



## ***PWYLLGOR CRAFFU BWRDD ADDYSG, SGILIAU A LLES***

***2.00 PM, DYDD IAU, 14 MAWRTH 2024***

***CYFARFOD AML-LEOLIAD - SIAMBR Y CYNGOR PORT, TALBOT A MICROSOFT TEAMS***

**Rhaid gosod pob ffôn symudol ar y modd distaw ar gyfer parhad y cyfarfod**

Gellir ffilmio'r cyfarfod hwn i'w ddarlledu'n fyw neu'n ddiweddarach drwy wefan y cyngor. Drwy gymryd rhan, rydych yn cytuno i gael eich ffilmio ac i'r delweddau a'r recordiadau sain hynny gael eu defnyddio at ddibenion gweddarlledu a/neu hyfforddiant o bosib.

1. Cyhoeddiad y Cadeirydd
2. Datganiadau o fuddiannau
3. Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Blaenorol (*Tudalennau 5 - 16*)
  - 8 Ionawr 2024
  - 1 Chwefror 2024
4. Y Diweddaraf am Bresenoldeb Disgyblion (*Tudalennau 17 - 26*)
5. Craffu Cyn Penderfynu  
Dewis eitemau priodol o agenda'r Cabinet ar gyfer craffu cyn penderfynu (amgaeir adroddiadau'r Cabinet ar gyfer aelodau'r pwyllgor Craffu)
6. Cofnod Gweithredu'r Pwyllgor (*Tudalennau 27 - 28*)
7. Blaenraglen Waith 2023/24 (*Tudalennau 29 - 30*)

8. Eitemau brys  
Unrhyw eitemau brys yn ôl disgrisiwn y Cadeirydd yn unol ag  
Adran 100BA(6)(b) o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972 (fel y'i  
diwygiwyd)

**K.Jones**  
**Prif Weithredwr**

**Canolfan Ddinesig**  
**Port Talbot**

**Dydd Iau, 7 Mawrth 2024**

## Aelodaeth y Pwyllgor:

**Cadeirydd:** R.Phillips

**Is-gadeirydd:** Y Cyngorydd D.Thomas

**Cynghorwyr:** W.Carpenter, N.Goldup-John, J.Henton,  
D.Keogh, C.Lewis, R.Mizen, P.A.Rees,  
S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, P.Rogers a/ac  
R.W.Wood

**\*Aelodau  
Cyfetholedig sy'n  
Pleidleisio** A. Amor, M.Caddick a/ac L.Newman

**\*Aelodau  
Cyfetholedig nad  
ydynt yn Pleidleisio** R.De Benedictis

## Nodiadau:

- (1) *Os yw aelodau'r pwyllgor neu'r rhai nad ydynt yn aelodau'r pwyllgor am gynnig eitemau perthnasol i'w cynnwys ar yr agenda cyn cyfarfodydd y dyfodol, rhaid iddynt roi gwybod i'r Prif Weithredwr/Cadeirydd 8 niwrnod cyn y cyfarfod.*
- (2) *Os yw'r rhai nad ydynt yn aelodau'r pwyllgor am fod yn bresennol ar gyfer eitem o ddiddordeb, mae'n rhaid rhoi rhybudd ymlaen llaw (erbyn 12 hanner dydd ar y diwrnod cyn y cyfarfod). Gall y rhai nad ydynt yn aelodau'r pwyllgor siarad ond nid oes ganddynt hawl i bleidleisio, cynnig nac eilio unrhyw gynnig.*
- (3) *Fel arfer, ar gyfer trefniadau cyn craffu, bydd y Cadeirydd yn argymhell eitemau gweithredol sydd ar ddod i'w trafod/herio. Mae hefyd yn agored i aelodau'r pwyllgor ofyn i eitemau gael eu trafod - er y gofynnir i'r aelodau ddewis a dethol yma o ran materion pwysig.*
- (4) *Gwahoddir aelodau perthnasol Bwrdd y Cabinet hefyd i fod yn bresennol yn y cyfarfod at ddibenion Craffu/Ymgynghori.*

(5) *Gofynnir i aelodau'r Pwyllgor Craffu ddod â'u papurau ar gyfer Bwrdd y Cabinet i'r cyfarfod.*

## Minutes of the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

8 January 2024

Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams

---

<b>Chairperson:</b>	<b>Councillor R.Phillips</b>
<b>Councillors:</b>	W.Carpenter, N.Goldup-John, J.Henton, C.Lewis, R.Mizen, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds and R.W.Wood
<b>Co-opted Voting Members:</b>	A. Amor and M.Caddick
<b>Co-opted Non Voting Members:</b>	R.De Benedictis
<b>Officers In Attendance</b>	I.Guy, H.Lervy, C.Millis, A.Thomas, R.Crowhurst, C.Saunders, C.Morris, N.Blackmore, N.Daniel, H.Jones and P.Chivers
<b>Cabinet Invitees:</b>	Councillors J.Hurley, N.Jenkins and C.Phillips

---

### 1. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received

### 3. **BUDGET CONSULTATION 2024/25**

The Chair advised members that comments from the meeting will form part of the formal consultation response to the budget 2024/25.

