of support organisations for the third sector. Our shared goal is to enable the third sector and volunteers across Wales to contribute fully to individual and community wellbeing, now and for the future.

