



EDUCATION, SKILLS AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.00 PM THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2024

***MULTI-LOCATION MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER, PORT TALBOT
& MICROSOFT TEAMS***

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

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1. Chair's Announcements
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 14*)
 - 12 September 2024

PART 1

4. To consider items from the Cabinet Forward Work Programme
 - (a) Youth Engagement Strategy
 - (b) Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 in non-maintained settings, primary and secondary schools and all age schools and into Post 16
 - (c) 2025/2026 Budget

PART 2

5. To consider items from the Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
- (a) Service Plans from Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate

PART 3

6. Performance Monitoring

PART 4

7. Selection of items for future scrutiny (*Pages 233 - 252*)
8. Urgent Items
Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100BA (6) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Thursday, 17 October 2024

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor R.Phillips

Vice Chairperson: Councillor D.Thomas

Councillors: N.Goldup-John, L.Heard, J.Henton, D.Keogh, C.Lewis, R.Mizen, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, S.H.Reynolds, P.Rogers and B.Woolford

***Co-opted Voting Members** A. Amor, M.Caddick and L.Newman

***Co-opted Non Voting Members** R.De Benedictis

Notes:

- (1) *If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) *If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*

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Minutes of the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

12 September 2024

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

Chairperson:	Councillor R.Phillips
Vice Chairperson:	Councillor D.Thomas
Councillors:	N.Goldup-John, J.Henton, D.Keogh, C.Lewis, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, S.H.Reynolds, P.Rogers and B.Woolford
Co-opted Voting Members:	A. Amor and L.Newman
Officers In Attendance	A.Thomas, H.Lervy, A.Thomas, I.Guy, R.Crowhurst, C.Saunders, C.Morris, C.Davies, H.Jones, G.Powell, Z.Ashton, L.Clement-Jones, R. Miller, K.Windsor-Brown, J.Jones, S.Griffiths and P.Chivers
Cabinet Invitees:	Councillors J.Hurley, N.Jenkins and C.Phillips

1. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Adam Amor, Item 4(c) – Personal, Family members are pupils at YGG Rhos Afan and Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur

Cllr. Alun Llewelyn Item, 4(d) – Personal, Governor at YGG Cwmllynfell

Cllr. Peter Rees, Item 4(f) – Personal, Chair of Governors at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. **TO CONSIDER ITEMS FROM THE CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered items from the Cabinet Forward Work Programme

(a) **Celtic Leisure**

The Director of Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning provided members with an overview of the report contained within the agenda pack.

Members asked for clarification regarding the statement made, that Trade Unions were of the opinion that insourcing was unaffordable.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that the statement was correct. The Trade Unions have indicated they would like to see the staff enhancements in option C but understand that insourcing is unaffordable.

Members asked for clarification that the decision to ask Celtic Leisure for an extension to the contract was made by Cabinet Members.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that the decision was made by Cabinet.

Members referred to page 18 of the report and the reference made to details of the working groups, members enquired if meeting minutes were available. Members enquired whether there has been any progress made in driving down costs and increasing income as previously discussed and agreed when the decision was made in 2022.

The Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture confirmed that notes were taken at the working group meetings. The working group have examined the insourcing costs by each individual budget line, during the review process some costs were changed. There is confidence that the figures are as accurate as possible.

Members referred to the penultimate paragraph on page 18 of the report, and asked for confirmation that in January 2024, cabinet members and officers met the trade union to officially inform them that leisure services would not be insourced in April 2025. It was noted that Council members were not informed of any changes at that time.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that information around the delay in insourcing Celtic Leisure was provided at the end of 2023; a meeting was held with Celtic Leisure staff and Trade Unions in January 2024.

Members referenced page 19 of the report and asked whether there had been any consideration to potential savings that could be realised by the co-location of services or sharing of resources in the insourcing model.

The Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture confirmed that savings are made when they are identified. Longer term opportunities for savings will not be realised in the short term. It was noted that none of the proposed options would affect this, and the negligible savings identified will not make a material difference.

Members referred to option 2 on page 21 and asked how resilience has been improved within the Celtic Leisure senior leadership team.

The Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture confirmed that the company position had improved, particularly from a trading perspective. There have been some changes at leadership and board level and members of the board possess the relevant skill set required for the efficient running of the business. The recruitment of a new Chief Executive Officer is planned.

Members asked for further detail of how an investment fund could drive growth. It was noted that poor staff morale could impact the capacity for growth.

The Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture advised members that it was expected that the new Chief Executive Officer would bring forward a report on how the investment fund could be utilised. The investment fund would be held by the council and released when there was a satisfactory business case going forward.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning advised members that any business case for investment being brought forward, would need to satisfy members, and drive income streams or reduce costs. The aim is to make the business more sustainable, reduce the burden on taxpayers and ensure job security.

Members asked the Cabinet Member, if it was the intention for Celtic Leisure to present the business case to the scrutiny committee for transparency.

The Cabinet Member for Nature, Tourism, and Well-being stated that no decision has been made yet. It is expected that there will be a greater amount of performance monitoring, within proposal options 2 & 3. The Chief Executive Officer would be expected to attend scrutiny committee.

The Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture confirmed that the intention was for tighter performance monitoring between the council and Celtic Leisure going forward.

The Chair asked what the potential increase in council tax, to all residents, would be if Celtic Leisure was insourced in the current financial climate.

The Director of Finance confirmed the potential increase in Council Tax would equate to 2% for all residents.

Members wished to ask questions on the private part of the report.

Members proposed and seconded 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.

Resolved: to suspend access to meetings

Members made a request that the Leader be included in recommendation (b) in addition to the Cabinet Member for Nature, Tourism and Wellbeing & Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning confirmed that the Cabinet would be made aware of the request at an appropriate time.

Following scrutiny, members supported the recommendation outlined in the draft Cabinet report.

(b) **An overview of the School Based Counselling Service (SBCS) support for schools and staff wellbeing**

The Chair thanked officers for the report and for their hard work under difficult circumstances. The Chair referred to page 55 of the report and the number of missed sessions and asked what work was being undertaken with schools to reduce this figure.

Officers confirmed that due to the confidential nature of counselling, it was sometimes difficult to alert pupils to their session. There is a need to review school systems to ensure pupils attend appointments and work is ongoing in schools where non-attendance rates have increased. It was noted that some pupils using the service are very vulnerable and this affects their ability to attend.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

(c) **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Annual Report**

The Head of Support Services and Transformation advised members that the annual report provided an overview of progress made during the first two years of the 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The Chair complimented staff on their good work and made a request for members to share promotional material on social media channels and in their communities, when available.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

(d) **Childcare Rents in Schools**

The Head of Early Years, Inclusion and Participation provided members with an overview of the report contained within the agenda pack, and stated that no negative impacts have been identified during the pilot period. Awareness is held of wider issues within the childcare sector and there is a commitment to the sustainability of the sector as a whole.

Members thanked the officers for the efforts taken to ensure Councillors are fully understanding of the situation and the work they do in the wider sector under difficult circumstances.

Following scrutiny, members supported the recommendation outlined in the draft Cabinet report.

(e) **Strategic Schools Improvement (SSIP) Proposal to reorganise Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Provision at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School**

The Head of Support Services and Transformation advised members that the report contained in the agenda pack was the first of three reports that will come to scrutiny.

Members asked if the proposal would free up space at Cwmtawe and whether that could be utilised for ALN facilities at the current time and in the future.

The Head of Early Years, Inclusion and Participation advised members that a review of planned places across the authority had been undertaken, to identify need and where facilities would be best located. There are ongoing discussions taking place with schools. The outcome of this can be reported back to committee at a later date.

Following scrutiny, members supported the recommendation outlined in the draft Cabinet report.

(f) **Strategic Schools Improvement (SSIP) Proposal to reorganise Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Provision at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School**

Following scrutiny, members supported the recommendation outlined in the draft Cabinet report.

(g) **Draft Air Quality Action Plan**

The Head of Planning and Public Protection provided members with an overview of the report contained within the agenda pack.

Members enquired if the consultation was only for the consultees listed in the report and whether there would be any public consultation. Members referred to measure 26, and the mention of the deployment of electric buses as part of the decarbonisation plan. Members enquired whether it was planned for the whole fleet of buses to be electric or whether one electric bus would address the measure.

The Head of Planning and Public Protection confirmed that there will be an element of public consultation, however, because the report is of a technical nature there is a requirement to engage with the statutory bodies listed in the report. There will be publicity around the public consultation. The long-term aim is for the whole fleet to transition to electric but there are high costs, so this aim is not achievable in the short term. It was noted that the action plan is for a 5-year period and all proposed actions and measures will be reviewed and any required updates will be dealt with appropriately.

Officers confirmed that the project was not run by Environmental Health, but it was relevant to include it in the action plan. Another project in relation to hydrogen bus trials is ongoing, environmental health have no direct involvement, but information can be obtained as part of the action plan, and this will be monitored as a proposal as part of this action plan going forward.

Following scrutiny, members supported the recommendation outlined in the draft Cabinet report.

5. **TO CONSIDER ITEMS FROM THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

There were no items selected from the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

6. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

There were no Performance Monitoring reports for consideration.

7. **SELECTION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY**

Officers advised members of new items that had been added to the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and changes to the Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme; members were given the opportunity to request further items for consideration.

A discussion was held concerning the size of the agenda pack. Members noted that the new scrutiny model provided scrutiny with the ability to participate at an earlier stage, and officers could be assured that there was no expectation for scrutiny reports to be in as much details as cabinet reports.

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning acknowledged the size of the reports and thanked officers for the work involved.

Members noted the Forward Work Programme.

8. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

9. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

This item was considered under agenda item 4A.

10. **SCRUTINY OF PRIVATE ITEMS**

This item was considered under agenda item 4A.

(a) **Celtic Leisure - Appendix B and C (Exempt under paragraph 14)**

This item was considered under agenda item 4A.

**Councillor R.Phillips
Chairperson**

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

24th October 2024

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Purpose of Report

To allow for pre-decision consideration of the Youth Engagement Strategy by scrutiny members.

Background

The scrutiny committee have selected this item for pre-decision scrutiny before it is presented to Cabinet on 13th November 2024 for approval.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Not applicable.

Workforce Impacts

Not applicable.

Legal Impacts

Not applicable.

Risk Management Impacts

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

Not applicable.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts

Not applicable.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the constitution for consultation on this item.

Recommendations

Following scrutiny, members to support recommendation outlined in the draft Cabinet report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 -

Draft Cabinet Report – Youth Engagement Strategy

List of Background Papers

Not applicable.

Officer Contract

Rhiannon Crowhurst Head of Support Service and Transformation

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NEATH Port Talbot COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

13th November 2024

Report of the Head of Support Services and Transformation

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title: Youth Engagement Strategy

Purpose of the Report:

1. To request that members formally adopt the Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy 2024- 2034

Executive Summary:

2. The Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy of 2013-2023 required renewing to better align with the new Welsh Governments Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPPF) (Appendix 1).
3. The new Youth Engagement Strategy (Appendix 2) sets out a multi-agency approach to ensuring young people's engagement in education, employment or training (EET) and also to help respond to young people who are at risk of being homeless. Strategic responsibility lies within the Education Directorate and operational responsibility for implementation of the Framework lies with the Youth Service led by the Youth Engagement & Progression Co-ordinator. An easy read version will be provided prior to publication of the Strategy.
4. The new Youth Engagement Strategy sets out systematic mechanisms to identify and respond to young people at risk of becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET), who are NEET and/or who are at risk of being homeless. The Strategy highlights the processes in place to identify young people who require tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression, led by local authorities, working with their delivery partners.
5. This Youth Engagement Strategy identifies how the many partners who impact on the lives of young people can work together to ensure young people successfully transition into adulthood.

Background:

6. The Welsh Government Updated the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) in 2022. The amended YEPF now has an additional focus on supporting young people who are at risk of becoming homeless.
7. Under the Framework there are processes in place to identify young people who require tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression, led by local authorities, working with their delivery partners.
8. To reflect the changes within the YEPF and to give a new focus and emphasis on the Youth Engagement work within Neath Port Talbot it was decided that the Youth Engagement Strategy required refreshing and renewing. The current Youth Engagement Strategy had expired, the new YEPF had changed which included a change in the age range with the amended version supporting young people aged 11-18 instead of 11-25. The new YEPF also included supporting young people at risk of youth homelessness.
9. The new Youth Engagement Strategy 2024-2034 (YES) has been developed with key stakeholders and through a range of consultations and workshops. Partnering Regeneration Development Ltd (PRD) were engaged as consultants to help develop the new strategy and were central in the consultation process.

Why do we need a Strategy?

10. Neath Port Talbot is a distinct community, with opportunities and challenges that impact on and shape the lives of young people. It is important that the systematic mechanisms and processes outlined in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework are used in a way that works for our young people, in our community. This Youth Engagement Strategy considers how the many partners who impact on the lives of young people can work together to ensure young people successfully transition into adulthood.
11. The Strategy will help Neath Port Talbot achieve the vision – ‘All young people in will be supported to successfully transition into adulthood, in a way that works best for them. Working together we will reduce youth unemployment in Neath Port Talbot by positively encouraging and supporting young people to stay in education, employment and training. We will prevent youth homelessness, and ensure young people have the safe and stable homelife they need.’

Who Is This Strategy For?

12. This Strategy requires a multi-agency approach to ensure young people have the support they need to successfully transition into adulthood. It is for all the organisations that work with and empower young people, including Neath Port Talbot Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Careers Wales, and a range of providers and third-sector partners. It is also for the young people who live in Neath Port Talbot so they can understand the choices available to them and the options they have.

How Was It Developed?

13. The Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy builds on The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28 and a range of other local, regional and national policies. It uses data and evidence from a range of sources to understand the needs of our young people, and the challenges which impact on their transition into adulthood.
14. Engagement was at the heart of the development of this strategy. This included conversations, through focus groups and one-to-one meetings, with over 100 young people, including care experienced young people, young people at risk of homelessness, young people living in supported accommodation, LGBTQ+ young people and NEET young people. Their lived experiences, ideas and perspectives have informed this strategy.
15. This strategy has also been informed by a workshop session that brought together a range of services and providers to explore how to “work together to identify young people who need support and provide appropriate support to ensure they have positive outcomes.”

Strategic Objectives

16. The strategy focusses on five strategic objectives. These outcomes, set out below, are interlinked and build on the *better outcomes for young people* diagram taken from the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook.
 - Early Identification. Young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET or at risk of becoming homeless are identified as early as possible.
 - Working Collaboratively. Services work together collaboratively to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people who need it, sharing responsibility and accountability.

- Monitoring and Evaluation. The support available to young people is monitored and evaluated to ensure it is meeting their needs.
- The Right Provision. The right provision is in place to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them.
- Strategic Oversight and Leadership.

Early Identification

17. Early identification enables targeted support to be put in place earlier to meet young people's needs. Not only does this give the best chance of preventing situations such as a young person becoming homeless or disengaging from education, employment or training, it can also increase individuals' engagement, improve attainment, and develop pathways to help them achieve more positive outcomes.
18. Early identification can also, prevent escalating need or risk, and in so doing reduces demand for statutory and/or specialist services.
19. The strategy outlines the following:
 - Working across services to increase the public's awareness, with a focus on support, benefits and entitlements for young people who are or are at risk of becoming NEET and/or homeless.
 - Evaluating the Upstream Pilot to think about how we can embed the early identification of young people at risk of homelessness. The Upstream Pilot was delivered in 4 schools where young people in years 10 and 11 completed a survey which helped identify young people needing support in a number of areas. The Pilot was run in partnership with the voluntary sector organisation Llamau.
 - Addressing the barriers to data sharing and explore ways to bring together data from a wide range of places to identify young people who would benefit from additional support.
 - Exploring ways to encourage and enable young people to ask for help as soon as they identify an issue.
 - Providing the training and workforce development needed to enable those who work with and engage young people to have the professional judgement that is needed to identify the young people that need support.
 - Increase multi-agency input into early identification by piloting Multi Agency Transition Screening Meetings (MATSM) in schools.

Working Collaboratively

20. We are seeing an increase in demand for support services from young people and it is therefore vital that partners work together to meet this demand, minimise duplication, and enable young people to access the support they need.
21. Young people in engagement expressed concern about having to tell their stories to multiple services and said that a perceived lack of joined-up thinking and poor communication between services can disengage and frustrate them.
22. To ensure that services work together collaboratively to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people in Neath Port Talbot who need it, the Strategy sets out to:
 - Ensure those in lead worker roles have the understanding, training and continuing professional development needed to enable young people to access support.
 - Maximise the use of tools that enable joint working, for example joint commissioning and the establishment of an alternative providers framework.
 - Refresh and repurpose the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group around the three common principles that are key to multi-agency working: information sharing, joint decision-making and intervention.
 - Map provision available to young people and establish shared cross-partnership pathways.
 - Explore and exploit the opportunities resulting from the Curriculum for Wales to provide person-centred support for young people.
 - Work collaboratively with schools, the third sector and local area coordinators to provide community-based, local support that young people can access.
 - Work with schools to implement school-community partnerships aimed at delivering interventions capable of preventing youth homelessness. The foundation of these interventions should be partnerships between schools, healthcare, mental health support, community-based social services and the third sector.
 - Explore options to provide wellbeing support for young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET or homeless.

- Continue to improve the links between services for young people aged 16 and 17, known to NEET and housing teams.

Monitoring and Evaluation

23. Monitoring and evaluation are critical to ensuring support is meeting individual young people's needs, enabling early identification and person-centred approaches. Evaluation and monitoring are part of a process of reflection and review that can ensure lessons are learnt, and improvements are made, providing young people with a better choice of high-quality support and opportunities.
24. To ensure the support that is available to young people is monitored and evaluated so that it meets their needs, the strategy sets out to:
 - Evolve the role of the Youth Engagement Strategy Group to include a self-evaluation partnership looking at how well systems are working.
 - Give young people a role in evaluating the services that support them.
 - Look at how outcome-driven approaches can be used to evaluate and monitor the impact of the support our young people receive, in order to inform decision-making on a case-by-case and collective basis.
 - Establish a monitoring process to improve the monitoring of the transitions and destinations of our young people.
 - Create a multi-agency pathway for young people who have been identified as at higher risk of becoming NEET and/or homeless.
 - Develop an evaluation framework for front-line services to assess their progress towards youth homelessness prevention.

The Right Provision

25. Young people want to be able to choose their employment, skills and/or training pathways, take ownership of their future, and choose what they think is right for them.
26. As well as using the framework to improve engagement and progression for young people, we need to ensure the framework leads to more young people moving into skilled employment, with a balance of work experience, skills, and pathways to employment or self-employment.
27. Working together the strategy aims to make sure the right provision is in place to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them. To do this we will:

- Work with the employability and skills teams to create work ready programmes / work experience.
- Involve young people in service design, enabling them to shape and inform the services that are there to help them.
- Promote the full range of pathways including apprenticeships, degree-apprenticeships and vocational qualifications – and how to access them.
- Ensure equity and quality of advice and support to all young people across Neath Port Talbot.
- Work with schools and education providers to make the most of the opportunities the Curriculum for Wales offers.
- Enable young people to successfully transition to and from the support they need, helping them to transition to further support (should they need it) when they leave youth services.

Strategic Oversight and Leadership

28. For partnership working to be successful all partners involved in the delivery of the Youth Engagement Strategy need to be part of an ongoing process of reflection and review. This process needs to be enabled by senior leaders. The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook advocates that this approach "will help drive improvements in NEET rates and reduction in youth homelessness."
29. To bring partners together to work collaboratively, sharing responsibility and accountability, the Strategy sets out to:
- Put in place a governance structure that supports and enables partnership working, enabling multi-agency working.
 - Secure buy-in from leadership across the partnership to enable sharing of knowledge, power, decision-making and funding to change services and interventions to meet the needs of our young people.
 - Re-establish the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group, to deliver the aspirations of the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.
 - Ensure young people know who is responsible and accountable for the support they receive.

Financial Impacts:

30. There are no financial impacts as a result of this report. However, it is important to note that work involved in addressing the actions within the Youth Engagement Strategy relies on external funding through grants that are due to expire 31st March 2025. Financial decisions will be made after the budget announcements.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

31. A first stage Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has found that the adoption of the strategy will have a positive impact on the protected characteristic of age, as the strategy will focus specifically on young people and their support.
32. No negative impacts have been identified and as such a full Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

33. There is no direct impact on valley communities as result of this report, as young people all across the county borough will be able to benefit from the support outlined in the strategy.