Members were reminded of their obligation as part of the budget consultation process, to put forward any other proposals for budget savings which are not included within the report, so that officers can give them consideration as soon as possible.

Members were reminded that they should consider the elements of the budget which fall under the remit of this scrutiny committee.

The Chief Finance Officer gave a brief overview of the consultation process. The budget consultation commenced on 20th December 2023 and closes on 10th January 2024. This timeframe was deemed sufficient for members to consider the proposals and provide officers adequate time to consider feedback, before final proposals are presented to Cabinet in March 2024.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that work had been ongoing for a number of months to identify the scale of the budget gap. The focus has been to secure services and protect jobs.

Heads of Service gave an overview of the savings and income generation proposals contained in Appendix 4 of the agenda report pack.

In relation to Margam Country Park (ELLL1), members enquired about the implications of the staff loss mentioned.

Officers confirmed that operationally, there was no loss of staff as the reference related to a staff member taking flexible retirement, this arrangement enabled skills and experience to be retained.

Members enquired on the previous proposals for a Zip Line at Margam Park.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that a full report would be brought back to this committee before the end of the financial year, in relation to the future strategic direction of Margam Park.

Members enquired if the levelling up funding would affect the savings proposals for the Princess Royal Theatre (ELLL3).

Officers confirmed that no details were known at present, a planning meeting will take place shortly and the development phase is

expected to be in the region of 12 months. The theatre would be closed for a considerable period of time whilst work is undertaken.

In relation to the Indoor Leisure proposal (ELLL4), members questioned the high amount of savings stated in the report and the implications if this saving is not realised. Members also questioned whether the cost of equipment depreciation has been taken into account and global events which may cause energy prices to rise.

Officers agreed that the proposal needed careful monitoring. The majority of the income would be achieved from memberships and energy savings. The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning acknowledged the risks and confirmed there is an understanding of the volatility of the figures which can be affected by world events. The savings figure stated in the report represents a reduction in operating deficit not a profit.

Members referenced page 21 of the report and the mention of further delays in Celtic Leisure being brought in house and the related costings. Members noted that Trade Unions are reporting staff insecurities and an ongoing impact on morale and questioned whether staff morale could affect the achievement of the proposed efficiencies. Trade Unions have called for a working party to develop a workable business plan over the next few months and members asked how the council would respond.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that a business plan for the Leisure Service Directorate will be presented to this committee prior to Celtic Leisure being brought back in-house. The Business Plan would be the responsibility of the Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture as part of the overall Leisure Services Directorate. Any request for a working party would be for the Celtic Board to address with Trade Unions. Celtic Leisure have a current business plan which will allow them to deliver the efficiencies detailed in the report.

In relation to Primary School Cleaning (ELLL9), Members raised concern that schools may opt to employ private companies who may lack knowledge and experience that was gained during the recent pandemic. Members also questioned the price difference between the current provision and private companies.

Officers do not anticipate that schools would opt to employ private companies as the service currently provided is well regarded. A

meeting is planned with the Cleaning Manager to identify implications for schools and ensure schools are reassured that they will receive the same high quality service. Officers noted that pre-Covid, private companies could not provide the required safeguards needed for school cleaning and this is unlikely to have changed.

Members questioned whether schools would continue to use the service but reduce their cleaning time.

The Director of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that this was a possibility, but noted that certain areas in schools require daily cleaning and there would be no scope for cutbacks in these areas. The Director commented that the proposal was regrettable but unavoidable in the current economic climate and every effort would be made to protect the service and retain in-house.

Members agreed that the cleaning service is highly regarded but commented that some schools, particularly primary schools, were facing challenging financial circumstances and any reduction in service could have a detrimental effect on school finances and children's safety.

