

ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2023

Name of Local Authority

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

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Date	28.7.23 reviewed 15.8.23

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS / HIGHLIGHTS

- The Authority has undertaken an ALN Consultation in relation to the implementation of further Resource Bases in mainstream education, once agreed it is planned to implement a 10-15 places Resources Base at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg for opening in September 2025
- The contract has been let in relation to the new build seedling school Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar, with childcare to open Academic year 2024-25. A temporary location has been secured for September 2023 at Ty Bedwellty, Tredegar under the governance arrangements of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.
- The new build Welsh Medium Childcare provision in Ebbw Vale is under construction and is scheduled to open May 2024.
- Completion of Band B works at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg with Ministers visit 5th June 2023, this was to showcase the school and its immersion provision.
- Regional discussions have commenced with regards to a collaborative secondary school approach.

OVERALL PLAN SUMMARY

Self-Assessment **Green** – significant progress made in several areas.

FOREWARD LOOK MILESTONES

Having reviewed the current progress made via our monitoring form the following has been identified as forward looking milestones:

- To continue to increase the uptake in the number of primary school's places.
- To undertake a feasibility study in line with the potential for increased capacity within the primary sector between 2027 and 2028, mapping further growth options to potential locations
- To increase transition from Welsh-medium Childcare to Welsh-medium education settings.
- To continue the momentum with regards to regional Welsh-medium secondary school discussions.
- To open the new school provision in Tredegar along with co-located childcare
- To implement the ALN provision in Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg;
- To increase the opportunities for informal learning experiences via the Youth Service and the Urdd in partnership.
- To increase Welsh-medium provision in English-medium schools or schools looking to transition to a different category; and
- Youth Service in collaboration with Urdd to establish another 2-welsh youth clubs.

Outcome 1

More nursery children/ three year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

KEY ANNUAL DATA

- The latest full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was completed in 2022. Unfortunately, there was a low response with regards to the parent survey (in common with most other Local Authorities in Wales) so it is difficult to use that as a strong determinant for demand for Welsh medium provision.

The assessment states 'There is a clear lack of Welsh medium provision in Blaenau Gwent, with two community planning areas, Sirhowy and Ebbw Fawr, currently having no Welsh medium provision at all. Those areas have, however, already been identified in the previous assessment and follow up reports and capital build plans are in place to bring full day care childcare options to both of those areas. The parent survey conducted indicated barriers to accessing Welsh medium provision included distance and availability and some demand was reported for Welsh medium childcare in future by 26 parent/carers that either wanted or would consider Welsh medium childcare.

More local provision, offering wider opening hours may encourage those parents to take up Welsh medium options when needed. There are currently no childminders operating in Welsh, although some offer a service in both Welsh and English. There are only English medium childminders in Sirhowy which offers a more restrictive choice for parent/carers in that area. Current Welsh medium providers in North and South Ebbw Fach only offer childcare to children aged two to four years and for limited hours during the day. There is no after-school or holiday provision offered in Welsh.

There has been a Cylch Meithrin registered in Sirhowy, but the provision remains unstaffed and closed currently. The Local Authority would welcome that provision opening soon to begin building demand for the new seedling school. Welsh medium sessions have been incorporated into English medium Day Nursery provision in Ebbw Fawr, extending choice in that area. Extending this pilot into other English medium Day Nurseries would be very welcome. The need to develop services especially considering the new Welsh seedling school to be built in Tredegar is desirable. The new full day care options will help meet some of these gaps identified but the need to explore recruiting Welsh speaking childminders, or upskilling childminders, particularly in the Sirhowy area is clear.

- Based on the January 2023 PLASC and numbers on roll. The actual number of learners surpassed the target of 45 learners identified within the WESP 10-year plan for 2022/23.

2022-2023			
Target		Actual	
45	6%	49	9%

- The number of Clychoedd Meithrin within Blaenau Gwent remains at 2. The number of children attending both venues are 57. Out of the cohort of 57 children 29 (50.8%) are transferring to Welsh-medium education.
- There are currently 11 flying start provisions, 2 of which are Welsh-medium equating to 576 places of which 76 (13.2%) are Welsh-medium.

OUTCOME SUMMARY

- Under the expansion plans for Flying Start there were 9 settings identified, currently there are no welsh-medium places identified. This will change when the 2 new Welsh-medium childcare settings in Ebbw Vale and Tredegar are commissioned as Welsh-medium, Flying start places maybe offered but at this time this is unknown.
- The number of Cylchoedd Meithrin has improved from the baseline data in the WESP 10-Year plan (page12) 2019/20 data 45 children registered of which 14 (31%) transferring into Welsh-medium education. The 2021/22 data shows a bigger cohort size of 57 and more children 29 (50.8%) going into Welsh-medium education in Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. This is a good start on the journey to promote Welsh-medium childcare and education.
- **Menter iath organised a small festival called Bwrlwm Blaenau Gwent on 20th May 2023 in order to promote the new school. Invites were extended to local partners such as cymraeg i blant, mudiad meithrin and Rhag to come and share information via stalls and activities.**
- There has been development of new in-house Quality Assurance tools (We Play, Learn and Play at Home and Quality Matters) that replaces the Environmental Ratings Scheme used previously, these tools support quality in settings of all types. Colleagues from the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme, Early Years Transformation Programme and childcare leaders and practitioners have worked with the Flying Start and EYCP teams to contribute to the development of the latest tool 'Quality Matters', which is to be rolled out during 2022.