Workforce Impacts:

34. There is no direct impact on the workforce as a result of this report.

Legal Impacts:

35. There are no direct legal impacts identified as a result of this report. However the Youth Engagement Strategy is developed on the principles of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, and recognises the importance of the Welsh Government's Children and Young Peoples Participation Standards (2016), to ensure young people have their voices heard and participate in making decisions that affect them.

Risk Management Impacts:

36. As noted above, work towards addressing the actions within the Youth Engagement Strategy relies on external funding through grants that are due to expire 31st March 2025. Financial decisions will be made after the budget announcements.

Partnership working is vital to ensure the aims of the strategy are met; without commitment from all strategic partners, including external partners, the success and impact of the strategy will be limited.

Consultation:

37. While there is no requirement to undertake formal consultation on the strategy, meaningful engagement and discussion with young people and strategic partners has taken place, to ensure that all have been able to help shape and develop this strategy. Young people's consultation included meeting with young people who were NEET, young people in supported accommodation, Youth Council and young people from vulnerable groups. The Youth Service facilitated consultation with over 80 partners from a wide range of sectors including education, health, housing and homelessness services, post 16 education and training providers, employability services and the voluntary sector.

Recommendations:

38. Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Screening Assessment it is recommended that Members formally adopt the Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy 2024-2025.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

39. The decision is necessary to help drive forward the work to support young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, who are already NEET and those young people who are at risk of Homelessness. By adopting the Youth Engagement Strategy this work will be supported at a strategic level, become more accountable and will improve the offer to young people.

Implementation of Decision:

40. The decision is proposed for implementation following the three day call in period.

41. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

Appendix 2 – Youth Engagement Strategy

Appendix 3 – IIA

List of Background Papers:

N/A

Officer Contact:

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Jason Haeney, Principal Youth and Community Officer,
E-mail j.haeney@npt.gov.uk



GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

● Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Handbook

The development of the Framework Overview and Handbook has been informed by detailed discussions with stakeholders and young people, available data and research findings, as well as related policy developments.

First published: 22 September 2022

Last updated: 22 September 2022

Contents

Background

Early identification

Brokerage

Monitoring progression

Provision

Employability and employment opportunities Accountability

Roles and responsibilities

Annex A: Signposting to support for mental health and well-being

Background

INTRODUCTION

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework ('the Framework') outlines a process for organisations to work together to identify young people who need support and provide appropriate support to ensure they have positive outcomes.

The Framework is there to support:

- young people aged 11 to 18 at risk of not making a positive transition into education, employment or training when they leave school
- young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- young people aged 11 to 18 at risk of youth homelessness

outcomes we aim to address through the Framework are:

- for more young people to make a positive transition into education, employment or training
- for the prevention of homelessness to happen much earlier, through identifying and supporting young people who may be at risk

Underpinning the delivery of the Framework is the recognition that if young people are to be able to participate in and benefit from learning and have a smoother transition to becoming young adults, including not experiencing homelessness, then good emotional mental health and well-being is crucial.

We want young people to:

- engage in activities that are meaningful to them
- feel a part of their communities
- have a sense of belonging

The Framework was first published in 2013 and is being strengthened as a Programme for Government commitment. The revised Framework applies to those aged 11 to 18, and works in conjunction with the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG), which applies to all aged 16 to 24. Together the Framework and the YPG will ensure there is a structure to support young people throughout their school journey until they move into employment or self-employment.

The original Framework was developed with the aim of reducing NEET rates, and this remains a strong focus. However, as outlined above, the Framework now also includes the prevention of youth homelessness. The vulnerability indicators for identifying risk of NEET can overlap with indicators for risk of family breakdown and youth homelessness. This approach means we consider holistically what difficulties young people are experiencing, building up a better understanding of their circumstances, enabling us to offer targeted support.

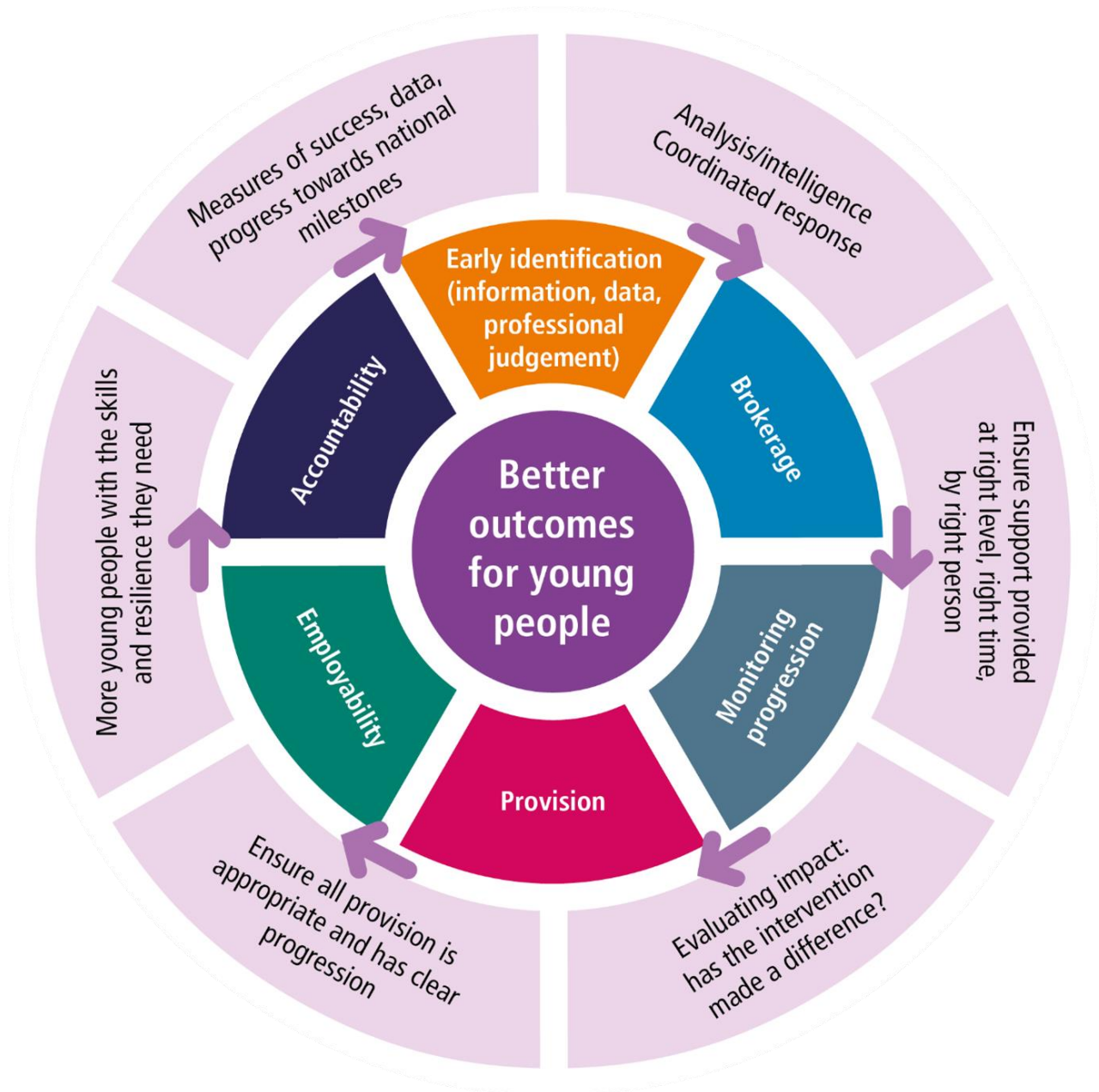
Strengthening the new Framework involves widening and extending its stakeholder base to empower local partnerships to improve its delivery. This includes the partners delivering the YPG, including Working Wales, and the voluntary youth work sector, whose role in delivering the Framework has been under-developed to date.

There are 6 components to the Framework and the application of each depends on the vulnerability stage and age of the individual. The components are:

1. Early identification
2. Brokerage
3. Monitoring progression
4. Provision
5. Employability and employment opportunities
6. Accountability

Each of these components is covered in more detail in this Handbook. The diagram below shows how the 6 components combine to secure better outcomes for young people.

Better outcomes for young people diagram



THE WAY FORWARD

A system-wide, collaborative focus is needed to remove the silos in delivery that have developed since the Framework was first published. Agencies and providers within a local area need to use their collective resources to fully engage with and better support young people.

Strengthening the Framework will involve collective accountability and responsibility for its delivery. **Public bodies** can build on this sense of collective accountability and responsibility as we work together towards achieving **national milestones**, in particular the national milestone for at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment, or training by 2050.

One of our main aims is to embed a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement among all partners and stakeholders involved in delivering the Framework. This will involve partners participating in a process of review and reflection to:

- identify, as partnerships what could have been done differently
- learn lessons
- drive improvements
- provide young people with a better choice of high-quality support and opportunities

We want to ensure that as many young people as possible make a successful transition into education, employment and training (EET) when they leave school. Regular engagement with those young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET will improve the probability of them making a successful transition into EET and reduce the likelihood of them becoming 'unknown' at a later stage. 'Unknown' status refers to those not known to Careers Wales, and therefore it is unknown whether they have plans for EET and are therefore at risk of becoming NEET.

Partners involved in delivering the Framework also need to review and reflect on the available data for those aged 16 to 18 whose status is 'unknown' and work in partnership to engage with that group.

Through the Framework and YPG, the Welsh Government will monitor NEET levels in order to determine progress against the national milestone of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds being in education, employment, or training by 2050.

When organisations set their key performance indicators (KPIs), they should explore how they can collectively offer support and establish KPIs to best reflect the targets and ambitions outlined in these relevant national milestones. KPIs should also be centred around recognising the needs of the at-risk young person.

Partnership collaboration is also vital for the early intervention and prevention of youth homelessness. The Youth Homelessness Coordinator role is based within the youth service and should work closely with the Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator (EPC) to help identify young people who may be at risk of homelessness at an earlier age, in order to put suitable support in place. It is also important that these roles work with housing, social services, education and voluntary sector colleagues to ensure there are appropriate referral mechanisms, signposting, and pathways of support available to young people who need them.

This Handbook encourages all providers and stakeholders to work together to provide support and opportunities for young people in Wales. It should be read in conjunction with the '[Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)', which sets out the strategic narrative around the Framework and shows how it aligns with government priorities.

This Handbook seeks to bring clarity by setting out the practices and processes required for different components of the Framework. The Handbook also includes a number of case studies, showcasing working practices already happening in different parts of Wales or illustrating possible ways of working.

Early identification

Early identification of young people who have barriers to engagement or to remaining in their home and who need support is the foundation of the Framework. Early identification enables targeted support to be put in place earlier to meet young people's needs. Not only does this give us the best chance of preventing situations such as homelessness that at-risk young people are vulnerable to, it can also increase individuals' engagement, improve attainment and develop positive pathways to employment.

We are formally embedding the identification and support of young people at risk of youth homelessness within the Framework. The early identification systems that are already in place under the Framework can be used to proactively work with those individuals at an earlier stage. Feedback from the '[Refresh of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Stakeholder and Youth Consultation Report](#)' (2021) ('the consultation on the Framework') was supportive of this approach.

[The consultation on the Framework](#) also indicated that early identification systems are a strength of the current Framework. However, we can further improve these systems by introducing greater standardisation in approaches (such as in relation to data collected) to help ensure a greater level of equity in access for young people across Wales.

To achieve this, we will work with stakeholders and develop comprehensive, up-to-date guidance on early identification, which includes the identification of those at risk of homelessness. This will allow for a greater standardisation in approaches across Wales. Work will commence on this new guidance in 2022.

The case studies below are based on the early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET, as this is the most developed area.

For young people in school, early identification systems have focused on attendance, behaviour and attainment indicators, and all local authorities in Wales have added their own relevant local indicators.

Early identification data is used at termly, multi-agency meetings where partner organisations share relevant information where the individual is under 16 years old. This is to ensure that young people who require support from more than 1 organisation experience a seamless and effective service; and that services are coordinated, coherent and achieve intended outcomes. The data is therefore informed by practitioner input, where the discussion confirms a young person's at-risk status.

Case study: multi-agency meetings in Pembrokeshire

The multiagency or service Team Around the Pupil, Parent and Setting (TAPPAS) panels are operational in all Pembrokeshire secondary schools and units, comprising of a high priority strategic initiative supported by the Children and Schools Directorate. The panels act as a central point to identify at an early stage learners at risk from disengaging from their education (or become NEET), and to broker support and/or provision for individual learners or groups.

TAPPAS panels convene termly, clerked and chaired by the local authority. Membership includes school staff with responsibility for vulnerable learners (including those with additional learning needs (ALN)), local authority services (for example, Inclusion, 14 to 19, youth service), post-16 providers (Pembrokeshire College and work-based learning), Careers Wales, voluntary sector youth services, and health services (including emotional health).

Schools or partner services are responsible for referring young people deemed

vulnerable for professional discussion at TAPPAS. In advance of meetings, the local authority compiles and shares a database of early identification indicators and relevant information on learners to be discussed, including attendance, behaviour, education outcomes, ALN, barriers to education and known agency involvement. A vulnerability assessment profile (VAP) score is calculated using either a red, amber or green (RAG) status. For Year 11 learners, the likelihood of them becoming NEET is scored by the school. The Year 11 cohort are discussed with post-16 providers at the start of meetings so that the latter may leave prior to a discussion of younger learners.

Professional multiagency discussion enables a holistic, deeper understanding of need to support the young person. Needs are captured, and an action plan is formulated naming the responsible lead worker. If necessary, onward brokerage of services or provision is agreed. Action plans and learner progress are reviewed at subsequent meetings. During the academic year 2021 to 2022, 779 learners were discussed at TAPPAS, with 202 learners discharged at the end of the year as their needs were met. The 3 significant areas for support brokered during this period were transition, learner behaviour, and emotional health and well-being.

Case study: Swansea's approach to early identification

Swansea local authority takes a data-driven approach to identify and support young people at all stages of their journey. They identify young people through use of their VAP. They consider those young people scoring highest (red and amber), as well as those already supported by their Early Help Hubs (EHH). In considering young people with the highest assessment scoring, they then look at additional identifiers such as previous or current social services involvement, previous or current EHH support, well-being needs, whether they have applied or interviewed for a post-16 destination and if they have missed any careers appointments.

Each term the EHH manager chairs a multi-agency meeting with the school, careers officers, pastoral support, **Cynnydd** support and education welfare. During the meeting, they discuss:

- levels of support for identified high risk young people of statutory school age
- who will lead on support
- whether an early referral is needed

Each professional then agrees a score on a scaling question (0 representing not confident that they will make transition and 10 representing very confident of making transition). At this meeting, all professionals also have the opportunity to add other young people to the list.

In the summer term, Careers Wales will also prioritise the young people in Year 10 they identify as most at risk. Those young people will be:

- offered opportunities to meet with their careers worker
- provided with support to help them decide on their post-16 EET options

Between April and October every year, referrals come into the post-16 lead work team from school pastoral or Progress (Cynnydd) leads, Careers Wales advisers and EHH lead workers regarding young people in Year 11. Support is offered to those young people most at risk of not making a successful post-16 transition.

Between July and November, weekly case monitoring is completed using the data available through Careers Wales and the post-16 lead work team. This includes regular updates and feedback on individuals to support their successful transition into EET.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Data is critical in the early identification process. Professional judgement is also crucial, as professionals may have insight into what is happening in a young person's life, which is not picked up by the data alone.

Case study: how professional judgement can make a difference

Siân is 14 years old and has always done well at school. However, since she started Year 10 she has been bullied by a group of girls, and this is starting to take its toll. Siân has become increasingly anxious and withdrawn. Siân hasn't spoken to her teachers about this as she thinks that will make things worse.

Siân attends a local voluntary youth centre, where the youth worker had noticed Siân hanging back and not joining in activities, and that she seemed to have lost her confidence. The youth worker had a chat with Siân, who opened up about the bullying, and the impact it was having on her self-confidence. Siân said she was feeling overwhelmed and she was worried her schoolwork was suffering as she was feeling so upset and distracted. She was finding it increasingly difficult to engage in class and felt demotivated.

The youth worker asked Siân if she would mind if she spoke to the local authority and/or the school, to address the bullying and get additional support for Siân, and Siân agreed to this.

The youth worker contacted the EPC to highlight what was happening to Siân. The EPC recognised that Siân needed support and arranged for the youth worker to act as Siân's lead worker to advocate on her behalf. The EPC also agreed to speak to the headteacher to make him aware of the bullying and the effect it was having on Siân, and to explore how the school's pastoral systems could be used to tackle the bullying and provide further support for Siân. It was agreed that Siân's case would be considered at the termly multi-agency meetings at the school, so that her progress could be monitored, and support adjusted as necessary.

WORKING WITH VOLUNTARY YOUTH WORK ORGANISATIONS

There is scope to improve the links between voluntary youth work organisations and EPCs so they can provide additional support for the early identification process where they are working with young people outside of local authority settings. The Welsh Government facilitates regular meetings of EPCs, Careers Wales representatives, with representation from the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS). As CWVYS does not cover all voluntary youth work organisations, links also need to be made at a local level between EPCs and other voluntary youth work organisations to enable a coordinated approach.

EARLIER IDENTIFICATION

The Framework applies to young people aged 11 to 18. However, during **the consultation on the Framework** there was strong support for early identification to start at primary school, in Year 5 or 6, to allow for earlier interventions and for support to be put in place for the transition from primary to secondary school.

Some local authorities have been exploring using early identification processes with primary school learners. This approach is currently outside the scope of the Framework. However, the Welsh Government will continue to liaise with local authorities so as to remain focused on the outcomes of this approach.

Case study: Monmouthshire's use of early identification for Years 5 and 6

In Monmouthshire, the use of the NEET Early Identification Tool (EIT) was extended to Year 5 and Year 6 in December 2020. The existing EIT used in secondary schools was adapted for use with Key Stage 2 learners, remaining consistent with indicators, weighting and thresholds, with data cuts provided 3 times a year:

- at the end of the Autumn term
- at the end of the Easter term
- at the end of the academic year

All 30 primary schools within the county were contacted and discussions were held with 29 of these, with the majority of schools optimistic about the work, positively engaging and recognising the overlap between those learners identified through the EIT and those they had highlighted as needing support.

In January 2021 it was decided to only work with Year 6 learners as the demand for support was growing and capacity for Year 5 was limited. 180 children (out of a potential 874) were discussed across the 29 Primary Schools at Year 6, with support later being concentrated to 121 Year 6

learners across 19 schools who would be supported with their Year 7 transition across the local authority's 4 secondary schools.

COVID-19 has presented many problems. Initially all meetings with school staff were held online where concerns were discussed, and professional discussions held. When it was safe to do so, primary schools were visited in person, children met and their needs, concerns and support were discussed individually.

Timetables for visiting the learners in their secondary schools were drawn up.

Feedback from primary and secondary schools, parents, carers and learners show that the approach was proving very successful, with 93% of participating pupils embracing the support. The approach used is constantly being adapted and developed to suit the needs of the schools and learners.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION AT 16 TO 18

After young people have moved to post-16 EET they may find they require support, even if they have not previously needed any. Adolescence is a period of great change and can be challenging for young people to navigate.

If young people are struggling, if they are beginning to or have disengaged, early identification processes should kick in to show that they may require extra support. We expect post-16 education or training providers (or the young person) to tell Careers Wales when young people need additional support (and Careers Wales can align them with the appropriate tier in the Careers Wales

5-tier model of engagement).

For those identified at risk of homelessness, post-16 education or training providers should signpost young people to the local authority or to Shelter Cymru to ensure early support can be put in place to avoid the young person becoming homeless.

SELF-EVALUATING EARLY IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS

In all areas of the Framework, we expect partners to proactively work together to develop and improve methods to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET or of becoming homeless. An important part of the early identification process is to review and reflect on whether the early identification system is working, to inform the ongoing development of the process.

Understanding how well the early identification process is working goes beyond looking at the NEET rates. Some young people might be NEET at 31 October, but are about to start a job or a training course. Unless there is a risk they will not make a successful transition to post-16 EET, they would not be of concern. It is more important to consider those cases where, despite support being in place, individuals have not made a successful transition or have ended up homeless. Or alternatively, to understand why an early identification system has not identified an individual who then becomes NEET or homeless. The review and reflection process allows EPCs and their partners to develop a deeper understanding of how well the process is working and where improvements can be made.