Members asked if there were checks and monitoring in place should schools employ private companies to ensure that schools are maintained at the required standard.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that no private operators are employed presently. Should this situation change the authority would assist schools in preparing a specification, but the responsibility would fall on the governing body. Officers confirmed that this would be a huge responsibility as currently this is covered by cleaning services who adhere to all regulations in regards to training/COSHH.

Members asked for further clarification in relation to proposals ELLL 11/12 & 13 and the offset of grants against core costs.

Officers confirmed that there was no consequence to the proposals. In relation to the Youth Service proposal there was an uplift of £10k which is being claimed back against the core. In relation to period dignity there are already a huge amount of resources available within schools which enables the admin costs to be redirected this financial year. The RCSIG saving would be taken from an underspend.



Members referenced the proposal to increase income above 7.5% threshold on the pest control service (ENV20); and queried how any increase in council charges compared with private company fees.

Officers noted that it was difficult to make a comparison as many private companies do not publicise their fees, but it is understood that Neath Port Talbot pest control fees are favourable compared to the private sector.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning drew member's attention to a budget proposal which did not fall under the remit of the committee but related to the grounds maintenance of schools (ENV14).

Members questioned whether there was any additional bureaucracy around changes to procurement in relation to the savings proposal SCH1.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that additional bureaucracy was a possibility but if schools follow advice they will be able to secure goods and services in a more efficient way which will not be onerous.

The Chair thanked all Officers and their teams for their ongoing hard work.

Members considered the Budget Consultation Report 2024/25 as presented. There were no additional budget proposals put forward by members at the meeting.

Following scrutiny, Members noted the report.

#### 4. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

**Councillor R.Phillips**

**Chairperson**

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwriadol wag

## Minutes of the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

1 February 2024

Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams

---

<b>Chairperson:</b>	<b>Councillor R.Phillips</b>
<b>Councillors:</b>	W.Carpenter, N.Goldup-John, J.Henton, C.Lewis, R.Mizen, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds and R.W.Wood
<b>Co-opted Voting Members:</b>	A. Amor, M.Caddick and L.Newman
<b>Officers In Attendance</b>	I.Guy, C.Millis, R.Crowhurst, C.Saunders, M.Daley, D.Holder-Phillips, S.McCluskie, Pain, A.Spooner-Cleverly, R.Samuel, J Davies, P.Williams and A.Thomas
<b>Cabinet Invitees:</b>	Councillors J.Hurley, N.Jenkins and C.Phillips

---

### 1. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was confirmed that the committee would be scrutinising items 7, 8, 9 and 13 from the Cabinet Board Agenda.

### 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Adam Amor – Item 8 – Personal, Non-Prejudicial. Director of business who carries out occasional work for the Youth Service.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **CURRICULUM FOR WALES UPDATE**

Members asked if data was held regarding progress made by schools in implementing the new Curriculum for Wales and enquired if any schools have fallen behind.

Officers confirmed that all the schools with pupils up to year 8 are planning and implementing the curriculum for Wales with all children moving towards the four purposes. The measure of progress is different to how progress was measured previously. Schools are developing a shared understanding as to what progress may look like and are implementing design within the framework of the curriculum.

Following scrutiny, members noted the report.

5. **IMPACT OF ENERGY PRICES ON SCHOOL BUDGETS**

Members referred to page 15 of the report, and questioned the timescale regarding the potential capability for solar PV panels to be installed at 14 schools. Members also queried potential costs involved, how many additional posts were required and how the installation and additional posts would be funded.

The Head of Support Services and Transformation confirmed that at present, a desktop survey has been carried out, with potential schools being identified due to their location and style of roof. The work is being undertaken by the Environment Directorate and an update will be requested and progress will be reported back to this committee.

A Co-opted member noted the mitigating actions mentioned in the report but questioned if meters and daily standing charges could be looked at further. Schools with split sites will have multiple meter boxes with multiple standing charges.

The Head of Support Services and Transformation will seek clarity on this issue from colleagues in the Environment Directorate and report back findings to this committee.

Following scrutiny, members noted the report.

## 6. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

### Standing Advisory Panel

Members referred to Appendix 1 of the report and queried the procedure for recruitment to the committee, in particular recruitment of an atheist representative.

Officers confirmed that recruitment procedures can vary by Standing Advisory Councils (SAC). The aim is to achieve a broad range of representation from all faiths and beliefs relevant to the county. Head offices of relevant organisations are contacted to request a true and balanced representative. Once an individual is identified, discussions are held at SAC and a group decision is made on the individuals' suitability, relevance and appropriateness. Recruitment of an atheist representative can be more challenging but is required to comply with Welsh Government Equality Legislation. Reputable atheist organisations and groups are contacted to put forward a representative and vetting is carried out.