The Early Years, Childcare and Play (EYCP) team has a dedicated Quality Improvement Officer and a Childcare Strategy Team Leader, whose roles, in working with the providers to raise quality, has delivered results with quality scores improving in recent years. The role complements roles in Flying Start that undertake similar work and there is a close working relationship between both teams to ensure consistency of advice, joint delivery of training and sharing of good practice. The Play Sufficiency Officer also supports this process by offering expert advice and training on play. There has been a Community of Practice group established for the last three years where Officers across teams are able to work together, share information and plan training.

- Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy provides transport to Welsh-medium education settings as follows:
 - transport is provided where a child lives more than 1.5 miles from their nearest Welsh-medium school.
 - free transport for full time nursery pupils attending the Welsh-medium setting; and
 - places on existing transportation to Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw for secondary school age pupils
 - plus, post 16 pupils are catered for on existing transport to Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw
- The structure of the Welsh Education Forum is working well, the group meets every term. There is an established Communication subgroup which meet bi-monthly and plan marketing, webpage information and social media engagement activities. This year the group designed bookmarks, sent out to the whole of Blaenau Gwent. One side was about immersion and benefits of being bilingual, signposting them via a QR code to the webpage and the other side was all about the new school building on Chartist Way Tredegar.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Monitoring of the 1st Year of the WESP 10-year plan has been captured within the Blaenau Gwent monitoring form the data is collected twice annually.

Out of the identified 17 Action points identified in the WESP there are a total of 15 levels in progress with 2 not started. As this is the first monitoring form submitted under the new 10-year plan there are no actions completed.

As well as the Welsh in Education Forum which meets termly there are various subgroups set up with key leads grouping together Outcomes as below:

Outcome 1&2	Outcome 3&4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6
Outcome 7 is a key feature in all the 4 groups.			

Theses groups meet regularly in order to discuss progress against the outcomes.

Blaenau Gwent also have a Communications sub-group which meets bi-monthly, a regional WEF Planning of School places group with other LA's in the greater Gwent area also meets termly. Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent have also taken the lead on a discussion group with neighbouring authorities in relation to the planning of Secondary Provision.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

1. The delay in appointing a contractor to build the new Welsh-medium 210 place primary school on Chartist Way Sirhowy with a co-located childcare provision, has slowed down the progress on Outcome 1, inclement weather in the winter months, whilst undertaking the ground works could also impact on the delivery timescale and costs. However, the school is opening- on a temporary location Ty Bedwellty for Nursery and Reception pupils. It is

anticipated the school will be completed and ready for occupation in the autumn term 2024/spring term 2025.

2. Insufficient childcare places, to support the growth of the seedling model.
3. Recruitment and retention of staff to support the seedling provision, this is an issue nationally

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

1. The delay to the school build is being mitigated by providing temporary location for Nursery / Reception pupils in the Tredegar Valley until the seedling school is completed.
2. The creation of childcare places will be addressed by the opening of the childcare provision May 2024 in Ebbw Vale and the Tredegar provision Autumn-term 2024/Spring 2025.
3. The Local Authority will ensure adequate training, support and sabbatical opportunities are provided to ensure the development of staff. In addition, this is a national issue, and the Authority are working with Welsh Government to address this.

Outcome 2

More reception class children/ five year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

KEY ANNUAL DATA

- Based on Plasc data (Jan 2023) and admission number for Reception class for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg is 44 out of a cohort of 743 pupils in 2022, the number of places filled in Welsh-medium is in excess of 14 places. Please see table below for actual against target data. Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg have not refused any pupil into reception, the increase has been accommodated within the school for this year.

2022-2023			
Target		Actual	
30	4%	44	6%

- Surplus places data currently is -2% 220 on roll excluding nursery against a capacity of 215, currently.
- There will be sufficiency issues for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg for the next 4 years.
- This will be addressed with the introduction of Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar the seedling school. Blaenau Gwent are also on a reserve list for a capital grant which would involve the building of an extension to allow relocation of the Immersion and ALN provision. Thus allowing this classroom space to be utilised to increase the capacity.
- This will be monitored annually in line with pupil projects and facilities reviews.

- There are currently no pupils on roll from Ethnic minority backgrounds at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, the County Borough has a low percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. Out of the school age population of Blaenau Gwent schools Cohort of 9053 pupils (including Nursery), there are only 323 of pupils with English as an additional language that is only 3.4% of the overall Cohort.