We would expect a core team to lead self-evaluation activities in each local area, led by the EPCs, working with youth homelessness co-ordinators, local partners, Careers Wales (including Working Wales for the YPG), Regional Skills Partnerships, Community Employability Programme mentors, as well as representatives from the voluntary youth work sector. This should involve a process of reflection, working, as appropriate, with partners and/or the young person, and consider:

- whether school leavers who are NEET at 31 October had previously been identified as at risk of being NEET. If they had not been identified, explore why
- whether all educational leavers had moved on to a positive destination, and if not why
- what more could be done to engage with young people whose destination is 'unknown'
- whether young people who had received support under the Framework have managed to move on to a positive destination, and if not, why
- whether young people at risk of homelessness were being identified via the Framework's early identification system
- young people identified as at risk of NEET who also identified as at risk of becoming homeless

Brokerage

ASPECTS OF BROKERAGE

There are different aspects to brokerage under the Framework:

Strategic

There is a need to maintain strategic overview of services on offer in each local authority area to support those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable, and to broker appropriate support for young people. The successful operation of the Framework relies on services working together and being readily available for those with complex and multiple needs. This can include young people with ALN or disabilities, or who need support for their mental health, young people involved in the youth justice system, young carers, as well as young people at risk of becoming homeless. These aspects of brokerage are covered by the EPC and youth homelessness co-ordinator roles.

Operational

Providing continuity of support and contact for the most at-risk young people. This aspect is covered by the lead worker role.

ROLE OF THE EPC

The EPC function will continue to play a critical and strategic role, overseeing the Framework at a local authority level. Each local authority should have established an effective EPC function with sufficient influence at a senior level across the local authority and partner organisations. The EPC is instrumental in brokering agreements with service leaders regarding the availability and quality of services on offer. This includes brokering support services for specific groups identified as needing bespoke support.

The EPC function should coordinate and oversee a local partnership that will assist them in considering the overall picture of provision and how they can successfully collaborate to meet the needs of young people in their area.

EPCs will also report to senior leadership within the local authority on a regular basis. They will provide updates to the Welsh Government, through the reporting system for the Youth Support Grant, which is a term and condition of the grant.

EPCs will also work with Welsh Government officials towards developing an annual report for Welsh Ministers on the contribution of the Framework (see Accountability).

The EPC role will involve working with local partnerships to:

- manage the data process and guide the early identification system at a local authority level, to be aware of which young people are least likely to make successful transitions at 16 or be of concern pre-16
- facilitate the process or systems to start to identify the specific support needs of young people to feed into the brokerage conversation
- develop an understanding between partners as to which organisations are doing what to support a young person at any given time. This includes maintaining channels of communication with relevant local authority officials (for example home education, Families First) and other services
- facilitate the development of a network of experienced lead workers who can work with young people
- using the outputs from early identification to broker a discussion between key support agencies to identify whether a young person should be allocated a lead worker and if so, which organisation is best positioned to play that role, as well as who else will be involved in delivering support
- ensure the allocation of lead workers as appropriate, and ensure that lead

worker support is offered to those identified as requiring additional support

- receive feedback (through agreed mechanisms) from lead workers where support is not helping a young person move forward and to work with partners to find new solutions
- manage the provision mapping at a local authority level to inform a local level prospectus for young people (see Provision)
- manage the interface between the local authority and Careers Wales, and inform the 5-tier model with updates on young people in Tier 1 and 2 via the monthly spreadsheets

Case study: Caerphilly's brokerage of support for looked after children

In the Caerphilly local authority, looked after children (LAC) have been identified as being particularly vulnerable. The EPC has brokered an additional level of support for this cohort.

For the pre-16 cohort, the EPC holds 6 multi-agency meetings a year with schools, providers, and other professionals (including colleagues working on the prevention of youth homelessness) in order to identify and support vulnerable learners, including LAC, into EET. A young person who is looked after, and is uncertain or uneasy about their future, is supported by a LAC worker. The LAC worker attends the meetings and works closely with the EPC to facilitate a programme of support from Careers Wales and into a post-16 destination.

Support includes providing assistance with applications, visiting venues and starting new EET.

For the post-16 cohort of young people in care, the EPC arranges information, advice and support into EET. The EPC makes referrals based on information from other panels and departments within the local authority, as well as Tier 1 and 2 data indicators. The EPC regularly attends meetings with other professionals to track progress and report on it.

Young people who are in care may sometimes become homeless, which is where the involvement of local authority officials working on youth homelessness prevention becomes so important. The local authority has established the Progress (Cynnydd) scheme, where care leavers are identified for opportunities in EET and supported into that opportunity by the EPC and a Llamau-funded progress worker. Options utilised include further education, traineeships and Llamau's Moving Forward scheme.

During [the consultation on the Framework](#), concerns were raised around how to identify home-educated young people who need support, and who are outside the school system. Brokering

support for specific groups can therefore include young people who are home-educated, to ensure these young people can be signposted to additional support if they need it. To achieve this, good channels of communication between EPCs and local authority home education officials need to be in place.

When young people are taken off the school roll to be home-educated, it provides an opportunity for local authorities to make an offer of support. This could include:

- ensuring awareness of youth work provision to ensure the young person has continuing opportunities to socialise and access to a broad range of experiences
- inviting young people who are home-educated to careers events or open days
- arranging bespoke careers or induction events for groups of home-educated young people

ROLE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS CO-ORDINATOR

Some young people will require additional support to prevent homelessness. The youth homelessness co-ordinator exists to ensure that young people at risk of becoming homeless are identified earlier and they receive the necessary support to help them stay within the family home or transition into independent living where appropriate. The Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant provides annual funding to local authorities for a youth homelessness co-ordinator position. This is a specific role aimed at establishing collaborative, partnership working arrangements across housing, health, education, social care, voluntary sectors and a wide range of services and partners, to ensure a coordinated approach and shared working practices.

The youth homelessness co-ordinator should:

- work with the EPC to strengthen the Framework's early identification system to account for indicators associated with young people at risk of youth homelessness
- develop appropriate referral mechanisms, signposting, and pathways of support
- develop and deliver youth service-led training to practitioners across a range of local services, in order to develop awareness of risk factors for youth homelessness and understand how to support young people effectively to prevent them becoming homeless

The role aims to prevent youth homelessness from happening, rather than for crisis management when a young person is already homeless. This means that youth homelessness coordinators should have a focus on working with young people under the age of 16, identifying them early and putting suitable support in place. The role should be located within local authorities' youth service and not within their housing directorates. In order to avoid duplication in identifying young people at risk and providing support, it is important that the youth homelessness co-ordinator works closely with the EPC.

ROLE OF LEAD WORKER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF BECOMING NEET

The lead worker function is intended to provide continuity of support and contact for the most at-risk young people to remain in, or to enter EET. It should be focused on those needing sustained support, and an offer of additional support to an individual.

However, for young people up to the age of 18, we expect EPCs to use a range of resources, including local authority staff (for example youth workers, Families First staff), and to work with partners (for example Careers Wales and voluntary youth services), as well as linking with other support services such as [Community Employability Programmes](#).

For young people aged 16 to 18, the lead worker support is allocated against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement.

The specific functions associated with the lead worker role are:

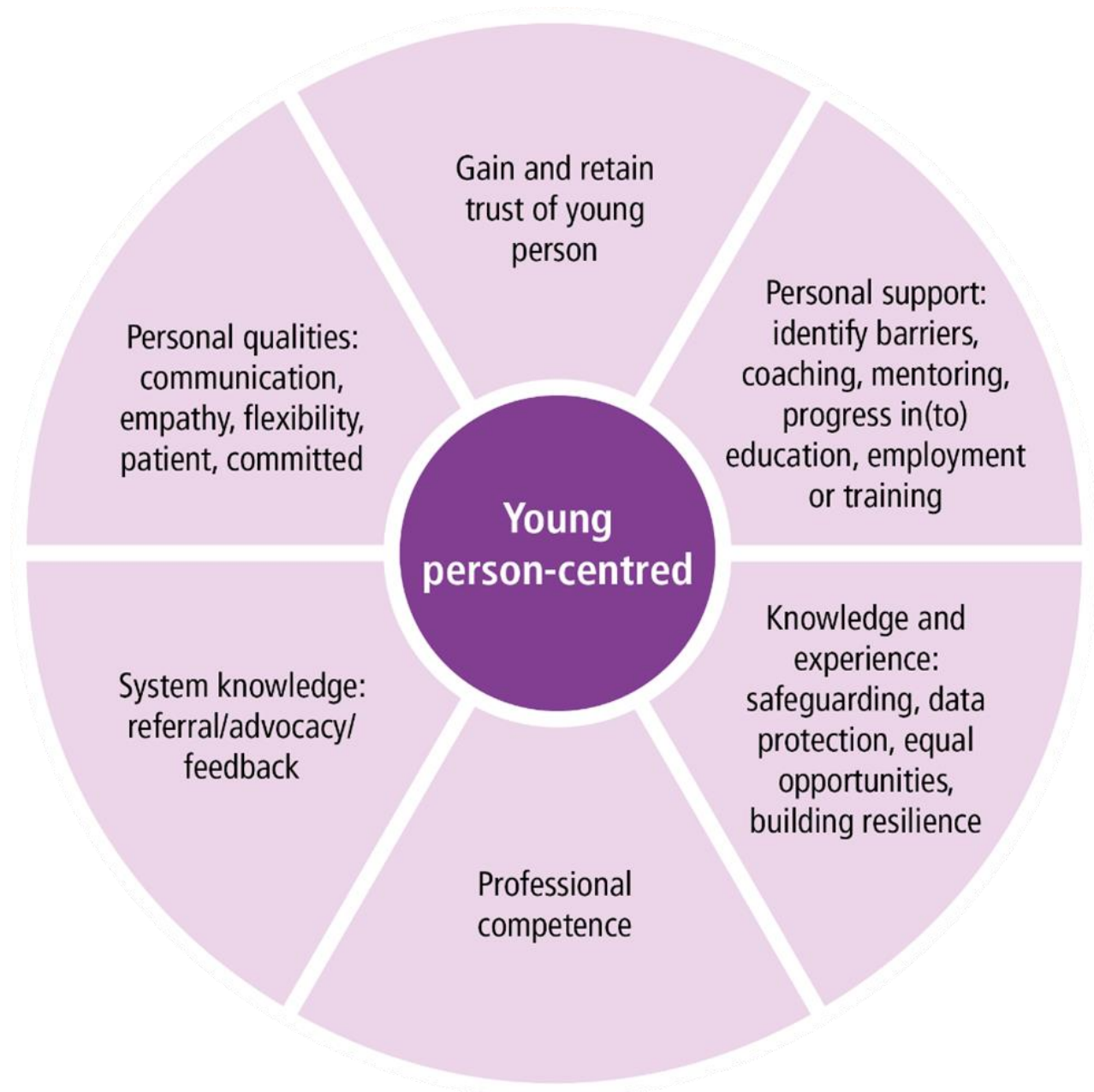
- being a named individual responsible for regularly keeping in touch with the young person
- having an awareness of the range of support in place around an individual, and if necessary, negotiating with other support services and professionals and advocating on behalf of the young person as appropriate
- flagging to a supervisor or EPC if support is not helping a young person move forward
- helping to build resilience of a young person in ways relevant to the lead worker's organisation and its particular focus and expertise
- reviewing the 'status' of the young person against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement, and providing feedback to the EPC

Lead workers will therefore include a range of professionals from different organisations. In general terms, those undertaking the lead worker function should:

- build a rapport with, and gain the trust of the young person
- have the skills, competence and capacity to help the young person progress in (or into) EET
- have a knowledge of local provision and other support services
- have the communication skills to work with other professionals and advocate on behalf of the young person

Placing the young person at the centre, the diagram below shows what skills, knowledge and qualities are required by the lead worker.

Young person-centred diagram



The allocation of the lead worker resource should be driven by early identification systems, based on data and practitioner input. The lead worker function is the offer of additional support to young people who have been identified through early identification systems. The specific circumstances of the young person should be considered when deciding which organisation is best- equipped to provide the lead worker role.

This guidance provides some starting assumptions about which young people might benefit most from lead worker support, and who may be best placed to play the role. However, the final decision will need to be informed by practitioner input and agreed through discussion between local partners.

Case study: how a lead worker can support a young person

A youth worker from the local authority youth engagement and progression team contacted a young person who had disengaged in early June 2021, initially via phone calls and finally a door knock. David, the young person, was very hesitant to speak to the youth worker, but did express a wish to go to college. In order for him to progress, further support was needed. He had become socially isolated due to COVID-19 he had experienced a change of gender identity, and had developed anxiety problems. At this point, he had not attended school for 12 months nor left the home for over 4 months.

The youth worker became David's lead worker. After a few meetings with his lead worker, David's confidence increased, and he agreed to meet with his lead worker outside the home. After building a trusting relationship with the lead worker, who showed him different provision opportunities, David expressed an interest in a pre-vocational course at a local college. The lead worker supported David with his application, and a transition meeting was set up with the college to ensure David had further support once the course started.

David was accepted onto the course and was supported by his lead worker to apply for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) grant and given information on the Digital Inclusion Grant. The lead worker also helped David get an exemption card from the college so that he wouldn't have to wear a mask.

The lead worker arranged a meeting at the college so he could speak to learner services and provide further background on David to help David's transition to college.

The lead worker was able to support David at college on his induction day. David had a prior appointment, so his lead worker negotiated a different start time for his induction. During the induction David showed signs of high anxiety but his lead worker was able to reassure and calm him. The support he received helped David to progress into college.

Allocation of lead workers for young people aged 11 to 16 at risk of being NEET

The table below shows when a lead worker will or will not be allocated to a young person and who that lead worker could be.

Allocation of lead workers

Young person's circumstances	Lead worker offered?	Possible professional
Young person settled in provision and judged to be at a low risk of disengagement	No	N/A
Young person's circumstances	Lead worker offered?	Possible professional
Young person engaged in provision and judged to be at a low to medium or medium risk of disengagement from EET	No	Schools or providers' own pastoral systems or support should be utilised as appropriate
Young person engaged in provision and judged to be at medium to high or high risk of disengagement	Yes	Schools or provider pastoral systems or youth worker
Where a young person is disengaged from EET	Yes	Youth worker, voluntary or specialist agency

Allocation of lead workers for young people aged 16 to 18 at risk of being NEET/who are NEET

For young people aged 16 to 18, support is allocated against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement. The model aims to guide and not restrict or silo operations across Wales. Strong partnership working to support individuals to get a positive EET outcome is the ultimate aim of all involved.

Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement for young people aged 16 to 18

Tier	Young people	Lead worker	Tracking and careers information, advice and guidance support
Tier 5: In further education or EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In EET. Working or studying part time over 16 hours. 	No lead worker necessary given that young person is already engaged and not judged to be at risk of disengaging. Providers' own pastoral systems or support should be utilised as appropriate.	Careers Wales
Tier 4: At risk of dropping out of EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in less than 16 hours of EET. Have been identified at risk of disengagement pre-16 and/or were judged as at risk of not making a positive transition but are subsequently in further education, sixth form or training. Have been identified to Careers Wales by EET providers (or themselves) as at risk of dropping out of EET. 	Allocation of lead worker depends on level of risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For low and medium risk use provider pastoral systems and/ or allocate a learning coach as a lead worker. For High risk a lead worker may be allocated from either youth service or Careers Wales or if Families First involved Team 	Careers Wales

Tier	Young people	Lead worker	Tracking and careers information, advice and guidance support
		Around the Family will decide allocation of lead worker.	
Tier 3: NEET or actively seeking EET but known to Careers Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged with Careers Wales and/or known to be actively seeking EET; either ready to enter EET, or assessed as requiring career management or employability skills support to enter EET. This tier should also include those known to Careers Wales, actively seeking EET but not requiring Careers Wales enhanced support, for example accessing support via careerswales.gov.wales or awaiting a college start date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead worker identified for 100% of the cohort. Careers Wales will provide the lead worker in nearly all cases. 	Careers Wales
Tier 2: Young people known to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant or multiple barriers requiring intensive personal support. Not available or unable to seek EET (for example due to illness, being a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead worker identified for 100% of the cohort. Youth service will provide lead worker in most cases (in some 	Careers Wales

Tier	Young people	Lead worker	Tracking and careers information, advice and guidance support
Careers Wales who are NEET and are not ready or available to seek EET	young carer, pregnancy, in custody).*	instances this role may be allocated to other services or organisations providing intensive personal support).	
Tier 1: EET status unknown to Careers Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown to Careers Wales. 	Once individuals are identified they are allocated to appropriate tier and allocated a lead worker accordingly.	Careers Wales

* We expect EPCs to be aware of these young people (for example those who are long term sick, who are in custody, pregnant or are young mums) and to have arrangements to keep in touch. Where individuals have multiple barriers and are supported by services such as Families First, Community Employability Programmes, social services, their lead professional can act as lead worker.

Supporting the lead worker role

To support and strengthen the lead worker role, the Welsh Government will:

- commission a lead worker review to scope out how many lead workers local authorities are able to call upon, and how often they engage with individual young people
- consider opportunities for sharing good practice and networking by lead workers across local authorities and organisations

Monitoring progression

Monitoring the progression of young people involves looking at what support and/or provision they are receiving and the impact it is having, so it can be adjusted as needed. Local area partnerships can evaluate, on a case by case basis, whether the support they have put in place is working for a young person. This allows adjustments to be made where necessary.

Monitoring progression also involves taking steps to identify young people who have fallen outside the monitoring system and establishing whether or not they are in EET. This is critical at the end of years 11, 12 and 13, when school leavers may be at risk of not making a positive transition into a post-16 destination. Young people with an 'unknown' destination on leaving school, or who have dropped out of post-16 education or training, should be located, and offered support under the Framework if needed.

MONITORING THE PROGRESSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE PRE-16

Local authority EPCs manage the process of holding termly pre-16 multi-agency meetings in all schools, to identify learners most at risk of not progressing into EET when leaving compulsory education. This means EPCs and partners have a good idea of which young people need support before the end of Year 11.

Attendees at these meetings should include school pastoral staff or family engagement officers, youth workers and Careers Wales advisers. Through this process, the specific support needs of young people are identified, so appropriate support can be brokered.

When learners have been identified as at higher risk of becoming NEET, having effective processes in place ensures that agencies can quickly intervene when young people become disengaged.

Case study: Merthyr Tydfil's approach to supporting young people in education other than at school

In Merthyr Tydfil there is a specific process in place for learners who are in education other than at school (EOTAS), and at a greater risk of becoming NEET. This entails monthly multi-agency meetings to consider learners' progress and allow for speedy intervention if required.

The local authority has information sharing protocols in place with partners to allow the sharing of personal information with pre- and post-16 partners. Multi-agency 'NEET Review' panels are held monthly to ensure that appropriate support is in place for EOTAS learners in years 7 to 11. By

the end of Year 10 it is apparent which young people in EOTAS will be at an increased risk of NEET, and support is put in place to reduce this risk.

Throughout Year 11, partners provide monthly updates of the stage each young person has reached in their transition and the young person is offered support to move forward. At the end of Year 11, Careers Wales and the EPC will consider any EOTAS learner who is potentially 'high-risk' of becoming NEET and, if they are not ready or available to seek EET, allocate them against Tier 2 in the 5-tier model.

A monthly Post-16 NEET panel allows cases new to Tier 2 to be considered and referred to a post-16 project for support. When an EOTAS leaver is thought to be work-ready, they are referred to Working Wales for further support in entering EET. Those not engaging with or dropping out of Tier 2 provision are allocated to another provider for further attempts to be made; this continues while they remain in Tier 2.

While this process cannot guarantee that all EOTAS-leavers engage in EET, it allows the team that works with young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET to offer support, and helps to ensure that there are no vulnerable young people whose circumstances on leaving school are 'unknown'.

MONITORING THE PROGRESSION OF SCHOOL LEAVERS INTO EET

School leavers with 'unknown' status

Throughout the summer months, as young people leave Year 11, multi-agency meetings should continue, with the involvement of post-16 teams and Careers Wales, to ensure continued support.

Despite the early intervention that takes place, each year there remains some school leavers in Year 11 who have 'unknown' status. This means that they are not known to Careers Wales, and so it is not known whether they have plans for EET, or whether they are at risk of becoming NEET. Careers Wales pass on the details of the 'unknown' young people to EPCs in July. The EPCs, working with the youth service and the wider Framework partnership, then try to contact those people to find out their plans. This may involve carrying out home visits to speak to young people.

Case study: Carmarthenshire's approach to locating and monitoring the progress of individuals with 'unknown' status

Careers Wales share information of Tier 1 'unknown' individuals with Carmarthenshire local authority. Local authority staff then use various methods to contact young people, including telephone calls, e-mails, letters, home visits and leaving calling cards. There are challenges to this

process. Contact information is sometimes incorrect or outdated, including telephone numbers, which is frustrating and time consuming to correct.