Following scrutiny, the committee supported the recommendation to Cabinet Board.

### Youth Service Update

Members asked if the service still experienced difficulties in recruiting qualified youth workers particularly for the sessional work activities. Members referred to page 20 of the report and enquired on the level of participation at the first Welsh medium youth club in Trebannws.

Officers confirmed that the progress of the Welsh medium youth club at Trebannws was positive. There have been 173 contacts within Trebannws and club membership stands at 29 boys and 16 girls. Officers confirmed that there are always difficulties in recruiting staff but the situation was currently on track with two youth clubs re-opening.

The Head of Education Development noted that Neath Port Talbot was in a more positive position than some other local authorities as staff chose to work here due to the high standards. It was noted that recruitment may continue to be an issue due to the nature of the job and this is a national issue. The previous two recruitment waves were successful and clubs have re-opened due to the re-engagement of people taking up part time posts. Nationally, the expectation of high level qualifications of sessional staff is difficult to achieve.

The Chair welcomed the Welsh-medium youth club in Trebannws and noted the difference it has made to the community and extended thanks to all staff. The Chair questioned if there are any plans for further Welsh-medium youth groups in the county.

Officers confirmed that the last club opened was externally funded, extra funding and staff would be required to enable further clubs to be opened. It was noted that work is ongoing in relation to general Welsh development with a celebratory event being held last year and a visit for Welsh speaking young people to Llangranog, but extra funding is needed longer term.

The Head of Education Development confirmed that the youth service had engaged with Bronwen Lewis who is supporting musical development in the Welsh Language.

Members enquired whether there were any bilingual clubs in the county.

Officers confirmed that in relation to the Glynneath youth club, staff provide one Welsh-medium session/awareness raising event per month, this can include games and quizzes about Welsh heritage and culture. Welsh speaking young people in the group provide assistance with the sessions which is empowering for the young people.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the report.

#### Transport Personal Travel Budget Update

The Head of Support Services and Transformation advised members that this was an update report following the report brought to Cabinet

Board in May 2023 seeking permission to implement the personal travel budget.

Members commented that some questions had been raised with the service in advance of the meeting, confirmation was given that users were selected for the personal travel budget where no alternative travel routes are available and to eliminate single occupancy travel. Members questioned what procedure was followed if no alternative travel route was available but families didn't want a personal travel budget.

The Head of Service confirmed that the authority has a duty to ensure the most cost effective means of travel is provided, taking into account the needs of the child and family. If no alternative travel routes are available, parents will be offered the personal travel budget, and assistance will be provided on how the budget can be used, in case of difficulties, officers work with families to identify solutions. It was noted that the personal travel budget is a flexible arrangement which works for the majority of families.

Members asked if any child had experienced difficulty in getting to school which affected their attendance.

The Head of Service confirmed that the biggest workload for the service is from families who are not eligible for travel assistance, rather than difficulties with the personal travel budget.

The Education Transport Manager advised members that parents can request a formal review of the suitability of the travel offer received in the form of an appeal.

Members questioned how many families have received a personal transport budget.

The Head of Service confirmed that at the time of the report, 51 families had received a personal travel budget, where otherwise pupils would be transported in a single occupancy taxi as no other alternative was available. Work is ongoing and there are a further 17 pupils currently using a single occupancy taxi where it may be suitable to transfer to a personal travel budget.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the report.

7. **COMMITTEE ACTION LOG**

The committee action log was noted.

8. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

In relation to the Pupil Attendance update report scheduled for 14th March, members requested a thematic Estyn inspection report could be circulated.

The Head of Education Development confirmed the Estyn report would be attached as an appendix to the report.

The forward work programme was noted.

9. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

10. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

Resolved: to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

11. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF PRIVATE ITEM(S)**

Royal National Lifeboat Institute

Following scrutiny, members supported the recommendation with the addition 'that cover is extended to 8.00pm in the evenings to ensure safety into the twilight hours.'

**Councillor R.Phillips  
Chairperson**



## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

14th March, 2024

### Report of the Head of Education Development - Chris Millis

**Matter for information**

**Wards Affected:** All

## PUPIL ATTENDANCE UPDATE

### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with information and data in relation to Neath Port Talbot pupil attendance.

### Background

2. This report provides Members with details of pupil attendance data for the academic year 2022/23 and for the accumulative period of the current 2023/24 academic year to end of January '24.