OUTCOME SUMMARY

- Blaenau Gwent had one Project funded project via the Welsh-medium Capital Grant, that was to build a 210 primary school on Chartist Way Sirhowy Tredegar. Progress has slowed with cost escalations as a result of Covid and market forces. The project is now moving forward ISG is the preferred contractor, Blaenau Gwent has issued a letter of appointment. This will allow ISG to be on site within the next few weeks to carry out the drilling and grouting exercise. A review of the build timeline is expected around the appointment of contractor, it is anticipated the will take build is 12-14 months which could result in occupation of the school in Autumn 2024/Spring 2025.
- Along with the Welsh-Medium Capital Grant for the Primary development, Early years were able to draw down Childcare capital funding grant to establish 2 Welsh-medium childcare settings, one in Ebbw Vale (co-located on Glyncoed site – anticipated completion May 24) and one on the site of the new build seedling provision at Chartist Way Sirhowy, Tredegar.
- The Council are now in preparation for the Sustainable Communities for Learning Rolling Programme (SCfLP). As part of this review and in line with the WESP 10-year plan the council aim to undertake a feasibility study to map a growth option and potential locations and timeframe and build this into the SCfLP. Along with working with neighbouring authorities across the region to collaboratively establish a secondary school provision by 2028-29.
- Every Council will be considering how the growth of Welsh-medium education will impact on the wider school estate. Blaenau Gwent have already undertaken some modelling on the impact on English-medium schools in the Tredegar area as part of the seedling school development. With the growth of Welsh-medium places, it is recognised that it will have an impact on English-medium places, this is being considered as part of the SCfLP proposals moving forward.
- The Council aim to work more closely with EAS to establish where the Boroughs English-medium schools are in relation to the three levels of school categorisation according to Welsh-medium provisions of welsh in schools.
- The Immersion class at Bro Helyg, 'Dosbarth Y Bont' opened during the academic year 2022-23 and 2 pupils have benefited from the provision. A Year 5 pupil has successfully integrated into the mainstream class and can speak and read fluently in Welsh. A year 2 pupil has been with us for 3 weeks and will continue in Dosbarth y Bont in September. The 2 videos showcasing the provision have been produced and are due to be shared on social media from the Summer Term. It is hoped that this will encourage other pupils to transfer next academic year.

- Levels of families with ethnic minority backgrounds are minimal in Blaenau Gwent as highlighted in Outcome1. However, engagement is undertaken through the admissions process and as part of the communication events to promote the Welsh medium provisions.
- The Headteacher of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg plays and active part in the WEF and the promotion of Welsh-medium education, they have be extremely support in the development of the seedling provision.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Monitoring of the 1st Year of the WESP 10-year plan has been captured within the Blaenau Gwent monitoring form the data is collected twice annually.

Out of the identified 15 Action points identified in the WESP there are a total of 1 level completed, 10 in progress with 4 not started. As this is the first monitoring form submitted under the new 10-year plan there is only 1 action completed

As well as the Welsh in Education Forum which meets termly there are various subgroups set up with key leads grouping together Outcomes as below:

Outcome 1&2	Outcome 3&4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6
Outcome 7 is a key feature in all the 4 groups.			

These groups meet regularly in order to discuss progress against the outcomes.

Blaenau Gwent also have a Communications sub-group which meets bi-monthly, a regional WEF Planning of School places group with other LA's in the Greater Gwent area also meets termly. Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent have also taken the lead on a discussion group with neighbouring authorities in relation to the planning of Secondary Provision.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

1. The delay in appointing a contractor to build the new Welsh-medium 210 place primary school on Chartist Way Sirhowy with a co-located childcare provision, has slowed down the progress on Outcome 1, inclement weather in the winter months, whilst undertaking the ground works could also impact on the delivery timescale and costs.
However, the school is opening- on a temporary location Ty Bedwellty for Nursery and Reception pupils. It is anticipated the school will be completed and ready for occupation in the autumn term 2024/spring term 2025.
2. Insufficient childcare places, to support the growth of the seedling model.
3. Recruitment and retention of staff to support the seedling provision and childcare provision, this is an issue nationally

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

1. The delay to the school build is being mitigated by providing temporary location for Nursery / Reception pupils in the Tredegar Valley until the seedling school is completed.
2. The creation of childcare places will be addressed by the opening of the childcare provision May 2024 in Ebbw Vale and the Tredegar provision Autumn-term 2024/Spring 2025.
3. The Authority will ensure adequate training, support and sabbatical opportunities are provided to ensure the development of staff. In addition, this is a national issue and the Authority are working with Welsh Government to address this.

Outcome 3

More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

KEY ANNUAL DATA

PLASC data for Year-6 learners transitioning to Welsh-medium Year 7 from Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg

2022-2023			
Target		Actual	
38	100%	34	89%

OUTCOME SUMMARY

- From an EAS perspective staff can spend time, up-skilling in Welsh medium education from English-medium schools in the county borough, (we have an example of a secondment from Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community to a Welsh medium school in 22-23). However, this is only a short-term benefit of in terms of capacity for Welsh medium schools. Whilst further confidence and linguistic competence is developed for staff to meet the needs of both English and Welsh medium sectors.
- Our aim is to upskill all staff to ensure standards across all schools so that English medium schools meet the 15% Welsh medium curriculum currently in guidance.
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg and Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw, have good transitional arrangements and activities in place to support Blaenau Gwent learners and their families for transition. Such as staff visits to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg and Residential week at the start of Year 7.
- There is transition work being undertaken by the schools and Youth Service, Blaenau Gwent Learners have secured secondary places in Gwynllyw until 2029.
- The interim Headteacher of Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw sits on the WEF forum and is pro-active in supporting learners from Blaenau Gwent.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Monitoring of the 1st Year of the WESP 10-year plan has been captured within the Blaenau Gwent monitoring form, the data is collected twice annually.