Home visits have proven to be the most successful approach. By interacting directly with young people, local authority staff were able to:

- establish which young people are already engaged in EET
- which young people require additional support put that support in place, and update their records accordingly
- signpost individuals with no planned destination to Careers Wales, to receive information, advice and guidance
- secure an offer of appropriate support for young people who have significant barriers to engagement

Young people with 'unknown' status are considered at the monthly multi-agency SEET (Supporting Engagement into Education, Employment and Training) meetings, in which all partner agencies are signed up to a Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) approved Information Sharing Protocol. Partner agencies may be engaging with the young people or working with siblings or families. This pooled knowledge can help identify which individuals require support. The SEET function has proven to be an effective means of monitoring the progress of individuals with 'unknown' status and those with significant barriers, as:

- updates are fed back to Careers Wales

- young people's movement against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement are recorded
- movement in and out of the local authority area is recorded

The COVID-19 pandemic caused some disruption to locating young people with 'unknown' status and home visits have not been possible due to restrictions.

However, responses from young people by other methods of contact, including social media platforms, have increased.

Case study: support for young person from Wrexham in Tier 1

Wrexham local authority's Tier 1 Project has a team of 2 staff, whose role is to locate young people in Tier 1 and ensure that those who are NEET receive the support they need.

The team works through the list of young people in Tier 1, based on postcode areas, and calls at the homes of young people on the list. If there is no reply the team leave a letter offering support to the young person. Home visits are repeated. A young person may receive 2 to 3 visits in a six-week period. As young people in Tier 1 may be hard to reach, this persistence is important to get results.

Joshua was one of the young people targeted by the Tier 1 Project team. After he finished Year 11, the team visited Joshua's home a number of times. Each time he was out. Eventually he sent a text message to the mobile number provided on the letter left by the Tier 1 Project team, asking for support.

A member of the Tier 1 project team, met with Joshua in an informal setting, over a coffee, and carried out an assessment of Joshua's needs. This showed Joshua had some significant barriers to progression, accordingly he was allocated against Tier 2. The Tier 1 project worker then referred Joshua to the MAPS (Motivate Achieve Participate Succeed) project, which supported young people via a bespoke mentoring plan. A MAPS worker arranged to meet Joshua at his home.

The MAPS worker spoke to Joshua and his mother and decided that the most suitable provision for Joshua would be Communities for Work. He referred Joshua onto this programme. When Joshua missed his initial appointment, Communities for Work alerted his MAPS worker who made contact with Joshua, and continued to support and encourage him to engage with suitable provision.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE AN 'UNKNOWN' LEARNER HAS BEEN LOCATED

Once a young person has been located and spoken to, an assessment of needs will identify their level of engagement against the 5-tier model of engagement.

This information is then fed into Atlas, the Careers Wales customer relationship management system, via a monthly spreadsheet.

From July each year, EPCs, youth service staff and Careers Wales staff work intensively with young people in tiers 2 and 3 to support them into a positive destination. Young people in these tiers are allocated a lead worker, responsible for regularly keeping in touch with them and then formally reporting back to the EPC. The lead worker will highlight if the support package and interventions put in place for an individual are not actively helping re-engage and move the young person forward.

From July onwards, further education institutions, training providers and schools and further education colleges submit information to Careers Wales showing which young people have started EET. (Training providers send Careers Wales a weekly list of starters and leavers because individuals' movement in and out of training provision is more fluid.) Careers Wales then updates young peoples' statuses against its 5-tier model. This information is essential to identify not only young people who have started EET, but also those who have not started provision as planned.

'Real-time' information about starters and leavers is particularly helpful as it allows leavers to be offered support as soon as possible, so they can be re-engaged.

In the autumn, the Welsh Government also provides Careers Wales with data from the [Lifelong learning Wales record](#) (LLWR), to confirm the starter information already received and to flag up any new starters not notified to Careers Wales. LLWR data usually arrives some time after the event, and is therefore most useful for checking the data that is already held.

Careers Wales advisers change the learners' status from Year 11 to their correct status against the Careers Wales 5-tier model of engagement (for example. Tier 5: fulltime college course). The status change therefore informs the 5-tier model. Information on tier status is held on Atlas.

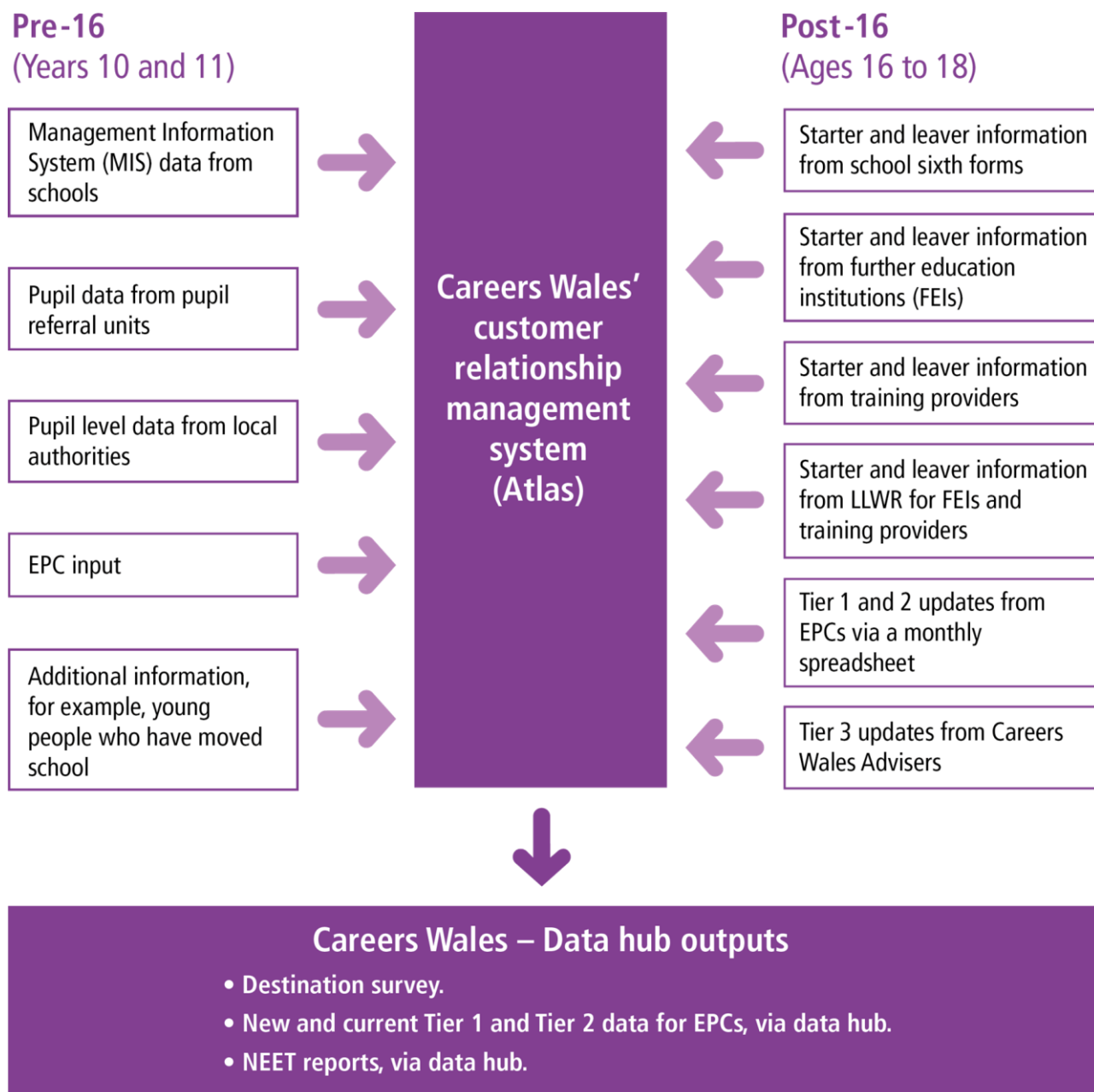
The annual [Careers Wales pupil destinations survey](#) reports the destinations of learners from all maintained and special schools across Wales who have reached statutory leaving age (Year 11), and students leaving school in years 12 and 13. The destination information is a snapshot of the learner's known activity on 31 October after they have left school. The information is published on the Careers Wales website, early the following calendar year.

(It is important to note that Careers Wales is not able to merge all the data they receive to publish the destinations survey into their own customer management database. Careers Wales can only merge and hold data on individual young people where they have an agreement in place. This

agreement will be held with either the young person directly, the school the young person attends, or the local authority.)

After 31 October every year, EPCs and the local Framework partnership should continue to monitor the number of young people aged 16 to 18 in Tier 1, and work together to locate them. If a young person aged 16 to 18 has an 'unknown' status and there are concerns about their safety, the EPC and/or their team should contact the local authority safeguarding lead or the Safeguarding Children's Board for advice. The Welsh Government guidance, [Keeping Learners Safe: The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002](#) (2021), includes detailed information on the process and expectations for safeguarding in schools, and the wider system.

Data flow for Careers Wales' customer relationship management system (Atlas)



DATA SHARING

The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). (For ease of reference, this guidance refers to UK GDPR, and covers data protection legislation in general.)

One of the key messages from [the consultation on the Framework](#) was the challenges of sharing data since the introduction of UK GDPR, both in terms of barriers to sharing data and also perception of UK GDPR requirements. (Anxiety about GDPR requirements is also cited in [Estyn's report Post-16 partnerships: Shared planning and provision between schools, and between schools and colleges](#), (2021).)

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the independent authority, established to uphold information rights. Detailed information and guidance on UK GDPR is available on the [ICO website](#), including [detailed guidance on data sharing and children](#). The ICO guidance on data sharing and children highlights that organisations may share children's personal data, provided they can demonstrate a compelling reason to do so, taking account of the best interests of the child. Organisations should build this into all of the systems and processes in their data sharing arrangements.

Organisations in Wales that are directly concerned with the health, education, safety, crime prevention and social well-being of people use the [WASPI](#) as a tool to help them share personal information effectively and lawfully. The WASPI website includes guidance to help organisations determine [what type of data sharing agreement is required](#) in specific circumstances. For data sharing under the Framework, the following WASPI agreements are commonly used, depending on whether the data flow is one-way or reciprocal:

- Data Disclosure Agreements (DDA) are used when personal data is to be disclosed (that is passed one way) from 1 data controller to another for a specific purpose. [Guidance on how a DDA should be developed in line with the WASPI framework is available on the WASPI website.](#)
- Information Sharing Protocols (ISP) are developed to record practices involving the regular, reciprocal sharing (that is information flowing back and forth between organisations) of personal information between data controllers. [Guidance on how an ISP should be developed is available on the WASPI website.](#)

Monitoring the progression of individuals under the Framework is underpinned by DDAs and ISPs as appropriate.

Individuals must be informed which personal information will be processed and why, where, how and when, and who it is shared with. This information is usually provided via a privacy notice, ideally at the first point of contact with an individual or at the first point their data is being collected and processed. It can be part of a registration or consent form or a standalone document.

Local authority maintained schools are expected to issue a privacy notice to their learners and/or parents, carers and guardians, which reflect DDAs and ISPs that are in place.

The privacy notice should also set out:

- the identity of the data controller and the contact details of the data protection officer
- the lawful basis for processing personal data
- how and why the personal data is being processed
- how long the personal data will be retained
- the rights of the individuals under data protection legislation

The data controller is the organisation (legal body) that makes decisions on why, what, how and when data is collected, what it is used for, how it is kept and for how long. The data controller is the main decision-maker when it comes to how people's personal information is handled, and how it is kept safe. Careers Wales is the data controller for the information it stores on Atlas.

With the appropriate processes in place, the progression of young people can be monitored so that when a young person is at risk of not making a successful transition into EET, they can be identified, and offered support.

Case study: how data sharing enables young people to be supported under the Framework

Alisha was in Year 11 at school and was engaged and interested in the work. She was working hard towards her GCSEs and was hoping to go to a local further education institution to study Information Technology. She sometimes experienced anxiety but was able to manage her condition with the support and understanding of her mother and her friends.

In March 2020, after the first lockdown was announced, Alisha experienced worsening anxiety. Over a period of weeks, Alisha began to experience poor sleep, and she became irritable. Alisha really missed her friends and was also worried that her mother, who worked as a carer, would catch COVID-19.

With the easing of restrictions in June 2020, Alisha's anxiety improved as she was able to meet up with friends. She was pleased with her GCSE results and enrolled at her local further education college on her chosen course.

However, after she started on the further education course in September, Alisha felt overwhelmed by the reports of rising Covid cases. Her anxiety levels increased and she found it difficult to concentrate on her new course. She dropped out of college in early November.

The college had a Youth Engagement and Progression Framework WASPI document in place, which enabled them to inform Careers Wales that Alisha had left college. The college then informed the Careers Wales link adviser that Alisha had left college, describing her change in circumstances and her current barriers to continuing in education.

The information received from the college was immediately recorded on Atlas and a status change to Tier 2 was made. This status change initiated a referral to the EPC via the data hub, where the EPC could access the notes describing why Alisha left college and the barriers she is currently facing.

The EPC requested a member of the local authority's engagement team to contact Alisha and offer appropriate support. Alisha agreed to meet with a member of the team for an assessment of her needs.

The assessment showed that Alisha needed support for managing her anxiety and boosting her self-esteem, and Alisha agreed to a referral to local authority counselling provision and youth services to help meet these needs. A lead worker from the engagement team spoke to the college on Alisha's behalf, and the college agreed that Alisha could enrol on a number of taster courses, to help her decide the best course for her.

Provision

We aim to ensure the mix of provision available in every area of Wales can meet the needs of our young people. Within the context of the Framework, 'provision' refers to programmes that keep young people engaged in EET and prevent youth homelessness. There is more information on provision available in Annex A, although this is not an exhaustive list.

Some young people may also need to be signposted to specific support to boost their mental health, well-being and self-esteem: Annex B provides more information on the different support available.

The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) will oversee the strategic planning of educational and skills delivery across all post-compulsory education and training, including funding, contracting, quality, and financial monitoring. This will bring a greater degree of coherence and efficiency to post-16 provision.

Young people identified as needing additional support can benefit from targeted pre-engagement activity. This can ensure they are aware of their options and are confident in making decisions about what they do when they leave the school environment.

Case study: Pre-engagement programme in Pembrokeshire

In Pembrokeshire, (pre-engagement programmes) PEPs are targeted transition programmes for vulnerable Year 11 learners identified as being 'at risk' of NEET or 'not making a successful transition' to post-16 education, training or employment.

The programmes are run in partnership with post-16 providers with funding secured via an inclusion service grant. In the academic year 2020 to 2021, learners attended the programmes 1 day a week during the spring and summer terms.

Transport and lunch were provided for all learners, irrespective of whether they were eligible for free school meals.

The aims of the programme were to:

- prevent or reduce the number of young people who were NEET
- reduce drop-out rates and increase retention rates on post 16 programmes
- reduce anxiety linked to transition to post-16 EET
- aid familiarisation with post-16 settings
- sustain motivation, engagement and attendance
- support learners in their decision making
- increase learner knowledge of post-16 options and pathways Programme

content included:

- a range of vocational tasters
- information, advice and guidance on all post-16 options
- opportunity for a one-to-one careers guidance interview with Careers Wales advisers
- familiarisation activities
- visits to and from other post-16 providers
- health, fitness and well-being activities
- team building and fun activities

- support to develop skills in areas such as information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy as well as interpersonal skills (research skills, completing and submitting applications and interview techniques)

In the academic year 2020 to 2021, of the 119 learners referred to PEPs, 89 completed the programme, with 95% of all learners who participated progressing into a successful post-16 destination.

Key to the success of the programmes were:

- senior leadership support at both local authority and school level
- having an effective early identification system
- the flexibility and willingness of the providers
- development of good relationships between the local authority, schools, providers, parents, carers and learners

Case study: offering a range of provision to meet a young person's needs

Harry was disengaged in mainstream school and was generally apathetic to the educational process. He had behavioural issues, which led to him being permanently excluded from one secondary school, transferred to another, and then placed in a pupil referral unit (PRU) for 2 terms. He was on the fringes of child criminal exploitation.

The local authority's Hard to Place/EOTAS panel referred Harry to its progression team, which allocated a lead worker to support Harry. The lead worker knew the family, as he had supported older siblings, and knew the parent. The lead worker initially made home visits, until Harry felt confident enough to meet outside the home.

The lead worker asked Harry about his likes and interests, which enabled a bespoke package of education to be provided. Harry attended a weekly sport course and then a 12-week art course, and achieved 100% attendance at these. Although he had ceased to attend school, he was still on the school roll. Harry began to attend a military preparation course with a military preparation college (MPCT). However, there was a drugs incident and Harry lost his place with MPCT.

The progression team referred Harry's case to the local authority's ALN decision panel, which agreed that Harry would benefit from also attending an outreach PRU, to give him a wider educational experience, while continuing with the sport course and completing the art course.

At the PRU, staff fostered a reignited engagement with education, through skilful curriculum design and delivery. As a measure of Harry's improved engagement he took public transport to the PRU every day, and achieved 100% attendance.

Harry was now attending provision 3.5 days a week, through a combination of the sports course and the PRU.

As there were still concerns around child criminal exploitation, the progression team and the EPC called a meeting with providers, Harry and his mother to discuss behaviours and concerns. The progression team contacted the police and youth justice services to obtain additional support. Harry was also found in possession of cannabis on a few occasions, so the progression team referred Harry to the local authority's drugs and alcohol team, which carried out a group session around drug awareness at the sports course. Subsequently Harry showed he was able to discuss substance misuse and that he was comfortable being challenged on his views. He was able to take on board the negative implications of substance misuse and agreed to continue attending group and individual sessions on substance misuse.

Harry has achieved some qualifications at the PRU and is studying towards additional qualifications. He recently secured a weekly work placement with a local mechanical garage.

Case study: offering provision to align with a young person's interests

Lewis has been attending a local voluntary youth drop-in centre since the age of

13. He comes from a large blended-family. Lewis first started attending the centre when he was in school, where he wasn't doing very well academically and was seen as disruptive. However, he flourished at the youth centre and was instrumental in helping staff develop a cooking project.

The youth workers realised very quickly that Lewis was very comfortable in the kitchen, where he supported staff to purchase ingredients, cook food and serve the members at their evening meal night. Lewis also really enjoyed developing new recipes and started a smoothie and flavoured milkshake sale. Throughout this time, Lewis was still experiencing difficulties outside of the youth project and regularly was sent home for street drinking and verging on anti-social behaviour. Sometimes, his behaviour was difficult at the youth project, but while he was busy and engaged he did well. He was given the opportunity to gain a food hygiene qualification, first aid qualification and an [Agored Cymru](#) unit in event planning.

The youth workers encouraged Lewis to take more and more responsibility at their café, and Lewis also ran a pop-up café at a local festival.

Lewis succeeded in gaining a place at a local college to study catering and after completing the course he accepted a job at a local hospital, with a dual role in catering and cleaning.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE GAIN SKILLS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

In the context of youth homelessness provision [the consultation on the Framework](#) highlighted young people wanted a greater focus on the provision of practical support to help make the transition to life as an independent adult. The young people wanted to improve their knowledge and understanding of various areas including:

- housing options
- bank accounts
- payslips and wages
- taxes
- bills
- insurance

Case study: provision to help prevent youth homelessness

Pembrokeshire's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is an online platform designed with, by and for young people. It provides information, support and learning resources to aid a successful transition to living independently and to help prevent youth homelessness.

It uses the experiences of young people to inform content and ensure their needs are addressed. The site hosts 7 interactive skill development modules covering a range of topics including:

- budgeting
- rights and responsibilities
- tasks involved in running a new home.
- items required for a new home
- tenancy administration
- housing options
- consequences of a tenancy failure

These modules feature activities, videos and resources which are co-designed and produced by young people.

The platform also hosts a 'Voices' element. This is a library of audio clips featuring young people talking about their own experiences of related matters. While the primary aim of this is to give users an opportunity to learn from others, it also provides those with lived experiences a chance to express their views and opinions which are then presented to associated sectors and organisations to help shape their services. A 'Big Blue Button' facility enables young people to access youth workers live via video conferencing, or a messenger provision from within the actual portal.

Finally, the overall project aims to enable young people to deal with certain housing issues affecting them, including the factors which contribute to youth tenancy breakdowns and homelessness. Furthermore, by involving this age group in every aspect of the project, it not only looks to inform, educate and guide young people, but also use their lived experiences to benefit others.

MAPPING PROVISION

The EPC will continue to play a critical and strategic role in mapping and coordinating provision at a local partnership level to help consider the overall picture of provision and how local partnerships can successfully collaborate to meet the needs of young people in their area.