### Attendance Data

#### Academic Year 2022/23

3. The primary sector attendance rate for the academic year was 89.80%, whilst the secondary sector attendance rate was 85.98%. [Note: for the purpose of statistical reporting, the data for Ysgol Bae Baglan, Ysgol Cwm Brombil and Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera - Bro Dur as all-through schools have been disaggregated into both the primary and secondary sectors.]
4. There was an improvement in attendance in both sectors up from 89.23% in the primary sector and 85.52% in the secondary sector from

the previous 2021/22 academic year. Data relating to individual schools appears in Appendix A attached to this report.

5. Whilst the Wales national data for primary attendance is not yet available the national data for secondary schools has shown an increase in ranking from bottom (22nd) in 2021/22 to 20th in 2022/23.
6. There is a negligible difference in attendance between boys and girls in either the primary or secondary sectors with girls attending slightly more in the primary sector and boys attending slightly more in the secondary sector. Similarly between CLA and non-CLA pupils (Children Looked After) and again between white British and non-white British pupils. However, there is a significant attendance gap between pupils who are categorised as eligible for free school meals and non-free school meals, and again between pupils designated as having SEN/ALN and those non-SEN/ALN. This is a pattern identified pre-Covid and areas where the local authority provides additional support in terms of identifying and intervening with vulnerable pupils and families at an earlier stage before persistent absence becomes an issue; working far closer with other service areas both within and external to the Council in order to provide a more cohesive and interconnected level of support, and acting as an advocate for pupils where there are issues between school and home preventing regular attendance.

### **Accumulative period September to end of January 2023/24**

7. Attendance for the first half of the academic year has shown a good level of further progress in both sectors with primary schools increasing to 91.50% attendance and secondary schools to 88.09%. [Note: for the purpose of statistical reporting, the data for Ysgol Bae Baglan, Ysgol Cwm Brombil and Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera - Bro Dur as all-through schools have been disaggregated into both the primary and secondary sectors.]
8. Comparing like-for-like based on the autumn terms over the past two years there has been a significant increase in both sectors with the primary sector increasing by slightly more than 2% and the secondary sector increasing by just short of 2%. Data relating to individual schools appears in Appendix B attached to this report.
9. Nearly all schools across both sectors made an improvement with some schools achieving an improvement of almost 5%.

## Post-Covid

10. Attendance currently remains concerningly lower than pre-Covid levels in both sectors by just over four percentage points each at the end of the 2022/23 academic year compared to 2018/19 which was the last full school year pre-Covid. Members will no doubt have seen in the various national press that reduced attendance rates are being mirrored at schools all over the country.
11. It has been widely reported that some pupils have struggled to re-connect with school and return full-time since the pandemic, whilst others have detached from education altogether and are presenting as school refusers. There is no single reason for an increase in pupil absence rather a range of reasons including complex and multiple causes, anxiety, mental health and wellbeing issues and allegations of bullying. Some learners established a pattern of not attending school during the pandemic that they and their families have found difficult to revert from. Many of these challenges existed before the pandemic, but some have deepened since, and as a result some families have become harder to reach and engage. A number of pupils were school refusers' pre-Covid and have continued with their poor attendance.
12. In January Estyn published a thematic report: Improving Attendance in Secondary Schools. A copy of the report can be found here: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2024-01/Improving%20attendance%20in%20secondary%20schools.pdf>. The report was undertaken in response to the concern that attendance rates across Wales have failed to return to pre-pandemic levels. Estyn reported that improving attendance was a recommendation in over a third of secondary school inspections since they had resumed inspections two years ago.
13. Amongst other things the report found that post-covid persistent absenteeism in most schools is significantly higher and that the attendance rates between FSM and non-FSM pupils grew wider.
14. Pre-covid the average attendance gap across Wales between FSM and non-FSM pupils in secondary schools was 5.2% difference. That doubled to 10.4% in 2022/23. The NPT attendance gap pre-covid was 5.17% rising to 11.06% in 2022/23. The gap has reduced significantly for the current academic year September to January '24 and stands at 8.70%.
15. The report gave 15 recommendations in total: 5 for schools, 3 for the LA, and 7 for Welsh Government.

16. Welsh Government have accepted all the recommendations and are currently drafting an action plan in response. The local authority continues to support schools to increase attendance and will weave the three recommendations for the LA into its routine practice.