Out of the identified 17 Action points identified in the WESP there are a total of 2 level's completed, 11 in progress with 4 not started.

As well as the Welsh in Education Forum which meets termly there are a few subgroups set up with key leads grouping together Outcomes as below.

Outcome 1&2	Outcome 3&4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6
Outcome 7 is a key feature in all the 4 groups			

Blaenau Gwent also have a Communications sub-group which meets bi-monthly, a regional WEF Planning of School places group with other LA's in the greater gwent area also meets termly. Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent have also taken the lead on a discussion group with neighbouring authorities in relation to the planning of Secondary Provision.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

1. Planning for Secondary places post 2029 when places are no longer available for Blaenau Gwent learners in Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw
2. Fluctuation of year groups and the risk that the recent transition of 4 learners into and English medium secondary provision becomes a trend

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

1. Regional planning for secondary places
2. Understanding why parents are not choosing Welsh-medium secondary education, work with the school to plan a survey to be undertaken by parents.

Outcome 4

More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

KEY ANNUAL DATA

- Based on Plasc data January 2023 the number of Blaenau Gwent learners attending secondary provision in Torfaen is captured in the below table equating to 19.57% (147/751) of Ysgol Gwynllyw are Blaenau Gwent Learners.

	Plasc Data numbers on roll Jan 2023							
Year Group	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Ysgol Gwynllyw	134	135	120	135	126	38	34	1
Blaenau Gwent learners	34	27	17	29	27	6	7	0
%	25%	20%	14%	21%	21%	21%	15%	20%

- The number of KS4 pupils registered for Welsh for GCSE Welsh as a first language in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw is now 27 out of a 126 year group
- The number of KS5 pupils registered for Welsh for GCSE Welsh as a First language in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw is now 13

Blaenau Gwent English Medium Secondary Schools

- KS3 GCSE Welsh (as a second language) is offered within all English Medium secondary schools in Blaenau Gwent (yr 9 pupils) 96% 618/645
- There are 8 learners in KS3 not registered who attend Special Schools
- The number of KS4 pupils registered for GCSE Welsh as a Second language within Blaenau Gwent is now 98% 557/565
- There are 27 learners in KS4 not registered who attend Special Schools

	SSE Chort	Secondary
	7701	3220
Pupils being taught in Non-Welsh Medium	7527	3220
Pupils studying Welsh as 2 nd Language	7355	3110
Pupils in Special Schools not taking Welsh	170	108
Pupils taught in Welsh Medium	174	0
Disapplied	2	2

- The number of Blaenau Gwent learners registered in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw for A levels in year 13 is 7.
- Coleg Gwent is the provider for post 16 education in Blaenau Gwent, they currently have 7 learners studying A level Welsh.
- E-ysgol has not been rolled out in this area as yet, but will be a priority in the forward milestones/work programme to be delivered.

OUTCOME SUMMARY

- Blaenau Gwent learners have benefitted as the subject areas taught at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw through the medium of welsh have increased by a further 6 subjects this year for pupils.
- In the academic year 2022/23 Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw offered to students at KS4 29 subject area choices which has risen from the baseline data of 25.

- In the academic year 2022/23 Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw offered to students at KS5 32 subject area choices which has risen from the baseline data of 30.
- Blaenau Gwent offer post 16 education via Coleg Gwent for Learners with Welsh as their first language, there are currently 7 learners who undertook Welsh as A level.
- Our Welsh-medium A Level provision for Blaenau Gwent learners is taught at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen. As mentioned above there are currently 6 learners.
- E-ysgol will be scoped out in the 2023/24 academic year.
- The Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Forum and Communications subgroup have been pro-active in the promotion of the benefits of being bilingual.
 - In the Autumn term 2022 a review of the being bilingual webpage was undertaken. This has subsequently been reviewed again incorporating video clips.
 - Social media posts also ran throughout the year to promote immersion and the opportunity of English-medium children to transfer into Welsh-medium education.
 - In December 2022 a bookmark was created - 1 side had the benefits of being bilingual with a QR code to take individuals through to the webpage and the other side covered the development of the new school being built on Chartist Way Tredgar
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg have been proactive in engaging with parents of to promote Welsh-medium education, staff have visited Tia Fi's and English medium childcare settings, along with offering a drop in session at Ty Bedwellty for prospective nursery and reception parents considering admitting their children in Ysgol Gymraeg Tredgar (the new seedling school under the Governance arrangements of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg) for September 2023.
- Mudiad Meithrin and Menter Iaith have been working with early years to promote opportunities for a Welsh-medium education.
- 70 Blaenau Gwent learners took part in the 2023 Eisteddfod
- 7 schools (257 pupils) from Blaenau Gwent have accessed provision in the Urdd Activity Centre:
 - Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg (40 pupils)
 - Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community (50 pupils)
 - St Mary's C.I.W Primary (33 pupils)
 - St Josephs R.C. Primary School (20 Pupils)
 - Glyncoed Primary Glyncoed (30 pupils)
 - Beaufort Hill Primary School (30 Pupils)
 - St Marys R.C. (54 Pupils)
- Mudiad Meithrin provide the CCLD course through 'Cynllun Ysgolion' Mudiad Meithrin at Ysgol Gwynllyw. 3 Cylchoedd Meithrin are following the Croesi'r Bont. The aim of the scheme is to ease the transition into Welsh-medium education for children whose families do not speak Welsh as well as support staff that are learning Welsh. Mudiad Meithrin have appointed a regional chief officer for their Cam wrth Gam courses. It is hoped that this will ensure growth in those taking childcare courses through the medium of Welsh and therefore