Once young people have been identified as needing support under the Framework, ensuring they have the right type of support is critical. Stronger mapping of existing provision was one of the key actions in the original Framework, and [the consultation on the Framework](#) highlighted the need to ensure those coordinating support are aware of the provision that is already available in their area. The consultation on the Framework also highlighted the importance of young people feeling informed about their full range of options in compulsory and post-compulsory education. It is important that individuals with specific vulnerabilities who are being supported under the Framework are also made aware of other key support services, such as drug and alcohol misuse services.

Mapping remains a key priority for organisations supporting young people, to identify what is available in their area.

At a local level, there are a range of different provisions available, which is why local provision mapping is critical. EPCs are responsible for managing the mapping within their local authorities, to ensure they have up-to-date information on what support is available for young people. We would expect EPCs to consult on the creation of the provision map and make that document visible and accessible to all stakeholders and partners. To support this process, the Welsh Government will continue to update EPCs on any further support that it introduces. A list is available in Annex A, however, this is not an exhaustive list.

The Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD), is currently running a project with Careers Wales, Welsh Government and Civil Society Organisations in Wales with the aim of providing a road map to better refer young people to a wider range of support.

Case study: mapping provision in Caerphilly

Caerphilly County Borough Council has developed a website, [Welcome to Caerphilly Pathways](#), which shows the full range of education and training opportunities available to young people in the county, including school sixth forms, further education institutions and local work-based training providers.

A large part of the site is an online prospectus providing details of the A-level and BTEC courses that are on offer. Other parts of the site are designed to show young people the progression routes, careers, degrees and apprenticeships that are linked to the subjects they might wish to study.

DETAILS OF PROVISION AVAILABLE

Set out below is the provision that is available around post-16 education and training (see also Employability and Employment Opportunities) as well as for preventing youth homelessness. This is not an exhaustive list, and will be subject to updates.

YOUNG PERSON'S GUARANTEE (YPG)

From age 16, young people can access the YPG via the Working Wales service. The YPG aims to provide young people under 25 across Wales with support into EET or self-employment. There will be a new YPG web presence in place on the Working Wales website together with web chats, Skype, e-mail and SMS texts. Dedicated advisers will operate online, on the high street and through improved outreach facilities across Wales.

Young people can also use the [Working Wales Support Finder](#) to search for programmes that will help to improve their skills and work opportunities, with further support from advisers. In addition, the course search facility provides thousands of learning opportunities on the database to choose from, including all part-time further education, community education, opportunities with private providers and work-based learning.

FURTHER EDUCATION

At 16, young people may decide to remain in school or move into further education. There are 13 [further education institutions](#) in Wales. Most are general further education colleges which deliver a broad range of provision to learners aged 16 and over. This includes academic and vocational programmes from entry to degree levels, apprenticeships, adult learning and independent living skills programmes for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities. More than 100,000 learners study at further education institutions each year.

There is also a range of employability programmes, covered under Employability and Employment Opportunities in this Handbook.

PROVISION FOR PREVENTING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Grant funding has also been made available to local authorities since 2019 to 2020, as part of the Youth Support Grant, to fund the role of a Youth Homelessness Coordinator in every local authority, to develop support for young people at risk of youth homelessness or signpost to existing support that may be needed such as mental health and well-being. This includes universal provision such as delivering awareness raising sessions in schools and youth work settings, highlighting the signs and causes of homelessness, particularly hidden homelessness. It also includes more targeted support such as family mediation, to enable young people to continue living within the family home, or independent living skills and tenancy skills to help young people make a successful transition to independent living when they are ready to move on.

Youth Homelessness Coordinators are expected to develop appropriate referral mechanisms, signposting, and pathways of support, by mapping the relevant local provision available to support those at risk of homelessness. Shelter Cymru has developed a Youth Homelessness Early Prevention Padlet Sharing Platform where coordinators can share resources they have developed.

Employability and employment opportunities

As well as using the Framework to improve engagement and progression for young people, we need to ensure the Framework leads to more young people moving into skilled employment, with a balance of work experience, skills, and pathways to employment or self-employment. In this way, we can set young people on a path that gives them the best possible life chances.

The Welsh Government's plan for employability and skills '[Stronger, fairer, greener Wales: a plan for employability and skills: summary](#)' (2022) sets out areas of interim focus over the next 5 years, linked to the national milestones, which includes maintaining post-pandemic improvements in levels of young people in EET, with a focus on transition to employment.

[The consultation on the Framework](#) showed support for a broader and more flexible range of vocational options being made available. Feedback from young people highlighted an appetite for greater focus on employment, employability and work experience, and for comprehensive information on their options.

Young people wanted to receive quality employment or self-employment support and advice in all education settings. They also wanted a greater focus on the

provision of practical support to help them make the transition to life as an independent adult.

We have been considering options available to deliver adult and youth employability provision both during the COVID-19 recovery phase and longer term in Wales. This is being delivered through a combination of new and existing programmes, at a national and local level. This Handbook references national projects only, partner organisations should also be aware of what is available locally.

PRE-16

Within schools

All young people will have access to careers services within the school setting. The curriculum in schools should enable learners to gain experiences related to work and careers, developing knowledge of the breadth of opportunities available to them throughout their lives. This learning will help them make informed decisions about their career pathways. The **four purposes** of the curriculum (to create ambitious, capable learners; healthy, confident individuals; enterprising, creative contributors; and ethical, informed citizens), and the integral skills which underpin them, are central to preparing learners for careers and work. These skills support learners to be resilient, creative and ambitious, requiring them to solve problems, engage with different issues, and work independently, as well as preparing them for the opportunities and challenges of a changing economic reality.

Learning about careers and work-related experiences (CWRE) is fundamental to developing skills for work and life. CWRE helps learners to understand the relationship between their learning and the world of work. Experiences should aim to open learners' eyes to the opportunities that lie ahead and should provide high-quality advice about skills and career pathways, raising the aspirations of learners who may not otherwise consider the possibility of certain opportunities being available to them. In January 2022, the Curriculum for Wales Guidance for Careers was updated with the integrated CWRE guidance. The majority of the guidance can be found at **Cross-cutting themes for designing your curriculum**). There are also updated sections for CWRE within the areas of learning and experience in the cross-curricula sections, as well as updates to the legislation section. The new Estyn National Framework will support schools in implementing CWRE.

Access to entrepreneurship learning can help young people develop entrepreneurial skills as part of their curriculum. These skills and experiences are valued by employers and are essential for starting and running a business. **Big Ideas Wales** provides an opportunity for learners to explore enterprise and learn from the experiences of entrepreneur role models. It gives information, advice and guidance to help them on the path towards becoming self-employed or starting their own business.

Junior apprenticeships

Junior apprenticeships offer Year 10 and 11 learners the opportunity to study full-time for a future career in a college setting from the age of 14. The

apprenticeships offer a two-year programme of work-related education with work experience built in, alongside a Level 2 course that is equivalent to 4 or 5 GCSEs, in a range of different vocational pathways. Each apprentice also studies GCSEs in Maths and English alongside their chosen area. There are a number of programme codes in the directory to reflect different junior apprenticeship pathways.

Each junior apprentice should have access to support with learning and teaching, help with behaviour management, and a designated welfare officer to provide pastoral care and day-to-day support.

The aim of the junior apprenticeship is to make the learner employable or ready to progress onto a higher-level vocational course or apprenticeship at the age of 16.

The junior apprenticeship programme is primarily funded by the local authority and therefore it is essential that agreement is reached between the college and the respective local authority before this provision is agreed.

ADVICE, SUPPORT AND PROVISION AVAILABLE TO YOUNG PEOPLE POST-16

Young people go on to a range of destinations at 16. Most young people will stay on at school or choose to move onto further and higher education. A small percentage may choose an option within the adult community education sector.

Some young people will choose to enter work-based learning straight after school. The key mainstream offers made available will be the Welsh Government's new Jobs Growth Wales+ programme and apprenticeships. There is, however, a range of further training and learning opportunities available, as set out in this document.

Young people often need support during this sometimes stressful transition, such as further advice on their future options and on how to overcome barriers. Some young people worry about making the wrong decision and are anxious about what options are available to them if they change their mind and their career goals. In addition, young people, who do not think staying on in school or further education, have fed back that they often feel they do not have the information or support to explore alternative options such as apprenticeships, work-based learning or employment and self-employment.

Advice services for young people

When young people reach the age of 16 they are eligible to access the [Working Wales](#) service. This service provides free advice, guidance and access to training across Wales.

Working Wales is also the gateway into the YPG, and has a dedicated [Young Person's Guarantee webpage](#). The Working Wales advice and guidance processes will assess young people to determine their most suitable option and help them make an informed decision to move to the type of provision that can best support them.

Young people can register on the Working Wales website for the YPG. They will receive support by an adviser where their needs will be assessed via a guidance assessment, resulting in a referral onto provision. Working Wales will measure and report on the number of registrations and number of referrals.

In addition, many young people will have access to additional advice services made available via further and higher education as well as the UK Government Jobcentre Plus services.

WORK-BASED LEARNING AND OTHER EMPLOYABILITY AND TRAINING OPTIONS

Jobs Growth Wales+ (JGW+)

The Jobs Growth Wales+ (JGW+) programme, launched in March 2022, and is available to young people between the ages of 16 to 18. It aims to progress young people into employment or further learning and increase participants' confidence and motivation by undertaking a bespoke package of training and development support.

The programme has 3 strands:

1. Engagement

For those needing to confirm or contextualise an occupational/educational focus prior to entering further learning or work.

2. Advancement

For those able to follow a programme of study leading to a Level 1 Qualification but assessed as being unable to currently follow a Level 2 or above programme.

3. Employment

For those who are occupationally focused and job ready.

It is important that EPCs, Careers Wales and JGW+ providers have strong partnership working relationships in place. This ensures that young people who would benefit from participating in the JGW+ programme (from those that are furthest away from the labour market through to job-ready individuals) are identified quickly and offered appropriate support. This will enable a smooth referral process via Working Wales.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in Wales are open to anyone aged 16 or over. They combine practical training in a job with study. Individuals will gain hands-on work experience, learn new skills and gain a nationally-recognised qualification. They also get the chance to earn a wage at the same time. Apprenticeships can take between 1 and 4 years to complete.

Apprenticeships are available from levels 2 to 6 and have the following qualification equivalence:

- Foundation Apprenticeship Level 2 = 5 GCSEs or NVQ Level 2 equivalent
- Apprenticeship Level 3 = 2 A-levels or NVQ Level 3 equivalent
- Higher Apprenticeship Level 4 or 5 = HNC, HND or Foundation degree equivalent
- Degree Apprenticeship Level 6 = Bachelor's degree equivalent (Degree Apprenticeships are currently available in ICT, digital, engineering and advanced manufacturing occupations)

Apprenticeships are available through the medium of Welsh and bilingually, allowing individuals to train and learn in their chosen language.

Apprenticeships are available for those who have a disability, health conditions or learning difficulties. Almost all apprenticeships can be made accessible and the employer will work with the individual to ensure they get tailored support to meet their needs so they can work confidently.

Further advice and guidance, including information on the [Find an Apprenticeship](#), apprenticeship vacancy service and [Manage Apprenticeships service](#) can be found by [visiting our apprenticeships section](#).

Entrepreneurship: Business Advice and the Big Ideas Project (16 to 24)

[Big Ideas Wales](#) is part of the Business Wales service to nurture young entrepreneurial talent and to support young people age 16 to 24 to develop enterprise capabilities and start their own business. Support, to access information and business advice, talk through processes and finance options, and help build knowledge and networks to help create sustainable ventures, is available through further and higher education, for community groups and for individuals.

Case study: entrepreneurship programme in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Rhondda Cynon Taf's Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) supports young people aged 11 to 25 to improve their resilience to deal with current and future challenges, supporting their well-being and their positive engagement in and contribution to the communities in which they live.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the YEPS team noticed just how creative young people were, with some using their new-found hobbies, passions and skills to support themselves, their families and communities, and raise money for charity. Few young people, however, had envisaged this passion being turned into a viable business. This is where YEPS was able to help through an exciting opportunity to provide the first youth-led entrepreneurship programme, in partnership with Welsh ICE, called the '5 - 9 Club'. This meant YEPS could help people learn how to turn those new skills, passions and ideas into a business.

A programme was developed to provide young people with the tools to market their idea, showing them how to source funding and learn from other entrepreneurs to develop their own business. The programme engaged with a group of 15 young people each week. It was offered through a blended-learning approach, which meant it was possible to cater for participants who preferred in- person learning, as well as those who wanted to attend sessions online. There was a community of support throughout the programme and beyond, with a WhatsApp group, Facebook group and support from Welsh ICE.

The objective of this programme was to give young people (16 to 25 years) the skills and confidence to be able to launch a new business. The YEPS team is optimistic that, now they have completed the programme, the young people will have the best possible chance of making their start-ups a success. As of 4 October 2021, 6 new businesses had been supported to begin trading with guidance and financial start-up from YEPS.

The Out of Work Service

The Out of Work Service supports people aged 16 to 24 who are NEET and are recovering from mental ill-health and/or substance misuse issues. It is a specialist programme, catering for those who cannot, or will not, engage with mainstream services, or for whom mainstream services are not suitable. Free confidential support is provided by peer mentors who have personal experiences of mental ill-health and/or substance misuse.

Between November 2016 and April 2022, over 4300 children and young people were supported by the Out of Work Service.

The Welsh Government is extending EET funding support until 2025 for young people who are NEET and recovering from mental ill-health and/or substance misuse issues.

Personal Learning Accounts

The Personal Learning Accounts (PLA) Programme provides support across Wales for employed people aged 19 and over and earning under the median income to gain higher-level skills which will improve their career and earning prospects.

It specifically enables people on below average salaries to achieve higher earnings on a sustainable basis. It uniquely offers flexibility around how and when people learn by helping colleges deliver courses that fit around an individual's work and family commitments.

The programme is also responsive to employers' upskilling requirements, by prioritising skills and qualifications in preparation for the future, to help employers rebuild their businesses and in turn support the economy.

In collaboration and with key advice from Regional Skills Partnerships delivery is targeted at the priority sectors of:

- logistics (in particular HGV and LGV driving), including driver licence fees and tests
- net zero and green construction (including retrofit, wind, tidal and solar power)
- advanced materials and manufacturing (including technical engineers)
- hospitality (including chefs, catering assistants, waiting and front of house staff)
- digital
- health and social care re-engagement

Full information on eligibility and how to apply for a PLA can be found on the [Careers Wales](#) and [Working Wales](#) websites.

DWP

The DWP provides a range of support and opportunities to young people who are claiming Universal Credit and other benefits to support them progress into work. At the time of publication these include:

- the Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) scheme which offers a six-month training scheme for those who have been unemployed for over 13 weeks
- the [Work and Health programme](#) which offers training and support and is available for those who have been unemployed for more than 12 months
- the [Restart](#) Scheme which offers 12 months of intensive support for those who have been unemployed for more than 9 months with some scope for early entry
- Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) which is a voluntary programme aimed at claimants with disabilities who also have complex needs
- New Enterprise allowance which provides mentoring and an allowance to help those with an idea to start their own business
- [Access to work](#) which helps those who have disabilities or a physical or mental health condition to get and stay in work

Accountability

Responsibility for implementing the Framework is shared by all partners (see [Roles and Responsibilities](#)). However, [the consultation on the Framework](#) highlighted a lack of collective accountability across all partners working within the Framework.

Local authorities are best placed to provide the strategic and operational leadership for implementation of the Framework. The Welsh Government also has a key interest in terms of alignment with the YPG and other government priorities, as set out in the '[Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)'. Local partnerships (including providers) have a critical role to play in delivering provision to support the Framework. This means local authorities and their partners need to have regular, honest conversations about what is working, and when a different approach is required.

GOVERNANCE

Governance structure

Local authority senior leaders should have oversight of the delivery of the Framework, ideally with a senior leader acting as a champion for the Framework. This means an appropriate governance structure needs to be in place, with EPCs providing regular updates to senior leaders on performance against the Framework. Where the Public Services Board (PSB), established under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in an area has identified actions to support young people, there is an opportunity for the Framework to be integrated with its local well-being plan. The local authority is a statutory member of the PSB.

Updates should also be provided to the multi-agency groups involved in delivering the Framework, so they can drive continuous improvement by understanding what approaches have worked and where there are lessons to be learned.

For those aged 11 to 16 updates should include:

- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming NEET
- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming NEET supported by the Framework
- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming homeless
- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming homeless supported by the Framework
- the number of young people identified as at risk of becoming homeless also identified as at risk of becoming NEET

For those aged 16 to 18 updates should include:

- the number of young people aged 16 to 18 whose destination is 'unknown', and whether there are any safeguarding concerns

- the number of young people 16 to 18 who are NEET
- the reasons underlying the NEET figures, and trends
- how long individuals have remained within a tier and the progress they have made (it may be appropriate for some young people to remain within a tier for more than a defined number of days, as long as they are still making progress)
- background information on why some individuals have not moved between tiers
- the success stories and the lessons to be learned and shared

By keeping senior leaders fully informed and escalating any issues outside the EPC's sphere of influence, senior leaders can bring their own influence to bear when there are blockages in the operation of the Framework.

Case study: Senior leaders in the Vale of Glamorgan supporting their staff to reduce the number of young people who are NEET

During the 2018 to 2019 financial year the Vale of Glamorgan ('the Vale') began to see a gradual rise in its NEET figures through the year. The NEET percentage had increased from 0.5% in 2018 to 1.4% in 2019.

Quarterly NEET data is examined by the Vale's YEPF Strategic Board, which compares trends and direction of travel. The rise in the number of NEET young people was escalated to the local authority's Head of Standards and Provision. The EPC highlighted that the rise in the number of young people who were NEET could be mitigated by improved communication between partner organisations.

The Head of Standards and Provision intervened to improve and open channels of communication at various levels. Working with the Head of Service within Careers Wales helped to prioritise the NEET agenda in the Vale.

The Vale's EPC developed an action plan that was agreed and finalised by partners, and arranged regular meetings between managers in the youth service, the EPC and Careers Wales. Weekly meetings were also set between the EPC and the Working Wales manager to monitor the number of young people allocated to Tier 3 in the 5-tier model. The main focus of the meeting was to ensure young people were moving into Tier 3, from Tiers 1 or 2, and receiving feedback on the progress of those in Tier 3 awaiting offers or start dates. As reducing the number of young people who were NEET was a recognised high priority, the Vale's youth service was able to prioritise resources to increase the frequency of 'door-knocking' at the homes of young people with 'unknown' status.

The local authority's list of young people in Tier 1 was shared regularly with partners and Careers Wales. The list was updated frequently as new information became available. This meant all partners understood what progress was being made in locating young people in Tier 1.

The support from the heads of services in the local authority and Careers Wales allowed the development of a governance structure that aided close collaboration and improved

communication. This helped reduce the percentage of young people who were NEET for the following financial year (2020 to 2021) from 1.4% to 0.9%.

IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY

At a national level, we propose that Welsh Government officials will work with EPCs and youth homelessness co-ordinators towards developing an annual report for Welsh Ministers on the contribution of the Framework to reducing the number of young people who are NEET and the number at risk of youth homelessness who have been supported. This report will highlight effective practice and current challenges, in order to provide an overarching update for Ministers on the contribution of the Framework.

Schools are important partners in the delivery of the Framework, in particular for identifying young people who need additional support. However, there can be tensions, as identified in Estyn's report, '[Pupil registration practices](#)' (2019).

This report has highlighted 'the increased availability of comparative data led to school leaders seeing data as a key element of 'high stakes' accountability', in particular feeling pressure to achieve good results at the end of Key Stage 4. This has unintended consequences, as noted in the report. There is evidence schools may be using off-rolling or other inappropriate registration practices to improve their performance data. This is not in the best interest of vulnerable learners. 'Pupil registration practices' contains recommendations for schools and governing bodies, local authorities and the Welsh Government, to address these practices.

Local authorities, schools and governing bodies, and post-16 providers are expected to consider their NEET data as part of their ongoing reflection and self- evaluation processes, and in relation to the overarching aim of preparing young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Additionally, local authorities, schools and post-16 providers are expected to provide up-to-date NEET data to Estyn inspectors in the course of an inspection.

MONITORING PERFORMANCE: WHAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE?

[Pupil destinations](#), based on an annual survey of school leavers, reports the destinations of learners across Wales who have reached statutory leaving age, (Year 11, and students leaving school in Years 12 and 13). (This applies to learners from all maintained and special needs

schools.) It also shows the number of school leavers with 'unknown' status (identified as 'No response').

The destination information is based on a snapshot of learners' known activity in the autumn after they have left school (usually carried out on 31 October), and the information is published on the Careers Wales website.