### **Supporting the Improvement of Attendance**

17. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) supports parents and carers to fulfil their statutory responsibility in ensuring that children attend school regularly. The Education Welfare Service works in partnership with schools, parents and other professionals to reduce pupil absence and to raise achievement, enabling pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. The service works closely with schools and parents to identify the cause of individual pupil absence with the aim of early intervention when and where needed. Schools are encouraged to correctly code absences to allow for effective data tracking. Pupil illnesses are monitored and challenged by Education Welfare Officers where there appears to be patterns of absence. Regular meetings are scheduled between Education Welfare Officers and key school staff to discuss individual pupil cases and provide advice, support and to determine appropriate course of actions. Education Welfare Officers will often attend at the home of the pupil to make enquiries as to the reason for the absence from school in an effort to assist and facilitate an early return to school and discuss with parents various strategies to encourage and improve regular attendance.
18. During the 2022/23 academic year Education Welfare Officers undertook 9,758 forms of communications with pupils and families (8,611 telephone calls/text messages/emails and 1,147 house visits).
19. Recognising the national challenges the Welsh Government provided additional grant funding to local authorities last summer to assist schools with the improvement of pupil attendance. From this grant three temporary Attendance Support Officers (ASOs) were recruited who have concentrated efforts on pupils at or near to becoming persistently absent (80% attendance as defined by Welsh Government). Their role involved daily contact with families enquiring after absent children to learn why they are not in school, likely length of absence and whether the school could support them better. In many cases the ASOs developed a frontline approach attempting to quell any further potential longer periods of absence.
20. During the Autumn term the local authority launched its 'Miss School, Miss Out' campaign to highlight to parents the importance of regular attendance. Involvements to date have included a photocall involving

pupils and the Cabinet Member for Education, the release of several messages via our social media channels, letters to every parent within Neath Port Talbot and school award ceremonies. The campaign is set to continue for a few more months and will include video messages involving pupils themselves.

21. Members will know from previous reports that Neath Port Talbot has invested in a dedicated post of Persistent Absenteeism EWO. Following an increasing success in this area a second Persistent Absenteeism Officer has subsequently been appointed. These Officers work exclusively with small numbers of pupils and families with very poor attendance for short periods of time (normally 6-8 weeks). Following this time successful cases are ordinarily stepped back to the school Education Welfare Officer for regular support or are escalated for consideration of prosecution.
22. Where support has been unsuccessful and all other avenues explored and attendance continues to be a concern, the Council has the available option of issuing parents with a fixed penalty notice or the commencement of prosecution via Court. These options were paused throughout the pandemic, however, have subsequently been reintroduced. A number of parents have been issued with formal final warning notification letters and a growing number have been issued with a penalty notices. The Council's Legal Services Department are currently preparing to reintroduce prosecutions via Court proceedings which should commence in the next few weeks.
23. The Education Welfare Service has close links with local Police who together regularly carry out truancy patrols to discourage absence from school. These have successfully recommenced with a number of patrols in both Neath and Port Talbot town centres having been undertaken. A number of pupils were identified as being absent from school without a valid reason and both pupils and parents appropriately warned.
24. In terms of pupil de-registration; all local authorities across Wales have seen an increase in the number of pupils being electively home educated since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. There are a number of reasons for this including the success for some from the experience of home learning during the lockdown periods to the consequences of attempts towards others to re-engage and return to school. It is the latter where officers in Neath Port Talbot are experiencing the greater number of de-registrations.

25. Members will continue to be provided with regular reports on pupil attendance and the work being undertaken to improve the operation of the Education Welfare Service.

### **Financial Impact**

26. There is no financial impact associated with this report.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

27. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes only.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

28. The attendance data contained within this report and support provided by the Education Welfare Service covers all schools across Neath Port Talbot.

### **Workforce Impacts**

29. There are no workforce or staffing issues directly associated with this report.

### **Legal Impacts**

30. There is no legal impact associated with this report.

### **Risk Management**

31. There is no identified risk in relation to this report.

### **Consultation**

32. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external Consultation on this item.