boost the WM workforce in the region. Next Steps: Mudiad Meithrin to promote, and recruit to its courses within schools, childcare settings and the wider community.

- A mapping exercise has been undertaken as part of the WEF and secondary school discussions group to ascertain the level of need for learners moving from primary to secondary form 2029 onwards, this will be analysed and utilised to inform discussions on further developing primary and secondary school places.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

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Out of the identified 17 Action points identified in the WESP there are a total of 1 level completed, 14 in progress with 2 not started.

As well as the Welsh in Education Forum which meets termly there are a few subgroups set up with key leads grouping together Outcomes as below.

Outcome 1&2	Outcome 3&4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6
Outcome 7 is a key feature in all the 4 groups			

Blaenau Gwent also have a Communications sub-group which meets bi-monthly, a regional WEF Planning of School places group with other LA's in the greater gwent area also meets termly. Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent have also taken the lead on a discussion group with neighbouring authorities in relation to the planning of Secondary Provision.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- Financial, political and corporate constraints in terms of developing further school reorganisation projects and the increased demand for Welsh-medium education.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Analysis of need is currently being undertaken to inform the longer term planning of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme and the associated demand for Welsh-medium education settings.

Outcome 5

More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

KEY ANNUAL DATA

Update on progress:

- Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Award
Welsh medium primary: 100% Silver – Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg
- Number of primary schools that have received Cymraeg Campus Award
Gold: 0, Silver: 1 (all through School). Bronze: 15 (all through School):
- There are a total of 23 schools within Blaenau Gwent, all (100%) English and Welsh medium primary schools/phases are part of the Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus.
 - 20 English medium schools (86.80%);
 - 1 Welsh medium primary (4.4%); and,
 - 2 Special Schools (8.8%)
- There is 1 Secondary school, 1 Foundation School and 2 all through schools each operating Siarter Iaith.
Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community has achieved the silver award in 2023.

OUTCOME SUMMARY

- The pace of progress has been slower than anticipated for the Siarter Iaith Award and Cymraeg Campus, as Schools, particularly English medium primaries, taught very little Welsh over the pandemic.
- Blaenau Gwent Youth Service has had a change in staff recently, the key officer for BG youth service left the authority at the end of February 2023 and was replaced by Kristian Gay mid-May 2023. Kristian Gay will now attend the WEF meetings and is the Key officer for updates from the Youth Service.
- Through a Service level agreement with the Urdd Blaenau Gwent Youth Service have employed a youth worker. Kristian Gay will line manage the Urdd youth worker along with Angharad Wyn Jones (Urdd).
- The following targets have been set for the Urdd youth worker.
 - The Urdd worker will work with Coleg Gwent to initially identify Welsh speakers within the college and plan a program of events with the students.
 - Re-start the Forum with Menter Iaith Bg,T,M – Ensure Young people from Blaenau Gwent are on the Forum – Meet with the Forum once a month.
 - Develop a Weekly Club in 3 x English Medium Comprehensive schools
 - Young volunteers: Offer Young people at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw volunteering opportunities.
 - Holiday Provision: 1 x Activities Half Term – Feb/ May and October, 2 x Activities – Easter, 4 x Activities – Summer
 - Transition work: Work with Year 6 at Bro Helyg

Blaenau Gwent Youth Service has recently conducted a consultation with young people. As part of that review young people commented that they wanted to see

more opportunities for Welsh-medium activities to be undertaken. Please see below feedback

When asked would young people attend activities if they were in welsh or Bilingual

- 41 young people answered YES.
- 204 answered No and
- 52 answered Maybe
- Youth clubs, after school clubs and Clubs to practice where the responses to this question.

When asked how much Welsh can you speak and understand.

- None 103
- A little bit 127
- Quite a lot 19
- Fluent 4
- I used to speak a lot 2
- I learn at school 42

Would you be willing to travel outside your area to attend welsh activities?

- Yes 26
- No 29
- Maybe 38
- Only one school – Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community has achieved their Silver award in 2023. All Schools are on the journey to obtain the award. An evaluation will be undertaken to assess the impact with schools next academic year 2023/24.
- All clusters have received funding to appoint a strategic Welsh cluster lead. The leads are invited to a termly regional EAS network for strategic Welsh cluster leads to receive and disseminate the latest information on professional learning opportunities, advice and support to develop and monitor a bespoke cluster action plan and to share best practice. Cluster progress is variable.
- There is representation on the Blaenau Gwent WEF from the Youth Service and the Urdd and Menter Iaith.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Monitoring of the 1st Year of the WESP 10-year plan has been captured within the Blaenau Gwent monitoring form the data is collected twice annually.