Pupil destination data is available at a national and a local authority level. Schools receive pre-release data on pupil destinations, so are aware of the number of their school leavers who are NEET.

Within local authorities, the Pupil destinations findings are used to review performance, particularly in respect of whether the number of young people who are NEET has increased or decreased compared to previous years. This information should supplement local authorities' own in-house reporting and scrutiny.

Information is fed into the Atlas and then the Careers Wales data hub provides EPCs with live information on young people in the 5-tier model. (The information flow into Atlas and the data hub outputs are set out in 'Monitoring Progression'.) EPCs are able to access information on the data hub on all 5 tiers, to inform their in-house reporting and scrutiny procedures. EPCs can also use the data hub to access more detailed information on young people in Tiers 1 and 2, as EPCs are more directly involved in managing support for those young people.

The more regularly EPCs check the information on the data hub and reconcile it to their own records, the more accurate the information they hold on young people.

Most partners working within the Framework are held to organisational key performance indicators (KPIs). [The consultation on the Framework](#) identified evidence of different organisations and programmes working to different KPIs and objectives. There is also anecdotal evidence of the 5-tier model being used as the basis for KPIs, which creates some tensions, as this is not the purpose of the 5-tier model. For example, a young person in Tier 2, who experiences significant barriers, may make progress, but this will not always be reflected in a KPI based solely on whether individuals have progressed to another tier.

In setting their KPIs, organisations should recognise the needs of the young person at the centre of activity. Organisations should explore how they can collectively own KPIs and best reflect the targets and ambitions outlined in the relevant national milestones. Rather than looking at young peoples' immediate destinations, KPIs could be drawn up on the basis of longer-term outcomes (for example how many young people who have received support under the Framework are still in EET after a year) rather than solely looking at immediate post-school destinations.

In all cases it is critical that the needs of the young person are placed ahead of programme targets or individual organisational KPIs.

The Welsh Government publishes **estimates of the participation of young people in education, employment or training** annually, and these provide information on the learning activities and labour market status of young people aged 16 to 24 in Wales at the end of the calendar year. This publication also provides the main estimates for young people who are NEET in Wales (the Statistical First Release (SFR) series). Estimates are published for young people aged 16 to 18 as well as for those aged 19 to 24. These estimates can only be disaggregated by gender due to limitations in the various primary data sources used to calculate them. For those reasons, the Welsh Government also publishes a second measure, the '**Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)**' series.

The 'Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)' series are more timely but less statistically robust survey-based estimates, are published quarterly by the Welsh Government. They can be disaggregated to show NEET rates by single year of age, gender, region and disability status.

Data is available for **employment rates, unemployment rates** and **economic activity rates** (excluding students) at a national and local level.

Local authorities provide qualitative information to the Welsh Government on the operation of the Framework through bi-annual reports submitted in respect of the Youth Support Grant.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITY MESSAGE

To summarise, developing the accountability strand of the Framework means all partners involved in its delivery need to be part of an ongoing process of review and reflection to develop a deeper understanding of how well the Framework is working in their area, its successes, and where improvements can be made.

This process should be supported by senior leaders. This approach will help drive improvements in NEET rates and a reduction in youth homelessness.

Roles and responsibilities

This section provides a summary of the key roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Framework that we have set out throughout this document.

THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

- Sets core standards and expectations.
- Links the Framework to national policies and programmes.

- Brings together policy officials to work collectively on this agenda, through the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Task Force.
- Provides guidance to strengthen the operation of the Framework.
- Facilitates best practice across local authorities.
- Facilitates the sharing of effective practice.
- Updates EPCs on Welsh Government provision that is being introduced.
- Holds local authorities and providers to account.
- Leads on the YPG to support young people across Wales.
- Monitors NEET levels in order to determine progress against the national milestone and YPG.
- Takes forward actions set out in the guidance document '[Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)'.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Have strategic oversight of the operation of the Framework in relation to young people up to the age of 18 in the local authority area.
- Work closely with delivery partners.
- Provide EPC role.
- Provide Youth Homelessness Co-ordinator role.
- Provide lead worker role for young people in Tiers 1 and 2, and monitor those who decline immediate support.
- Provide and promote suitable provision to keep young people engaged or to reduce their risk of becoming homeless.
- Part of self-evaluation partnership, looking at how well identification and support systems are working.

CAREERS WALES

- Inputs information into Atlas, their customer relationship management system.
- Makes information available to local authorities via the Careers Wales data hub on young people aged 16 to 18 in Tiers 1 and 2.
- Provides lead worker function for young people in Tier 3. Part of self-evaluation partnership, looking at how well identification and support systems are working.

WORKING WALES

- Identifying young people aged 16 to 18 accessing the YPG with significant barriers and referring them to the EPC and/or appropriate Tier 2 support.

LEARNING PROVIDERS

Learning providers include schools, further education colleges, work-based learning providers, Community Employability Programmes, contracted providers delivering the JGW + programme, voluntary sector, including voluntary youth work organisations. Their roles and responsibilities include:

- helping to identify young people at risk of disengaging, or at risk of youth homelessness, or who require support for their emotional mental health and well-being
- supporting operational delivery of the Framework, including:
 - providing lead workers for young people in Tier 2 and 4 and/or pastoral support as appropriate
 - providing suitable provision to keep young people engaged or to reduce their risk of becoming homeless
 - providing timely notification to Careers Wales of starters and leavers
- improving the number of young people with positive destinations at 16, 17 and 18, including supporting them to prepare for a successful transition
- monitoring the EET destination of their leavers to drive continuous improvement
- being part of the self-evaluation partnership, looking at how well identification and support systems are working

Annex A: Signposting to support for mental health and well-being

There is a link between young people's mental health and well-being, their engagement in EET and their risk of becoming homeless. The [consultation on the Framework](#) with young people highlighted the importance of positive relationships with individual teachers and support staff. Individuals who spoke positively about the support they received to help stay engaged in their education felt this support was an essential contributor to their successes in education and longer-term progression.

The consultation on the Framework identified concerns about a gap in relation to provision that supports young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties to engage with education and training. [The impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health has been well-documented](#). There is a range of support available to bolster young people's emotional mental health and wellbeing, and young people can be signposted to this.

FRAMEWORK ON EMBEDDING A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

For young people in school, the [Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being](#) aims to address the emotional and mental well-being needs of all children and young people, as well as school staff, as part of the whole-school community. It recognises that the school alone cannot meet all the needs of what is a complex population of young people, whose needs will vary as they progress through infancy to adolescence and early adulthood. Primarily it is about building resilience and ensuring preventative action. However, it also provides guidance on how to recognise the signs and address poor well-being when it arises and to ensure effective support for schools and the learner when a learner experiences more severe distress.

The Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being is meant to support and complement the Curriculum for Wales and in particular the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience.

CURRICULUM FOR WALES

At the heart of the Curriculum for Wales framework there are four purposes which are central to every decision made about the Curriculum for Wales. One of the four purposes is to support children and young people to become 'healthy confident individuals'.

A further introduction to the Curriculum for Wales is available in [the Curriculum for Wales guidance](#).

The Curriculum for Wales includes a [Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience](#) which enhances a curriculum's focus on the health and well-being of learners. For the first time, health and well-being has an equal status in law to other important areas of the school curriculum. This is an innovative part of the Curriculum for Wales and aims to ensure that learning and support around issues such as physical, mental and emotional health are provided to all young people in Wales.

INDEPENDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES

Local authorities in Wales are required to make reasonable provision of [independent counselling services](#) for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 on the site of each secondary school that it maintains and for learners in Year 6 of primary school. A local authority may in addition offer counselling services at other locations, for example at independent schools, further education colleges or at other community facilities.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAMHS) IN- REACH

The CAMHS in-reach Pilot Programme was established to build capacity (including skills, knowledge and confidence) in schools to support learner mental health and well-being and improve schools' access to specialist liaison, consultancy and advice when needed. [The evaluation reports on the implementation of the Pilot](#), including what worked well and how it fitted with other initiatives. The [Programme for government: update](#) includes a commitment to roll out the 'CAMHS in-reach' in schools across Wales.

YOUTH WORK APPROACHES

Grant funding has been made available to local authorities since the financial year 2019 to 2020, as part of the Youth Support Grant, to support young people's emotional mental health and well-being through youth work approaches. Youth workers, both voluntary and paid professional staff, are skilled at working with young people and developing trusted relationships with them. They are often well-placed to identify whether a young person may need additional support, and when that support may need to be provided by more specialist services. Youth workers based at the local authority are connected with EPCs and can highlight when individuals are struggling.

Youth work supports young people to develop holistically, facilitating their social and emotional development, enabling them to develop their voice, influence and place in society. It can take place in a wide range of settings such as in youth clubs, online, through outreach programmes, and in other settings to meet the needs of young people. Youth work responds well to creating a 'safe space' for young people who are struggling with their emotional well-being, and the informal nature of the engagement can make a substantial difference to a positive outcome.

FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN FURTHER EDUCATION

Dedicated funding for further education institutions to support mental health and well-being was introduced in the financial year 2020 to 2021. It supports institutional, collaborative and national projects designed to improve both learner and staff well-being. The funding is used for a wide range of initiatives including frontline counselling for learners; dedicated well-being coordinators in colleges; professional learning; and the development of tutorial programmes. National projects have included the development of toolkits on [substance misuse](#) and [trauma informed practice](#).

THE OUT OF WORK SERVICE

The Out of Work Service, which is explained in greater detail under Employability and employment opportunities, supports people aged 16 to 24 who are NEET and are recovering from mental ill-health and/or substance misuse issues.

DEWIS CYMRU

The [Dewis Cymru](#) website gives individuals the opportunity to research what sources of support are available for their well-being.

MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT

[The Mental Health Toolkit](#) links young people aged 11 to 25 to websites, apps, helplines, and more, to build resilience across 6 categories:

- anxiety
- low mood
- keeping healthy
- bereavement
- coronavirus information
- crisis

This resource enables users to take control of their mental health with information, self-help, and advice about how to seek further support embedded throughout. This online resource will continue to be revised and updated as required.

SILVERCLOUD

SilverCloud is an online course which offers support for anxiety, depression, and much more, all based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Anyone aged 16 or over can sign up at nhs.wales.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/.

CALL MENTAL HEALTH LISTENING LINE

CALL provides a confidential mental health listening and emotional support line which is open 24/7. CALL can also signpost to support in local communities and a range of online information. To use CALL, telephone 0800132737, text 'help' to 81066 or visit callhelpline.org.uk/.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL HEALTH BOARDS

Local health boards have made available clear advice and information on how to access local mental health services, if needed. This can be found on individual health board websites:

- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board: [Mental health, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)
- Hywel Dda University Health Board: [IAWN \(information, awareness and well-being now\), Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board: [Mental Health Hub, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)
- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board: [Mental health and well-being](#)
- Cwm Taf University Health Board: [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)](#)
- Swansea Bay University Health Board: [Get help with mental health](#)
- Powys Teaching Health Board: [Your Local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(CAMHS\): Powys Teaching Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)

NEATH PORT TALBOT YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024 – 2034

REVISION C
17 OCT 2024

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Introduction

What is a Youth Engagement Strategy and Why Do We Need One?

The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework is a "systematic mechanism to identify and respond to young people at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET), who are NEET and/or who are at risk of being homeless. Under the Framework there are processes in place to identify young people who require tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression, which are led by local authorities, working with their delivery partners."¹

Neath Port Talbot is a distinct community, with opportunities and challenges that impact on and shape the lives of our young people. It is important that we use the systematic mechanisms and processes outlined in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework in a way that works for our young people, in our community. This Youth Engagement Strategy considers how the many partners who impact on the lives of young people can work together to ensure young people successfully transition into adulthood.

Who Is This Strategy For?

This Strategy requires a multi-agency approach to ensure young people have the support they need to successfully transition into adulthood. It is for all the organisations that work with and empower young people, including Neath Port Talbot Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Careers Wales, and a range of providers and third-sector partners.

It is also for the young people who live in Neath Port Talbot so they can understand the choices available to them and the options they have.

How Was It Developed?

The Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy builds on The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28 and a range of other local, regional and national policies.

It uses data and evidence from a range of sources to understand the needs of our young people, and the challenges which impact on their transition into adulthood.

Engagement was at the heart of the development of this strategy. This included conversations, through focus groups and one-to-one meetings, with over 100 young people, including care experienced young people, young people at risk of homelessness, young people living in supported accommodation, LGTBQ+ young people and NEET young people. Their lived experiences, ideas and perspectives have informed this strategy.

This strategy has also been informed by a workshop session that brought together a range of services and providers to explore how to "**work together to identify young people** who need support and provide appropriate **support to ensure they have positive outcomes.**"²

¹ [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)

² [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)

Listening To Young People

It was vital that this strategy was informed by the experiences and ideas of young people. We spoke to over 100 local young people, aged between 11 and 25 years of age, including care experienced young people, young people at risk of homelessness, young people living in supported accommodation, LGBTQ+ young people, young people in work-based learning, the youth council, and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Through focus groups, meetings and one-to-one conversations, we explored with young people how they make choices about their future, the support they need and the barriers that prevent them from accessing help.

The conversations we had with young people have informed this strategy and corresponding action plan. Their stories and experiences are shared within to illustrate the strategic objectives and why change is needed. In our conversations with young people, they talked to us about a range of topics including:

- **The importance of knowing the options available to them:** Young people want to feel empowered and enabled to make choices and take ownership of their lives. It is seen as an important part of the transition from childhood to adulthood. When decisions are made for, or things are done to (rather than with), young people, this can lead them to disengage. There is a perception that the current approach to education and training in Neath Port Talbot provides limited options and that the pathway/s available are defined by the curriculum and not the individual.

"I think there needs to be more support for the individual so you know what you can think about doing, not just what they think you should do."

17-year-old attending work-based learning

"I'm going to be honest; I didn't know what I could do so I just copied my friends."

16-year-old in attending work-based learning

"I was told I was bad at making decisions. I've gone between A levels and vocational, I wanted to do media but was told 'I wouldn't be capable of it'. It feels like I'm being told what to do."

18-year-old care experienced young person

"Becoming an adult is about choosing what you do, not being told what to do."

18-year-old college student

- Their mental health:** Research by the School Health Research Network (SHRN) at Cardiff University found that nearly a quarter of secondary school learners in Wales reported having very high levels of poor mental health symptoms in the years following COVID-19. Young people spoke of their mental health affecting their home lives, participation in education / training, employability, and how they feel about their future. There is a concern among young people that the support available is insufficient and inadequate. Young people spoke of seeking help – for mental health, self-harm and other conditions – and being told *“we can’t help you, it’s not bad enough.”*

“My son has been on a waiting list for 3 years. He’s autistic but not autistic enough to get help.... He’s suicidal, he’s starved himself, but he’s not bad enough to get into CAMHS.”

Parent of a 19-year-old young person not in education, employment or training

“I had to learn that my results don’t define my life, otherwise I would crawl back into my anxiety hole.”

17-year-old attending work-based learning

“I’ve not had a lot of help with my mental health, I’m really overwhelmed... Staff change all the time, you can’t build a relationship with them.”

17-year-old student

- Why they disengage with education and training:** School attendance in Neath Port Talbot is lower than comparable areas and unauthorised absence rates are high. We asked young people why they disengaged with education and training. In addition to poor mental health, there was a perception that additional needs, and LGBTQ+ young people, were not being supported. There’s a belief that the people who work with young people need more training to understand and support those with additional needs. Young people also believe that professionals are focused on results rather than them as people. Bullying was a persistent issue, with young people talking about not feeling safe in education settings and a belief that *“school is not doing anything about bullying.”*

“I want to learn, but when I get to school I’m bullied for being in a foster care. For having parents who are druggies. I spend my breaks in the toilet. I don’t want to be there.”

14-year-old care experienced young person

“30 people in a class are too many. It’s loud and chaotic. You don’t get listened to. Why would you want that?”

15-year-old at risk of homelessness

“If you’re not doing well, some teachers make it feel like ‘you’ve failed, you’re a bad student.’ Teachers only care about grades.”

16-year-old at risk of homelessness

- **The barriers to support:** There are many reasons why young people cannot and do not access support. These range from preferring to *“help myself”* to a perception that the people you ask for help will not provide the help you need. There were other issues; for example, transport was seen as a barrier, particularly for those living in rural communities. In addition, young people were unsure of what help they’re entitled to and how to access it; and there was a reliance on professionals to refer them to support.

“You ask for help, and you don’t get it. Workers promise the world but don’t deliver. Why would I trust them?”

19-year-old living in supported accommodation

“I prefer to be left alone, to sort myself out.”

16-year-old college student and young carer

“Teachers don’t understand young carers and the challenges we face so we can’t ask them for help.”

14-year-old young carer

“We can’t get to these places because the buses have been cut and when you reach out, they all blame it on each other and we’re left with nowhere to go.”

College student

Learning from stakeholders

We worked with stakeholders to explore how to “**work together to identify young people** who need support and provide appropriate **support to ensure they have positive outcomes.**”³ These conversations highlighted the need to:

Tackle the barriers to collaboration: There is an aspiration to work together to ensure and enable young people to transition successfully into adulthood. However, there are a range of barriers that prevent this, including how services / projects / initiatives are funded, siloed working, and limitations to sharing information and data. There is also a need to re-establish and re-define governance required to deliver this Youth Engagement Strategy.

More robust identification: Reductions in budget, resources and capacity have resulted in fewer earlier intervention and prevention projects; both young people and stakeholders agree *“it would help if we could get help sooner. I feel like you have to wait and wait. Are they waiting for it to get worse?”* (young person interview). Stakeholders felt the current vulnerability index approach is not capturing all young people that need support as not all needs can be captured in data sets. Professional discussion is also needed to identify young people in need and systems to systematically capture the voice of young people are currently missing.

A clear understanding of what’s available: There is a wide range of support available to young people, from a variety of service providers. However, there is not a comprehensive and complete picture of what is available, how it can be accessed and by whom. This impacts on needs-based decision-making and is a barrier to young people and professionals finding the support that young people are entitled to.

Limitations imposed by funding criteria: Every young person has their own aspirations, needs and barriers. Stakeholders believe that a person-centred approach is needed which puts young people’s needs first.

Involving young people: Young people have told us they don’t want decisions to be made for them, or for changes to simply happen to them. Stakeholders felt that involving young people in service design, enabling them to shape the decisions that affect them, is critical to young people getting the support they need to successfully transition into adulthood. The Neath Port Talbot Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy sets out an approach to ensure young people’s voices inform the decisions that affect them.

³ [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview](#)

Vision and outcomes.

A Shared Vision

This youth engagement strategy seeks to set out how partners will come together to achieve this vision.

All young people in Neath Port Talbot will be supported to successfully transition into adulthood, in a way that works best for them. Working together we will reduce youth unemployment in Neath Port Talbot by positively encouraging and supporting young people to stay in education, employment and training. We will prevent youth homelessness, and ensure young people have the safe and stable homelife they need.

Strategic Objectives

To deliver on this shared vision, we will focus on five strategic objectives. These outcomes, set out below, are interlinked and build on the *better outcomes for young people* diagram taken from the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook.⁴

- Young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET or at risk of becoming homeless are **identified as early as possible**.
- **Services work together collaboratively** to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people who need it, sharing responsibility and accountability.
- The support available to young people is **monitored and evaluated** to ensure it is meeting their needs.
- **The right provision is in place** to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them.
- **There is strategic oversight and leadership**.

This section of the strategy uses quantitative and qualitative data to explain why each outcome is important, outlines the work that is already being done and sets out priorities for the action plan.

⁴ <https://www.gov.wales/youth-engagement-and-progression-framework-handbook-html>

Young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET or at risk of becoming homeless are identified as early as possible.

Why It's Important

- The Neath Port Talbot Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan (2023/23 – 25/26) states “we will see a number of young people transition from Children and Young People Services over the next few years. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to ensure that there is sufficient specialist service to meet the needs of young people.”
- “Early identification enables targeted support to be put in place earlier to meet young people’s needs. Not only does this give us the best chance of preventing situations such as homelessness that at-risk young people are vulnerable to, but it can also increase individuals’ engagement, improve attainment, and develop positive pathways to employment.⁵”
- Engagement with young people highlighted the barriers that prevented them from asking for help. Proactively identifying young people that would benefit from additional support / early intervention would address these barriers.
- Early identification can provide improved outcomes for young people, preventing escalating need or risk, and in so doing reduces demand for statutory and/or specialist services.