### **Recommendations**

33. That Members note the update provided within this report.

### **Appendices**

34. Appendix A and B, please see below.

## List of Background Papers

35. Estyn Thematic report on attendance, January, 2024:  
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2024-01/Improving%20attendance%20in%20secondary%20schools.pdf>

## Officer Contact

36. Chris Millis, Head of Education Development, [c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk)  
John Burge, Co-ordinator Child and Family Support Team,  
[j.burge@npt.gov.uk](mailto:j.burge@npt.gov.uk)

## Appendix A - Academic Year 2022/23 Individual School Year Data

Abbey Primary	90.87%	0.65%
Alderman Davies CIW	89.75%	-0.61%
Alltwen Primary	91.80%	1.52%
Awel y Môr	89.74%	1.45%
Baglan Primary	91.27%	1.11%
Blaenbaglan Primary	91.94%	0.54%
Blaendulais Primary	88.15%	6.13%
Blaengwrach Primary	91.41%	-0.46%
Blaenhonddan Primary	93.16%	0.18%
Bryncoch CIW Primary	92.78%	0.19%
Catwg Primary	92.63%	1.26%
Central Primary	89.68%	-0.76%
Cilffriw Primary	89.74%	4.21%
Coed Hirwaun Primary	90.40%	1.96%
Coedffranc Primary	87.63%	-1.27%
Creunant Primary	90.66%	0.11%
Croeserw Primary	86.09%	1.24%
Crymlyn Primary	91.30%	-0.98%
Crynalit Primary	89.61%	-0.01%
Cwmafan Primary	88.52%	0.56%
Cwmnedd Primary	87.30%	1.26%
Cymer Afan Primary	89.91%	-1.80%
Eastern Primary	86.04%	-0.93%
Glyncorwg Primary	92.19%	2.54%
Gnoll Primary	88.34%	1.35%
Godregraig Primary	90.88%	0.02%
Llangiwig Primary	91.87%	2.79%
Maesmarchog Primary	85.46%	-1.56%
Melin Primary	89.76%	1.35%
Penafan Primary	87.21%	1.56%
Rhos Primary	92.19%	1.63%
Rhydyfro Primary	90.46%	1.50%
Sandfields Primary	84.45%	-0.97%
St Joseph's Infant	89.99%	0.73%
St Joseph's Junior	90.08%	0.73%
St Joseph's Primary	90.93%	2.49%
St Therese's Primary	88.22%	1.49%
Tairgwaith Primary	90.45%	1.32%
Tonnau Primary	89.70%	1.71%
Tywyn Primary	89.38%	0.62%
Wauanceirch Primary	89.92%	1.11%
YGG Blaendulais	92.14%	-0.26%
YGG Castell-nedd	91.32%	0.49%
YGG Cwmllynfell	93.53%	3.19%
YGG Cwmnedd	91.16%	0.64%
YGG GCG	89.55%	0.34%
YGG Pontardawe	92.21%	0.58%
YGG Rhosafan	91.26%	0.25%
YGG Trebannws	89.98%	0.60%
YGG Tyle'r Ynn	92.64%	1.21%
YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur	88.48%	1.22%
Ynysfach Primary	90.17%	-1.23%
Ysgol Bae Baglan	87.95%	-0.56%
Ysgol Carreg Hir	86.85%	-0.59%
Ysgol Cwm Brombil	89.70%	-0.89%
Ysgol Maes Y Coed	82.16%	4.58%
Ysgol Hendrefelin	65.39%	-1.20%

Cefn Saeson	82.67%	0.54%
Cwmtawe	89.13%	0.98%
Dwr y Felin	87.35%	-2.88%
Llangatwg	84.01%	3.50%
St Joseph's RC	83.19%	-0.03%
Ysgol Bae Baglan	84.39%	-1.60%
Ysgol Cwm Brombil	85.34%	-1.13%
YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur	88.99%	-2.45%
Ysgol Maes Y Coed	83.35%	4.38%
Ysgol Hendrefelin	76.53%	0.29%