Out of the identified Action points identified in the WESP there are a total of 26 Outcome level of 5 completed, 17 in progress with 4 not started.

As well as the Welsh in Education Forum which meets termly there are a few subgroups set up with key leads grouping together Outcomes as below.

Outcome 1&2	Outcome 3&4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6
Outcome 7 is a key feature in all the 4 groups			

Blaenau Gwent also have a Communications sub-group which meets bi-monthly, a regional WEF Planning of School places group with other LA's in the Greater Gwent area also meets termly. Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent have also taken the lead on a discussion group with neighbouring authorities in relation to the planning of Secondary Provision.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

- A number of schools do not progress on the of Siarter liath continuum.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

- Impact assessment is being undertaken on how the Siarter liath is progressing across all schools
- Education and EAS will be supporting the 5 schools that have not completed their Bronze award over the next 2 years; and will be supporting 4 of the English medium primary schools/campuses who have already achieved their bronze award to engage with achieving their silver award.

Outcome 6

An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

KEY ANNUAL DATA

- Plasc data (Jan 2023) tells us that out of a population of 287 including Nursery pupils, there are 34 with ALN/SEN needs that is an overall figure of 11% of the school population. The figures can be split further with 12 (4.2%) identified as School Action and 22 (7.7%) as School Action Plus.
- A more detailed audit December 2022 of SEN and ALN needs of Welsh medium learners has identified that there is a need for Welsh medium provision, particularly for learners with ASD.
- Audit of Welsh language skills December 2022 of LA staff supporting learners with ALN has identified one Educational Psychologist and one member of the Inclusive Practice Service who are able to work through the medium of Welsh.

OUTCOME SUMMARY

- A capital grant to build a new extension for a full resource base at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg remains on Welsh Government waiting list for further funding. However, in early 2023, the Council went out to consultation to improve the provision of ALN Resource bases across the County Borough. Phase 1 of the proposal includes a small base for Welsh-medium provision. The consultation is currently at statutory notice stage concluding 26th July 2023 with the decision being made 1st September 2023 for implementation of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg provision September 2025 for 10-15 learners. As Welsh-medium education increases with the seedling school, there will be a

need to expand this, as part of the capital grant from Welsh Government should this be awarded.

- There is an Early Years special schools meeting every term as pre school children transition to Bro Helyg. Open evenings are offered to new parents
- Ongoing with welsh resources / tests for spld learners etc. All interventions in school delivered through the medium of welsh.
- Dr Laura Craven / Sara Thomas - Gough have made connections with some early years pupils prior to them arriving at Nursery. Early years funding provided for some.
- Both English and Welsh are given as options at every pcp meeting / parent meeting with SS and all other staff members.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Monitoring of the 1st Year of the WESP 10-year plan has been captured within the Blaenau Gwent monitoring form the data is collected twice annually.

Out of the identified 19 Action points identified in the WESP there are a total of Outcome level of 5 completed, 14 in progress with 0 not started.

As well as the Welsh in Education Forum which meets termly there are a few subgroups set up with key leads grouping together Outcomes as below.

Outcome 1&2	Outcome 3&4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6
Outcome 7 is a key feature in all the 4 groups			

Blaenau Gwent also have a Communications sub-group which meets bi-monthly, a regional WEF Planning of School places group with other LA's in the greater gwent area also meets termly. Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent have also taken the lead on a discussion group with neighbouring authorities in relation to the planning of Secondary Provision.

OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS

We need to increase the number of staff who have experience of working with pupils with ASD and other ALN who can work through the medium of Welsh, to support learners in the new resource base.

A clear plan needs to be developed to ensure effective Welsh medium provision for ALN learners as pupils transition from KS2 to KS3.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

The LA is currently consulting with Council around funding structures to ensure that the provision can be set up and staffed, and around the continuation of the provision.

Outcome 7

Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

KEY ANNUAL DATA

- The School Workforce census results for Nov 2022 published July 2023, shows overall Blaenau Gwent are in the lowest percentage figures across Wales.
 - The proportion of teachers with Welsh skills at intermediate level or above based on the 'Welsh language competency framework for education practitioners' is in the 0-19.9% category.
 - The proportion of support staff with Welsh skills at intermediate advanced & proficient Welsh skills based on the 'Welsh language competency framework for education practitioners' is in the 0-19.9% category.
- The number of places available via the EAS to undertake a sabbatical course for teachers to improve their Welsh is 14 around 3 places are offered to Blaenau Gwent staff, not all staff will be assigned a place on the course.

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Schools

- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg in the last year has appointed to the following roles in 2022/23:
 - Immersion Teacher for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg
 - Head of Campus for Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar
 - /HTLA post for Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar
 - TA post for Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar
- For September 2024, Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar under the umbrella of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg will need to recruit further staff as follows:
 - 1 HLTA;
 - 1 Level 3 TA
 - 1 Level 2 TA.
- Furthermore, with the implementation of an ALN resource Base at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg (subject to approval of the Consultation) based on 6 children the staffing requirement will be
 - 1 teacher;
 - 1 HLTA
 - 1 Level 3 TA.
 - Blaenau Gwent already have staff to support the service delivery of ALN within the Council's inclusion team.