What We Are Already Doing

There are a number of ways that youth support services identify and engage young people in Neath Port Talbot. These include:

- Young people can be identified as needing support by the **schools, social workers, youth workers, or any professional** and can be referred into targeted services.
- **Young people** who identify themselves as needing support can self-refer through the **Neath Port Talbot Single Point of Contact**. Family members can also make referrals through this service. Young people can also self-present at the **Opportunity Hub** in Port Talbot Shopping Centre.
- The **Vulnerability Assessment Profile** is a tool used for identifying young people who may benefit from additional support. It uses a range of factors, including free school meals, young people with experience of care, young carers, young parents and those with experience of economic disadvantage.
- Neath Port Talbot Youth Service is piloting **Upstream** which asks students aged 11 to 16 to complete a survey, focusing on a wide range of areas. This data on student well-being, resilience and engagement can help identify young people at risk of homelessness and/or in need of additional support.

⁵ [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Handbook](#)

What Are We Going To Do Next?

We will work together, in partnership, to improve early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET or at risk of becoming homeless by:

- Working across services to **increase the public's awareness, with a focus on young people**, of available services, support, benefits and entitlements for young people who are or are at risk of becoming NEET and/or homeless.
- **Evaluating the Upstream Pilot** to think about how we can embed the early identification of young people at risk of homelessness.
- Addressing the **barriers to data sharing** and explore ways to bring together data from a wide range of places to identify young people who would benefit from additional support.
- Exploring ways to encourage and enable young people to ask for help as soon as they identify an issue.
- **Providing the training and workforce development needed** to enable those who work with and engage young people to have the professional judgement that is needed to identify the young people that need support – which is often missed by data-driven approaches.
- **Increase multi-agency input into early identification** by piloting Multi Agency Transition Screening Meetings (MATSM) in schools.

Services work together collaboratively to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people who need it, sharing responsibility and accountability.

Why It's Important

- The cost-of-living crisis, the legacy impact of the pandemic and other factors are likely to lead to an increase in demand for support services from young people. It is therefore vital that partners work together to meet this demand, minimise duplication, and enable young people to access the support they need.
- Young people in engagement expressed concern about having to tell their stories to multiple services and said that a perceived lack of joined-up thinking and poor communication between services can disengage and frustrate them.

What We Are Already Doing

Housing and Homelessness Prevention: Homelessness prevention is a statutory duty for Local Authorities, under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Housing teams work with social services to support 16- to 18-year-olds; give advice and support; find somewhere suitable to stay whilst deciding what other help to give and may try to help young people go back home if it is safe/suitable.

Housing Options provide a number of services to support young people known to Children Social Services, who are transitioning into adulthood, including '**When I'm Ready**' and '**Supported Lodgings**'. They also provide accommodation or support for those who need it as part of their transition plan.

Welsh Government's Housing Support Grant (HSG) is utilised to deliver local authority services as well as to commission services from external providers. The aim of the funding is to intervene early and prevent homelessness or to support vulnerable people to maintain their current accommodation. The grant is complementary to the local authority's duty to prevent homelessness and cannot fund that statutory duty.

The funding can support people to overcome issues such as dealing with debt, finding employment, managing a tenancy, substance misuse, mental health, and violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV). The support offered through the grant is person-centred, helping individuals to improve their health and well-being by increasing skills, confidence, capability and agency.

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service supports young people aged 14 to 18 to prevent youth homelessness, funded by the Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant (YSG). Work includes awareness raising / prevention sessions for young people aged 14 plus in schools, colleges, training providers and youth groups. The aim of the sessions is to raise awareness of housing and homelessness issues and of sources of support. There is also targeted, bespoke prevention and early intervention sessions for young people identified as at risk of youth homelessness. The young people can be brought together to form a group, or they can receive one-to-one support.

In addition to HSG and YSG funded services, **Dewis Housing** offer help for young people in the form of "a mixture of supported accommodation in Neath Port Talbot, including shared flats and houses and self-contained flats for young people who are homeless, potentially homeless or in other housing need." The team at Dewis Housing provide support "to enable young people to live independently and maintain a tenancy with the aim of moving on to accommodation with either a Housing Association or in the private rental sector".

NEET / Prevention of NEET: The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework recommends the notion of lead workers, who "have a direct relationship with the young person, being a consistent point of contact and support as they move forward and helping them to build and develop the long-term resilience they need to succeed in education, training and employment". It also provides some guidance as to whom should provide the lead worker role along a continuum of support. The table below outlines how lead works provide support across the 5 tiers in Neath Port Talbot.

Table 1. Leader Worker Support

Tier	Client group	Lead worker
Tier 5 Young People in Further Education, Employment or Training (EET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining education, employment or training (EET). • Working or studying part time over 16 hours. • Voluntary Work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lead worker is judged necessary given that young person is already engaged and not judged to be at risk of disengaging.
Tier 4 Young People at risk of dropping out of EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those engaged in less than 16 hours of EET. Young people in a job without training. • Those who have been identified at risk of disengagement pre-16 and/or were judged as at risk of not making a positive transition who are subsequently in FE, sixth form or training. • Those who have been made aware to CW by EET providers (or themselves) as at risk of dropping out of EET. 	<p>Allocation of lead worker depends on level of risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low and medium risk – provide pastoral systems and/or allocation of learning coach as a lead worker. • High risk – may be allocated lead worker from either Youth Service or Careers Wales. Or if Families First involved, Team Around the Family will decide allocation of lead worker.
Tier 3 Unemployed 16- and 17-year-olds known to Careers Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged with CW and/or known to be actively seeking EET; either ready to enter EET or assessed as requiring career management or employability skills support to enter EET. • This tier should also include those known to CW, actively seeking EET but not requiring CW enhanced support, i.e. accessing support via CW.com, awaiting a college start date etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead worker identified for 100% cohort. • Careers Wales will provide the lead worker in nearly all cases.
Tier 2 Unemployed 16- and 17-year-olds, known to Careers Wales, who are not available for EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young person not available/ unable to seek EET (sickness, young carers, pregnancy, custody). • Young people with significant or multiple barriers requiring intensive personal support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead worker identified for 100% cohort. • Youth Service will provide lead worker in nearly all cases.
Tier 1 Unknown status on leaving Careers Wales services.	<p>Young people unknown to Careers Wales</p>	<p>Once individuals are identified they are allocated to appropriate tier and allocated a lead worker accordingly.</p>

School-based support: Schools employ Youth Engagement Workers who work with pupils who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training). Workers are linked to all secondary schools within Neath Port Talbot, including Ysgol Hendrefelin, and work with young people to overcome or manage any issues that are contributing to their disengagement from mainstream education.

Transition Support: Neath Port Talbot Youth Service and Youth Justice Early Intervention and Prevention Service support pupils in Year 11 both inside and outside of the classroom environment, including those who are Electively Home Educated. The interventions can vary depending on the needs of the young person and continues throughout the summer following their school-leaving data and their entry into a post-16 destination.

The aim is to prepare and support young people into a positive post-16 destination. Examples of the interventions include classroom support; home visits; partnership work with the education Welfare Officers, Teachers, Careers Wales, Social Workers, colleges; and work-based learning providers.

16–18 Support: Neath Port Talbot Youth Service is the lead organisation providing support to young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Tier 2 to help them make an effective transition to a positive EET destination. Targeted support along with tailor-made action plans are devised for individuals. The provision offers help and advice with job search activities, CV creation and interview techniques. Youth workers also provide wellbeing, emotional and life skills activities, which help the participants to achieve their goals.

In addition, the team are tasked with working in partnership with Careers Wales to reach out to young people aged 16 to 18 whose EET status is unknown. Although Post 16 Education and Work Based Learning Providers provide lead worker role for young people in Tier 4, youth work support is also offered to young people in work-based learning needing help to sustain their placement.

Careers Wales: Careers Wales provides support to enable young people to plan their career, prepare to get a job and find the right apprenticeships, courses and training. For example, they provide enhanced support to young people in Tier 3.

Third Sector: It is important to acknowledge and celebrate the role of the Third Sector that provides a wealth of community-based support for our young people. This includes programmes targeted at groups of young people with additional needs, such as mental health issues, LGBTQ+, gypsy traveller young people and young carers. The third sector is a vital component of provision for young people in Neath Port Talbot. There are also a range of providers that enable and empower young people to take alternative approaches to education and training.

There is a lot of provision available to our young people, with a shared aim of preventing young people from becoming NEET, supporting those that do and/or preventing youth homelessness. However, there is no complete picture of what initiatives are available to young people and the relevant referral pathways, and young people are not always able to access the services they need when they need them. Young people we talked to as part of the engagement expressed frustration at being unable to access support for a number of reasons – in some circumstances they felt that *“the help I get isn’t about me, it’s about ticking a box”*.

What Are We Going To Do Next?

To ensure that services work together collaboratively to provide appropriate, person-centred and accessible support for the young people in Neath Port Talbot who need it, we will:

- Ensure those in **lead worker roles** have the understanding, training and continuing professional development needed to enable young people to access support.
- **Maximise the use of tools that enable joint working**, for example joint commissioning and the establishment of an alternative providers framework.
- Refresh and repurpose the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group around the three common principles that are key to multi-agency working: **information sharing, joint decision-making and intervention**.
- **Map provision available to young people** and establish shared cross-partnership pathways.
- Explore and exploit the **opportunities resulting from the Curriculum for Wales** to provide person-centred support for young people.
- Work collaboratively with schools, the third sector and local area coordinators to **provide community-based, local support that young people can access**.
- Work with schools to **implement school-community partnerships aimed at delivering interventions capable of preventing youth homelessness**. The foundation of these interventions should be partnerships between schools, healthcare, mental health support, community-based social services and the third sector.
- **Explore options to provide wellbeing support** for young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET or homeless.
- **Continue to improve the links** between services for young people aged 16 and 17, known to NEET and housing teams.

The support available to young people is monitored and evaluated to ensure it is meeting their needs.

Why It's Important

- The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook states that "in all areas of the Framework, we expect partners to proactively work together to develop and improve methods to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET or of becoming homeless."
- Monitoring and evaluation are critical to ensuring support is meeting individual young people's needs, enabling early identification and person-centred approaches.
- The Framework sets out an aspiration to "embed a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement among all partners and stakeholders". Evaluation and monitoring are part of a process of reflection and review that can ensure lessons are learnt, and improvements are made, providing young people with a better choice of high-quality support and opportunities.
- To build confidence and trust in young people who need this support, and their families.

What We Are Already Doing

Currently it could be argued that monitoring and evaluation processes are primarily driven by the requirements of funders. Data is also collated and analysed to understand progress in relation to the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28.

Lead workers should take a young person-centred approach. They must be able to monitor and evaluate the support the young person / people they are working with are receiving, to understand if it is meeting those young people's needs and enable changes to be made if required.

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook explains that "monitoring progression also involves taking steps to identify young people who have fallen outside the monitoring system and establishing whether or not they are in EET. This is critical at the end of years 11, 12 and 13, when school leavers may be at risk of not making a positive transition into a post-16 destination. Young people with an 'unknown' destination on leaving school, or who have dropped out of post-16 education or training, should be located and offered support under the Framework if needed." **Currently this monitoring is shared between Careers Wales, education providers and the local authority.** Engagement with stakeholders suggests there is a need to evaluate the process by which information is shared about the transition and destination of our young people.

Pre-16 Local Authority Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator's (EPCs) manage the process of identifying those most in need of support by holding meetings in all schools. This process enables the identification of learners most at risk of not progressing into education, employment and training. This is enhanced throughout the year by the feeding in of new information and intelligence. During the school holidays, as young people leave year 11, multi-agency meetings continue, bringing together **post-16** teams and Careers Wales to make sure all young people have continued support.

Post-16 performance is continuously monitored, both in terms of our current performance against past performances and against the rest of Wales.

What Are We Going To Do Next?

To ensure the support that is available to young people is monitored and evaluated so that it meets their needs, we will:

- Evolve the role of the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group to include a **self-evaluation partnership looking at how well identification and support systems are working.**
- **Give young people a role in evaluating the services that support them.**
- Look at how **outcome-driven approaches** can be used to evaluate and monitor the impact of the support our young people receive, **in order to inform decision-making on a case-by-case and collective basis.**
- Establish a monitoring process to **improve the monitoring of the transitions and destinations of our young people.**
- Create a **multi-agency pathway for young people** who have been identified as at higher risk of becoming NEET and/or homeless.
- **Develop an evaluation framework** for front-line services to assess their progress towards youth homelessness prevention.

The right provision is in place to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them.

Why It's Important

- Young people want to be able to choose their employment, skills and/or training pathways, take ownership of their future, and choose what they think is right for them.
- The Neath Port Talbot Employability and Skills Strategy includes an objective to “create a person-centred approach that enables people to choose their own employability and skills pathways” and “ensure that there is a lifelong employability and skills journey for local people.”
- The Neath Port Talbot Early Years, Children and Young People’s Plan states: Our Vision is that Neath Port Talbot will be a place where all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, are part of a community that meets their needs and supports them to thrive **in a way that works best for them.**
- “As well as using the Framework to improve engagement and progression for young people, we need to ensure the Framework leads to more young people moving into skilled employment, with a balance of work experience, skills, and pathways to employment or self-employment. In this way, we can set young people on a path that gives them the best possible life chances.”⁶
- The Swansea Bay City Deal, Celtic Freeport, Wildfox, Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE) and other investment will present a wide range of opportunities for our young people. We need to ensure they are well placed to meet them.
- The Curriculum for Wales, aims to enable schools to develop curriculums that will enable their learners to become:
 - ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
 - enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
 - ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
 - healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

What We Are Already Doing

Neath Port Talbot’s Employability and Skills Strategy explains that the shift to Shared Prosperity funding has provided an opportunity for the realignment of employability, skills and business support. Within the Council, this has resulted in a cross-directorate way forward with improved collaboration.

The programme will support and enable a closer working relationship between the local authority and businesses in the area, ensuring that the skills and training needs of local businesses inform decision-making. A number of sector-based business forums have been developed to support meaningful engagement with local businesses, driving the conversation around change and need forward.

The [South West Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022-2025](#) is the regional skills plan for Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. It lays out the “the future skills need of the region with an aim to influence the Welsh Government’s planning and funding of post-16 education through full-time courses and apprenticeships. The plan contains key actions on training needs, including the emerging technologies to meet the net zero agenda.” It sets out the future skills requirements for the region across a range of sectors, highlighting that the region is “lacking in key transferable skills.” The Regional Learning and Skills Partnership business survey also puts an emphasis on ensuring young people are work ready when they join the workforce.

⁶ Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Handbook

What Are We Going To Do Next?

Working together we will make sure the right provision is in place to enable young people to access the right employment, skills and/or training offer for them. To do this we will:

- Work with the employability and skills team to **create the work ready programmes / work experience** that have been requested by businesses from all sectors.
- **Involve young people in service design**, enabling the community to shape and inform the services that are there to help them.
- **Promote the full range of pathways** including apprenticeships, degree-apprenticeships and vocational qualifications – and how to access them.
- Ensure **equity and quality of advice and support** to all young people across Neath Port Talbot.
- Work with schools and education providers to **make the most of the opportunities the Curriculum for Wales offers**.
- **Enable young people to successfully transition to and from the support they need**, helping them to transition to further support (should they need it) when they leave youth services.

There is strategic oversight and leadership.

Why It's Important

- The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook explains that "responsibility for implementing the Framework is shared by all partners". However, both the consultation of the framework, and the stakeholder engagement to inform this Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy, suggest there is a lack of collective accountability across all partners.
- It is important that Neath Port Talbot Council, across all the departments that impact on young people and the partners, have a mechanism for having regular, honest conversations about what is and is not working.
- For partnership working to be successful all partners involved in the delivery of the Youth Engagement Strategy need to be part of an ongoing process of reflection and review. This process needs to be enabled by senior leaders. The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook advocates that this approach "will help drive improvements in NEET rates and reduction in youth homelessness."

What We Are Already Doing

There is an established **NPT Youth Support Agency Group**, which is coordinated by the local authority and brings together partners from across the public, private and third sectors that provide provision for young people. There is a need to update the governance and terms of reference of this group to reflect the updated Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. **Neath Port Talbot Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum** aims to establish a dialogue between voluntary organisations, so that their needs and concerns can be accurately reflected within the planning process. The **Neath Port Talbot Youth Providers' Network** is run in partnership between Neath Port Talbot's Youth Service and Neath Port Talbot CVS, with representatives from organisations within voluntary, statutory, and independent sectors. It has a generic concern for all issues affecting young people aged 11 to 25 years in Neath Port Talbot.

Responsibility and accountability for delivering relevant Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28 objectives sits with the **Children and Young People's Leadership Group**, which brings together senior stakeholders from across local government, health, education, third sector and emergency services to champion the needs and priorities of children and young people.

What Are We Going To Do Next?

To bring partners together to work collaboratively, sharing responsibility and accountability, we will:

- Put in place a **governance structure that supports and enables partnership working**, enabling multi-agency working.
- **Secure buy-in from leadership** across the partnership to enable sharing of knowledge, power, decision-making and funding to change services and interventions to meet the needs of our young people.
- **Re-establish the NPT Youth Engagement Strategy Group**, to deliver the aspirations of the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.
- Ensure **young people know who is responsible and accountable for the support they receive**.

Governance

Achieving our vision that "all young people in Neath Port Talbot will be supported to successfully transition into adulthood, in a way that works best for them" requires collaborative working and needs organisations to work together in partnership in a way that ● meets the needs of our young people.

The **Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board**, brings “together local organisations and strengthens the way they work together to improve the well-being of the people who live in our county borough.”⁷ The Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board is working to give “all children the best start in life.” This includes:

- Taking a co-ordinated approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of our children and young people so they are able to flourish and thrive.
- Ensuring a better alignment of early intervention services in order to meet the needs of our children, young people and their families.
- Supporting and advising our school leavers to increase access to employment, education and training.

To deliver the well-being objective above, a **Children and Young People’s Partnership** has been created. This partnership will take a strategic role in delivering this Youth Engagement Strategy. It will also provide a link to the **West Glamorgan Children and Young People’s Programme**, localising regional approaches to meet the needs of Neath Port Talbot’s young people.

To enable the delivery of the Youth Engagement Strategy, operational task and finish groups will be established. These groups will have time limited, defined tasks, and the tasks will be derived from this plan. Each group will bring together the key organisations required to deliver the action/s within it. The task and finish groups will report to the Children and Young People’s Partnership, who, in turn, will feedback to the Public Service Board.

⁷ [Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board](#)

Appendix 1. policy context

National Policy Context

In 2022 the Welsh Government published a strengthened **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**, which contributes to the broader goal of tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment. It is built around the early identification of those aged 11 to 18 who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training or homeless (NEET), understanding their needs, putting appropriate support and/or provision in place, and monitoring their progression.

This Framework operates alongside our Young Person's Guarantee for people aged 16 to 24. This aims to give young people who are NEET other opportunities to move into education, employment or training. Collectively, these support the national milestone of at least 90% of 16- to 24-year-olds in education, employment and training by 2050 and the mission to prevent youth homelessness.

There are six components to the Framework, which are interlinked. The application of each depends on the vulnerability stage and age of the individual. These are:

- Early identification
- Brokerage
- Monitoring progression
- Provision
- Employability and employment opportunities
- Accountability

How the six elements combine to secure better outcomes for young people



A range of other National Policies have also been taken into consideration in the development of this Youth Engagement Strategy. The **Young Person Guarantee (YPG)** is “the Welsh Government’s key commitment to provide everyone aged 16 to 24, living in Wales, with support to gain a place in education or training, help to get into work or self-employment.”⁸ It is an “umbrella structure that sits above Welsh Government funding programmes for young people, aiming to fully utilize interventions, and to create a straightforward journey for young people regardless of circumstances and background.” It aims to ensure that every young person under 25 in Wales is guaranteed an offer of support to gain a place in education or training, find a job or become self-employed.

Stronger, Fairer, Green Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills has an area of action, Future Generations, that focuses on investing in and strengthening the whole system approach to delivering the YPG “to make it easy for everyone under the age of 25 to access an offer of work, education, training, or self-employment. This offer includes the young people who will benefit from 125,000 new Apprenticeships to give people of all ages high quality routes into better jobs.”⁹ **The Curriculum for Wales** “aims to help each school develop its own curriculum, enabling their learners (aged 3 to 16) to develop towards the four purposes of the curriculum – the starting point and aspiration for every child and young person in Wales.”¹⁰

⁸ <https://www.gov.wales/young-persons-guarantee-html>

⁹ <https://www.gov.wales/stronger-fairer-greener-wales-plan-employability-and-skills-summary-html#92543>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.wales/curriculum-wales-overview>

The four purposes of the curriculum are to support children to be:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Regional Policy Context

The **West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board** aims to improve the health and well-being of the region's population. The remit of their **Children and Young People's Programme** "includes supporting Children and Young People (CYP) who receive support as they transition into adulthood, where they may receive a different type of service as an adult. An underlying principle of this work is to follow a 'whole systems approach', which will form part of a new framework across health and social care services for CYP (covering both the statutory and voluntary sectors)."¹¹

The **South West Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022–2025** is the regional skills plan for Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. It lays out the "future skills needs of the region with an aim to influence the Welsh Government's planning and funding of post-16 education through full time courses and apprenticeships. The plan contains key actions on training needs, including the emerging technologies to meet the net zero agenda."¹²

Local Policy Context

The **Neath Port Talbot Public Service Boards Well-Being Plan 2023–28** is based around four objectives.