## Appendix B - September-January '24 2023/24 Accumulative Individual School Data

Abbey Primary	90.39%	2.40%
Alderman Davies CIW	90.85%	0.05%
Alltwen Primary	90.06%	2.95%
Awel y Môr	89.07%	2.01%
Baglan Primary	91.32%	-0.34%
Blaenbaglan Primary	91.68%	1.21%
Blaendulais Primary	86.80%	3.69%
Blaengwrach Primary	92.93%	0.26%
Blaenhonddan Primary	92.97%	0.79%
Brynoch CIW Primary	92.50%	1.50%
Catwg Primary	92.25%	0.70%
Central Primary	90.13%	1.35%
Cilfrw Primary	89.87%	1.28%
Coed Hirwaun Primary	90.13%	1.34%
Coedffranc Primary	87.45%	3.29%
Creunant Primary	90.58%	3.40%
Croeserw Primary	86.90%	1.39%
Crymlyn Primary	90.48%	2.18%
Crynalit Primary	89.42%	2.05%
Cwmafan Primary	87.58%	3.58%
Cwmnedd Primary	86.22%	4.00%
Cymer Afan Primary	90.44%	1.42%
Eastern Primary	85.39%	4.49%
Glyncorwg Primary	92.88%	-1.05%
Gnoll Primary	87.97%	0.66%
Godregraig Primary	91.47%	1.11%
Llangiwr Primary	91.44%	0.85%
Maesmarchog Primary	84.68%	2.10%
Melin Primary	89.66%	1.92%
Penafan Primary	87.47%	2.73%
Rhos Primary	90.24%	4.18%
Rhydyfro Primary	89.00%	2.21%
Sandfields Primary	83.46%	3.45%
St Joseph's Infant	89.25%	2.65%
St Joseph's Junior	88.98%	2.80%
St Joseph's Primary	89.81%	3.69%
St Therese's Primary	87.37%	4.79%
Tairgwaith Primary	90.67%	1.97%
Tonnau Primary	89.05%	2.54%
Tywyn Primary	88.26%	2.17%
Wauanceirch Primary	89.99%	1.76%
YGG Blaendulais	90.66%	3.41%
YGG Castell-nedd	91.52%	1.48%
YGG Cwmllynfell	93.31%	-0.70%
YGG Cwmnedd	91.13%	2.20%
YGG GCG	89.61%	1.66%
YGG Pontardawe	91.90%	1.33%
YGG Rhosafan	90.50%	1.65%
YGG Trebannws	89.25%	1.30%
YGG Tyle'r Ynn	92.32%	1.79%
YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur	87.91%	4.22%
Ynysfach Primary	90.01%	1.30%
Ysgol Bae Baglan	88.12%	2.04%
Ysgol Carreg Hir	86.55%	2.12%
Ysgol Cwm Brombil	88.63%	3.29%
Ysgol Maes Y Coed	80.58%	6.91%
Ysgol Hendrefelin	69.64%	12.23%

Cefn Saeson	<b>87.43%</b>	4.65%
Cwmtawe	<b>89.88%</b>	0.93%
Dwr y Felin	<b>89.05%</b>	1.23%
Llangatwg	<b>86.56%</b>	2.49%
St Joseph's RC	<b>87.12%</b>	3.21%
Ysgol Bae Baglan	<b>85.65%</b>	0.82%
Ysgol Cwm Brombil	<b>88.53%</b>	2.49%
YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur	<b>91.24%</b>	1.86%
Ysgol Maes Y Coed	<b>83.74%</b>	-0.26%
Ysgol Hendrefelin	<b>76.74%</b>	0.43%

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwriadol wag

## Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee - Actions and Referrals Update – 2023-24

<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Minuted Action / Referral / Request</u>	<u>Progress Update</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Target / Completion Date</u>	<u>Completed / On-going</u>
28.9.2023	Q1 Performance Indicators 23/24 Education Directorate	Members asked for information on outreach youth workers and what support they could give.	Youth Service Report to be presented to the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024	Chris Millis	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024	Completed – Presented to Scrutiny Committee 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024
1.2.2024  Tudalen27	Impact of Energy Prices on School Budgets	Members questioned the timescale, potential costs, required staffing and funding regarding the potential capability for solar PV panels to be installed at 14 schools. The Head of Support Services and Transformation confirmed that the survey work is being undertaken by the Environment Directorate; an update will be requested and progress will be reported back to this committee.	Emailed officer for information	Rhiannon Crowhurst	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Completed – Information e-mailed to committee 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
		In relation to meters and daily standing charges, schools with split sites will have multiple meter boxes with multiple standing charges. The Head of Support Services and Transformation will seek clarity on this issue from colleagues in the Environment Directorate and report back findings to this committee.	Emailed officer for information	Rhiannon Crowhurst	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Completed – Information e-mailed to committee 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024

Date last updated

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwiadol wag

## Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

(All starting 2pm unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Contact Officer
<b>2023</b>		
28 <sup>th</sup> September	Annual Report 2022 - 2023	Chair of Education Skills & Wellbeing Scrutiny Pamela Chivers (Scrutiny Officer)
	Update on the roll out of Universal Primary Free School Meals	Rhiannon Crowhurst
23 <sup>rd</sup> November		
<b>2024</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> February	Curriculum for Wales update	Chris Millis
	Impact of energy prices on School budgets	Rhiannon Crowhurst/Julie Merryfield
14 <sup>th</sup> March	Pupil Attendance Update	Chris Millis
25 <sup>th</sup> April	Professional Learning Offers available for school based staff	Chris Millis

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwiadol wag