Coleg Gwent

- Coleg Gwent have **35** staff on this year's 2022/23 Work Cymraeg scheme with **40** already registered for September 2023/24.
- Coleg Gwent continues to use Byiaith for staff training and mentoring.

- Coleg Gwent is offering a free PGCE to new Welsh-speaking staff working in the priority areas
- A good increase to date through the Work Welsh scheme and the sponsorship of TAR

The Council/ Policy Team:

- A Fixed term Kickstart Trainee Welsh Language Officer role began on 11/11/21, this employee is now employed directly via the Council as the Welsh Language Support Officer within the Policy and Partnerships team on a fixed term contract until March 2024.
- There is general monitoring of the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which falls under the Policy and Partnerships Team. They also update the Welsh Language Guidance made available to staff via the intranet. Promotion of any updates to guidance and general Standards reminders are sent out regularly to all staff through our Communications Team.
- Organisational Development work collaboratively with the Policy and Partnerships Team to ensure staff processes are in place to consider the bodies consideration of the Welsh language among staff including accessibility to skills development in order to deliver a Welsh medium service that meet the authorities duties under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- Staff receive regular Welsh Language training promotional opportunities via emails and they are include within managers briefings. There are training slides available on the intranet for all staff that also promotes further training resources, furthermore amendments to the Post Entry Training Policy and Induction
- Processes are underway as part of the CS092 Investigation Action Plan. These amendments aim to be more proactive in encouraging and arranging Welsh language training for current and newly appointed staff.
- The core group responsible for the implementation of the Internal Audit Action Plan meet 6-weekly to address any actions categorised Amber or Red when BRAG rating. This group is made up of staff from the following teams: Policy and Partnerships, Organisational Development, Communications and key customer facing service areas.
- The Integrated Impact Assessment has been updated in both English and Welsh and staff have been informed and is being used when needed.
- The Internal Audit/CS092 Investigation Action Plan is addressing a number of service delivery standards notably those pertaining to the telephone procedure, customer facing staff from the contact centre, community hubs and high-volume telephone lines are attending weekly tutor led training sessions tailored to their role requirements.
- The Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network has been re-established in the past 12 months. The network is made up of local Welsh language organisations and agencies and Blaenau Gwent Council service areas whose work directly centres on promoting the use of the Welsh language across the authority. Meetings are conducted in Welsh and translated into real time via teams.
- Blaenau Gwent Council work collaboratively with several networks to share best practice and seek support to address common hurdles. Groups such as

group Deddf made up of Welsh Language Officers from surrounding local authorities, the Rhwydlaith Network made up of WLGA workers that typically have guest speakers to update on proactive pieces of work, the Welsh in Education Forum that provide updates and request feedback on developments within the Welsh medium education sector, and the BG Welsh Network made up of our partners.

- In terms of local authority officers the Policy and Partnerships Team monitor and analyse data surrounding Welsh medium teachers in line with our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Welsh in Education Plan's outcomes.
- Staff Welsh language skills are recorded on iTrent and the data is compiled annually for the Welsh Language Annual Report, reminders are now being sent quarterly to all staff to keep this information up to date. This information helps identify service areas with lower numbers of staff with Welsh language ability and prioritize training promotion/arrangements accordingly addresses the needs for this area of work, e.g. customer facing staff capacity in order to deliver a quality Welsh language service.
- The Policy and Partnerships team support the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan's objectives reviewing their progress as part of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy monitoring with indicators for numerous actions being directly aligned with the developments within the education sector. Representatives from Policy and Partnerships attend the WEF and include updates surrounding education within the recently re-established Blaenau Gwent Welsh Network.

EAS

- Promotion of the SWAC education workforce survey via a promotional video. Video promotion via strategic HT/DHT network,
- Welsh cluster leads network and Welsh language coordinators network.
- EAS delivery of a suite of language learning opportunities for staff (beginners - entry and foundation level).
- EAS promotion of the National Centre for Learning Welsh provision.
- EAS Welsh teaching methodology and curriculum design support and professional learning. PL offer for 23-24 shared with schools.
- EAS promotion, recruitment, and follow-up support for the Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme courses.
- EAS language refinement provision available for staff in Welsh medium schools.
- EAS staff: Welsh language professional learning resources and support.
- ER- All clusters have received regional funding to appoint a strategic Welsh cluster lead. The leads are invited to a termly regional EAS network for strategic Welsh cluster leads to receive and disseminate the latest information on professional learning opportunities, advice and support to develop and monitor a bespoke cluster action plan and to share best practice. Cluster progress is variable.
- The EAS Professional Learning team are working in collaboration with ITE partners including Cardiff Met and USW, and with the region's schools to support ITE through the medium of Welsh.

- EAS capacity building project 23-24: Bro Helyg engaged with the promotion of and recruitment to a regional Gap Year project for those interested in experiencing work in a Welsh medium school during their Gap Year or moving to work in the education sector as a TA. Recruitment underway.
- Welsh language training could complement this for those parents with ambitions to undertake childcare or play training.
- EAS strategic lead for Welsh liaising with the national strategic leads for Welsh on the development of a national training offer for Governors.

Early Years & Childcare Scheme

- Four members of the Early Years Childcare and Play team have engaged with Welsh language learning over the last 2 years.
- Welsh language learning has been promoted to the childcare and play sector via Cwlwm partners attending local network meetings to outline responsibilities with regards to the Welsh Language Active Offer and in promoting Welsh language learning opportunities. Welsh language learning is also promoted on the annual Training Programme for the Childcare and Play workforce as part of their professional learning offer. Increasing Welsh language use in the childcare sector is a feature of quality assurance visits undertaken by Local Authority staff to settings.
- As part of the Flying Start Core Service Delivery Plan for 2023-24 there are plans for the Flying Start Local Authority staff team to be leading the way in terms of increasing the use of the Welsh Language among the childcare sector, all team managers have agreed to sign up to learning Welsh and opportunities for residential Welsh Immersion Courses and Work Welsh courses for the Flying Start Workforce are being explored.
- The two LA run Flying Start childcare settings will both work towards becoming bilingual settings which will hopefully encourage other settings to follow.
 - The EYCP team are happy to play a part in promoting any skills analysis /audit to be undertaken by Mudiad Meithrin and RhAG. The Flying Start programme will be conducting a similar exercise with Flying Start providers in the coming months.
 - Recruitment was identified as an issue to be addressed as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 and an action was created in the associated Action Plan for the Local Authority to consider what measures it could take to support the sector. A working group has been set up and a draft action plan has been written and is to be presented to the Early Years Development Childcare and Play Partnership on 29th June 2023. It includes a range of actions that aim to support recruitment.
 - Welsh language training has been promoted by both the Early Years Childcare and Play and Flying Start teams in the last 2-3 years through the Camau programme, with practitioners able to access fully funded entry level training, with a specific focus on Welsh for childcare settings.

- The EYCP Manager took part in Welsh Government Working Group looking at Workforce issues in March 2023 and will continue to contribute to national discussions.
- The latest Flying Start expansion plan (2b) states 'All English medium childcare settings use incidental Welsh as part of their practice, in order to introduce the use of the Welsh language to all Flying Start children supporting and promoting the benefits of being bilingual throughout application and transition processes.
- As part of the Flying Start Core Service Delivery Plan for 2023-24 we will set out the plans for the Flying Start Local Authority teams to be leading the way in terms of increasing the use of the Welsh Language, all team managers have agreed to sign up to learning Welsh and we are currently exploring opportunities for residential Welsh Immersion Courses and Work Welsh courses for the Flying Start Workforce.
- The two local authority run Flying Start childcare settings will all work towards becoming bilingual settings which will hopefully encourage other settings to follow. Our Childcare Professional Learning Offer for 2023/24 for all childcare practitioners in Blaenau Gwent will have Welsh language courses included and taster sessions to encourage more use of the incidental Welsh within settings.
- All 32 childminders in Blaenau Gwent have reported the main language of their service is English however, 9 confirmed that they use incidental Welsh daily with the children. As part of phase 2 we have developed a new Childminder specification to encourage childminders to apply to become registered Flying Start providers. As part of the specification, we will require childminders to engage in the Local Authority Quality Assurance Programme which encourages the use of Welsh in daily practice. This will continue to be encouraged, supported and developed going forward, with more emphasis on the Welsh Language.
- Additionally, earlier expansion plans note new Ti a Fi provision has been set up to support the take up of Welsh medium childcare alongside plans to offer Welsh language training opportunities to parents via the Flying Start hubs. Flying Start parents already access training via the hubs and have undertaken child psychology and teaching assistant training recently, offering Welsh language training could complement this for those parents with ambitions to undertake childcare or play training.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Monitoring of the 1st Year of the WESP 10-year plan has been captured within the Blaenau Gwent monitoring form the data is collected twice annually.

Out of the identified 28 Action points identified in the WESP there are a total of 5 levels completed and 23 in progress.

As well as the Welsh in Education Forum which meets termly there are a few subgroups set up with key leads grouping together Outcomes as below.

Outcome 1&2	Outcome 3&4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6
Outcome 7 is a key feature in all the 4 groups			
<p>Blaenau Gwent also have a Communications sub-group which meets bi-monthly, a regional WEF Planning of School places group with other LA's in the greater gwent area also meets termly. Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent have also taken the lead on a discussion group with neighbouring authorities in relation to the planning of Secondary Provision.</p>			
OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruiting sufficient staff to the new seedling school 2. The development of the 2 Welsh-medium childcare settings and the need for privately run childcare providers to deliver 3. Development of childminders for Welsh-medium demand 			
ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There has been lots of appointments within the school however it is not fully known where that leaves Ysgol Gymraeg back filling posts. 2. The Childcare and Early Years team will be going out to tender for Welsh-medium provision shortly and believe that they will recruit the right provider to deliver on their behalf. 3. The Demand is stable at the moment for childcare, more mapping will be carried out as the demand increases. There is flying start scoping in according to WIMD. 			