Highlighted below are the relevant aims within each objective:

1. All children have the best start in life.
 - Support and advise our school leavers to increase access to employment, education or training.
2. All our communities are thriving and sustainable.
 - Identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed.
3. Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.
4. There are more secure, green and well-paid jobs and skills across the area are improved.
 - Increase the number of apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement opportunities in the local area and support more people to access them.
 - Support more people to achieve the necessary level qualifications linked to the skills that local employers need now and in the future.

One of the objectives of the **Neath Port Talbot Recover, Reset, Renew Corporate Plan 2022–2027** is to ensure all children get the best start in life. Actions against this objective include helping pupils reconnect with school and improve attendance rates; providing effective early intervention; helping young people leaving care to access and maintain appropriate accommodation; working with partners to reduce youth unemployment; and increase work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.

The **Neath Port Talbot Children and Young People's Plan** sets out a vision that "Neath Port Talbot will be a place where all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, are part of a community that meets their needs and supports them to thrive in a way that works best for them." The strategy sets out services and interventions that will work together to deliver the following priority outcomes:

¹¹ <https://www.westglamorgan.org.uk/programmes/children-and-young-peoples-programme/>

¹² <https://www.rlp.org.uk/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=2&mid=13&fileid=50>

- Supporting our youngest children to be healthy and ready to learn.
- Children, young people and their families are able to access the right support at the right time with positive outcomes.
- Children and young people can access education that inspires them to learn and develop the skills they need for the future they want.
- Children and young people are listened to, and they have opportunities to be actively involved in decision-making.
- All children and young people should be supported to help themselves be physically healthy and feel mentally and emotionally strong.

The **Neath Port Talbot Employability and Skills Strategy** sets out to ensure that “Neath Port Talbot will be a place where local people and businesses have access to the range of skills and opportunities our economy needs to grow. We will work together to maximise the potential of the planned investment in the area and ensure that growth benefits our residents and communities.” It sets out the need to “ensure that there is a lifelong employability and skills journey for local people” including targeted support for young people.

The **Housing and Homelessness Strategy Plan 2023/4 – 2025/6** sets out the council's strategic approach to reducing and preventing homelessness by “managing the challenges of homelessness and affordable housing across the Borough”. The plan acknowledges that “there is a need to develop more accommodation-based services and provide a more specialised response to young people facing homelessness and young care leavers so that they can thrive and achieve their potential into adulthood. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to ensure that there are sufficient specialist services to meet the needs of these young people.

The **Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022–2025** sets out how to “increase meaningful participation of children and young people through inclusive engagement. This will ensure children and young people will be able to influence issues and decisions that impact directly and indirectly on them, their families, and communities.”

Appendix 2. Understanding who needs support.

In Neath Port Talbot, we want young people to engage in activities that are meaningful to them, to feel a part of their communities and have a sense of belonging. The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework is there to support our young people to fulfil their potential through ensuring they are engaged at school, supporting them on the pathway into work and preventing youth homelessness. It is designed to enable early identification of those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET or homeless.

There is a wealth of research that identifies groups of young people who might be more at risk of becoming NEET. These young people often face multiple barriers to progressing into employment, education or training. The evidence suggests that it requires a combination of factors to co-occur to make transition more challenging. Research shows that factors tend not to exert influence individually. More often a combination of factors co-occur that together make transition more challenging. The Welsh Government Rapid Evidence Review¹³ explains how for those young people who have inadequate housing or are homeless, “it is often much harder to find the physical and economic resources required to access the labour market or to re-engage with education.” In addition, this can limit a young person’s capability to search for work and their “capability to search for work and their motivation and access to opportunities (as employers can be reluctant to interview or employ people who are homeless). Homelessness is also linked to other risk factors, such as an increased risk of mental health problems and/or substance misuse.”

It is important that evidence informs decision-making. This appendix therefore provides a summary of the data available that can help us understand the number of young people experiencing the risk factors that can lead to them being at risk of, or becoming, NEET and/or homeless.

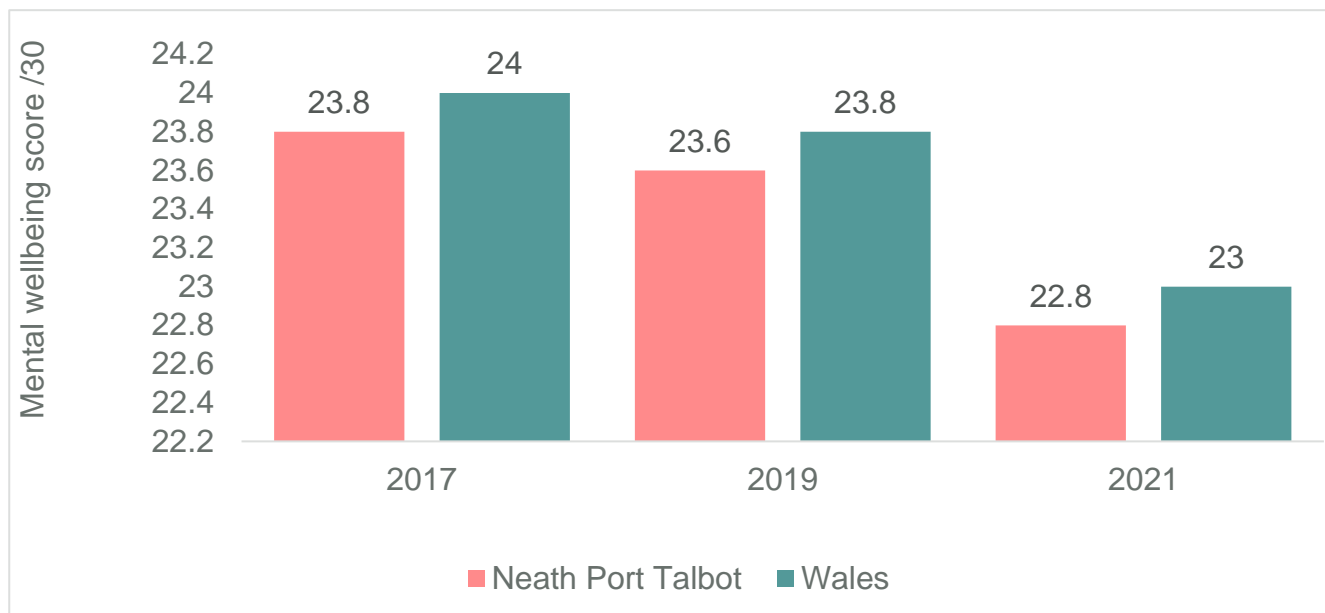
¹³ Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

Poor mental health

Good emotional health and well-being is crucial for young people to participate and benefit from learning and have a smoother transition into adulthood.

In Neath Port Talbot the mental wellbeing of young people aged 11 to 16 is slightly lower than the Wales average and is declining.

Public Health Wales, School Health Research Network Data Dashboard



Welsh Government Rapid Evidence Review¹⁴ reports that “over the last 15 years there has been a rapid increase in self-reported mental ill health, and around one in six (17.4%) of 17 to 19 years in England now have a probable mental health disorder (NHS Digital, 2021)”. The review also found that “poor mental health has been identified as having a larger effect on the chance of being NEET than other health conditions, particularly for young men. The increase in the number of young men, in particular, who have mental health difficulties has been marked and has offset the decline in the number of young women who were economically inactive due to home or caring responsibilities.”

Socio-economic disadvantage

There is evidence that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to become NEET. Material deprivation can mean that families are unable to afford basic resources, which can have an impact on children’s access to education, and achievement. There are 5,294 children living in relative low-income families in Neath Port Talbot, and there are neighbourhoods of severe deprivation in urban areas as well as in some rural areas.

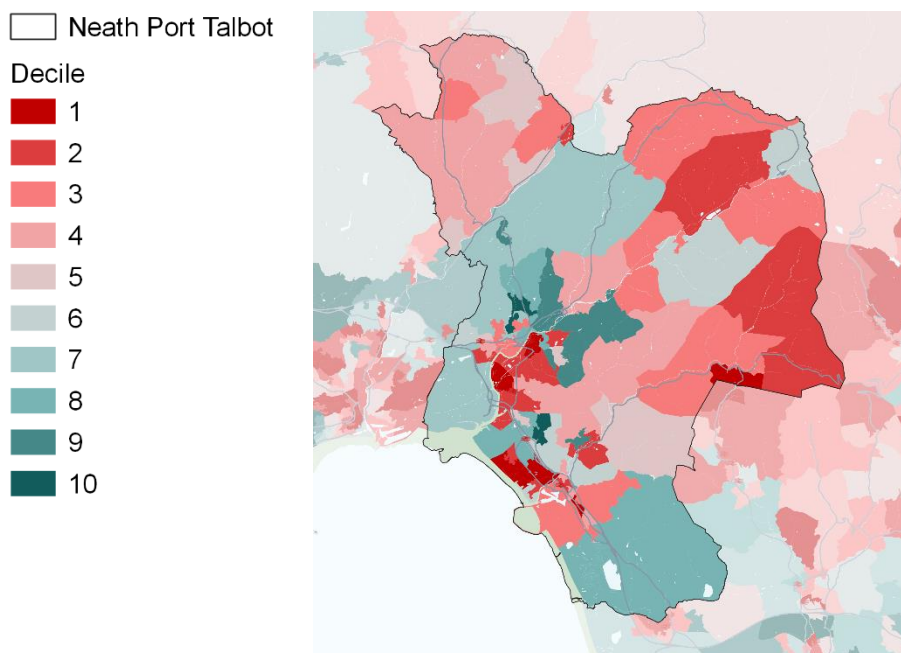
An analysis of matched data from the Welsh Government Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and the Careers Wales Pupil Destinations Survey (2011) found that “pupils that live in the most deprived areas were over five times more likely to become NEET than pupils living in the least deprived areas.” In addition, “pupils who are eligible for free school meals were almost three times more likely to become NEET than pupils who are not eligible (Welsh Government, 2013).

¹⁴ Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

Welsh Government Rapid Evidence Review¹⁵ found that “socio-economic disadvantage is also often linked to other risk factors which can add to or compound the challenges young people face, such as:

- Family worklessness and poor educational experiences (LWI, 2018b);
- Choices about post-16 pathways, with, for example, lower rates of participation in higher education, amongst young people from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, such as areas with higher levels of deprivation, or with parents with lower levels of education or from lower socio-economic groups (HESA, 2023);
- Ill health and disability (IOHE, 2020)”.

Index of Multiple Deprivation, Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government 2019



Awareness of training and employment pathways

The YPG National Conversation¹⁶ was a conversation with young people about their future. “Many [young people] claimed they did not know what to do next, having completed school or college.” Around a third of those surveyed lacked clear aspirations. The literature review to support and inform the conversation highlighted low aspirations; lack of confidence, hope or expectation of employment; and/or weak knowledge or understanding of EET pathways.

The YPG National Conversation also showed that many of the young people consulted were ‘not very aware’ of the support available, and therefore it is reasonable to infer that they are not taking up support and as a result forgoing the chance/s to “build their capabilities, increase their access to opportunities and/or strengthen their motivation.”¹⁷

Additional learning needs

¹⁵ Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

¹⁶ [Young Persons Guarantee: National Conversation](#)

¹⁷ Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

An analysis of matched data from the Welsh Government PLASC and the Careers Wales Pupil Destinations Survey (2011) identified that pupils whose additional needs were supported at School Action Plus were almost five times more likely to become NEET than pupils without Additional Learning Needs (ALN).¹⁸

Those with a disability

Disabled young people are disproportionately likely to be NEET. This is even more pronounced for 19 to 24-year-olds compared to 16- to 18-year-olds. 2,359 (19%) young people aged 16 to 24 in Neath Port Talbot were disabled under the Equality Act in 2021, a higher proportion than the Wales average.

In Wales, almost one in five (18.7%) disabled people aged 16 to 18 are NEET, rising to almost four in ten (38.6%) of disabled people aged 19 to 24.¹⁹

Social Services Involvement

Among homeless youth populations, a very large proportion of those young people have been involved in the child welfare system. There is also evidence of a large gap in attainment between looked after children and other pupils at all stages of education, critically at Key Stage 4, which impacts on their opportunities for progression.

Local data analysis has identified that young people receiving support from Social Services, but not Looked After, is a key identifier for young people at risk of experiencing homelessness by the age of 20.

National data analysis of the Welsh Government PLASC and the Careers Wales Pupil Destinations Survey (2011) identified that pupils in care were around four times more likely to become NEET than other pupils.²⁰

Young Carer

Young carers are less likely to be in full-time education, are more likely to have lower educational attainment levels, experience worse mental wellbeing and are at a higher risk of disengaging from learning. Data from the 2021 census suggests that 939 young people in Neath Port Talbot had caring responsibilities in 2021.

Research has found that young carers are a particularly vulnerable group, in part because their caring responsibilities limit when and where they can participate in employment, education and training but also because it can result in (unlawful) discrimination. Being a carer is associated with a range of risk factors including:

- “The emotional stress associated with being a young carer, which can impact upon mental health and also motivation, as young carers may be more vulnerable to pessimistic thinking and be ‘present-orientated’ in their thinking, finding it difficult to think ahead or plan for their futures and/or reluctant to relinquish their caring responsibilities to others (and leave behind the person/people they care for);
- Negative experience of school, linked to lower levels of educational attainment.”²¹

¹⁸ Welsh Government, 2013, p.24

¹⁹ Welsh Government, 2022

²⁰ Welsh Government, 2013, p.24

²¹ Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people’s thinking and behaviour](#)

Transport and rurality.

As part of the national conversation to inform the YPG, young people identified inaccessibility, reliability and/or cost of transport as the most common barriers to EET.²²

Minority Groups / Protected Characteristics

There is intersectionality between being NEET and/or homeless, and sexuality, race and gender.

The Welsh Government's Rapid Review²³ found that "few or no qualifications are often clustered with other risk factors associated with a higher risk of being 'NEET', such as socio-economic disadvantage; disabilities and/or ALN; some ethnicities, most notably Gypsy Traveller and Roma; and young people whose first language is other than English."

Prior Experiences of Education and Training

A negative experience of school can have a lasting effect on a young person's education, employment and training. Research shows that a "particular risk factor seems to be those who had poor school attendance or who were excluded". The YPG National Conversation²⁴ includes the accounts of a number of young people who felt that school had "failed them" and as a result they were unprepared for the transition into EET.

An analysis of the Welsh Government PLASC and the Careers Wales Pupil Destinations Survey (2011) identified that:

- Pupils with an attendance rate of 50% or less are around 15 times more likely to become NEET than pupils with an attendance rate of 90% or more;
- Pupils with an unauthorised absence rate of above 30% are almost 11 times more likely to become NEET than pupils with an unauthorised absence rate of 10% or less.

Acknowledgements

This Youth Engagement Strategy has been shaped, supported and enhanced by a wide variety of people and organisations. Every person who took part in the conversation has played a part in developing the action plan and will go on to play a role in delivering it for the benefit of the people of Neath Port Talbot.

Particular thanks must go to the young people of Neath Port Talbot who shared their experiences and their ideas for the future.

²² [Young Persons Guarantee: National Conversation](#)

²³ Welsh Government: [Rapid Evidence Review: Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to achieve their goals: young people's thinking and behaviour](#)

²⁴ [Young Persons Guarantee: National Conversation](#)

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Impact Assessment - First Stage

1. Details of the initiative

Initiative description and summary: Adoption of the new Youth Engagement Strategy
Service Area: Employability, Skills and Poverty
Directorate: ELLLS
Strategic Decision: Yes

2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service users	x	
Staff	x	
Wider community	x	
Internal administrative process only		x

3. Evidence used in the Assessment

<p>Local Data</p> <p>Youth Homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and young people under 16 – End of June 2024 65 dependent children and young people within Neath Port Talbot were Temporarily Accommodated; Annual data shows that during 23/24 there were 18 young people aged 16 to 17 who presented to Housing for assistance; Annual data shows that during 23/24 there were 186 young people aged 18 to 14 who presented to Housing for assistance; <p>Young People at who are Not in Education, Employment or Training:</p> <p>For the 31st March 2023 to 1st April 2024 reporting period there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 139 young people aged 16-18 whose status was unknown to Careers Wales (Tier 1);
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- 286 young people aged 16-18 who were Not in Education, Employment or Training with multiple barriers (Tier 2);
- 172 young people aged 16-18 who were Not in Education, Employment or Training but were actively seeking a provision (Tier 3).

National Policy Context

In 2022 the Welsh Government published a strengthened **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**, which contributes to the broader goal of tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment. It is built around the early identification of those aged 11 to 18 who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training or homeless (NEET), understanding their needs, putting appropriate support and/or provision in place, and monitoring their progression.

The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook explains that "responsibility for implementing the Framework is shared by all partners". For partnership working to be successful all partners involved in the delivery of the Youth Engagement Strategy need to be part of an ongoing process of reflection and review. This process needs to be enabled by senior leaders. The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Handbook advocates that this approach "will help drive improvements in NEET rates and reduction in youth homelessness."

This Framework operates alongside The **Young Person's Guarantee** for people aged 16 to 24. This aims to give young people who are NEET other opportunities to move into education, employment or training. Collectively, these support the national milestone of at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds in education, employment and training by 2050 and the mission to prevent youth homelessness.

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The four purposes of the curriculum are to support children to be:

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 - Support more people to achieve the necessary level qualifications linked to the skills that local employers need now and in the future.

One of the objectives of the **Neath Port Talbot Recover, Reset, Renew Corporate Plan 2022–2027** is to ensure all children get the best start in life. Actions against this objective include helping pupils reconnect with school and improve attendance rates;

providing effective early intervention; helping young people leaving care to access and maintain appropriate accommodation; working with partners to reduce youth unemployment; and increase work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.

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- Children, young people and their families are able to access the right support at the right time with positive outcomes.
- Children and young people can access education that inspires them to learn and develop the skills they need for the future they want.
- Children and young people are listened to, and they have opportunities to be actively involved in decision-making.
- All children and young people should be supported to help themselves be physically healthy and feel mentally and emotionally strong.

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy Plan 2023/4 – 2025/6 sets out the council's strategic approach to reducing and preventing homelessness by "managing the challenges of homelessness and affordable housing across the Borough". The plan acknowledges that "there is a need to develop more accommodation-based services and provide a more specialised response to young people facing homelessness and young care leavers so that they can thrive and achieve their potential into adulthood. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to ensure that there is sufficient specialist services to meet the needs of these young people.

The Neath Port Talbot Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan (2023/23 – 25/26) states "we will see a number of young people transition from Children and Young People Services over the next few years. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to ensure that there is sufficient specialist service to meet the needs of young people."

The Children and Young People's Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022–2025 sets out how to "increase meaningful participation of children and young people through inclusive engagement. This will ensure children and young people will be able to influence issues and decisions that impact directly and indirectly on them, their families, and communities."

4. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L/D	Reasons for your decision and details of the impact
Age	x				M	The Strategy will focus on young people and will help support those young people at risk of becoming not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and those who are at risk of youth homelessness.
Disability		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Gender Reassignment		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Marriage/Civil Partnership		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy/Maternity		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Race		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Religion/Belief		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L/D	Reasons for your decision and details of the impact
Sex		X			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.
Sexual orientation		x			L	The Strategy will be open to all young people aged between 11 – 25, the Strategy will not discriminate and accordingly there is no impact on this protected characteristic.

5. Does the initiative impact on:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		x			L	There will be no impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language. The strategy is intended for all young people, regardless of their first language, and young people will be supported in either Welsh or English as appropriate.
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		x			L	There will be no impact on the way the Welsh language is treated. The strategy is intended for all young people regardless of their first language and will be available in Welsh and English.

6. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
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To maintain and enhance biodiversity		X			L	There will be no impact on biodiversity.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.		x			L	There will be no impact on biodiversity.

7. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):

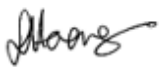
	Yes	No	Details
Long term - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	X		If adopted, the Strategy aims to provide the framework for supporting young people who are NEET or at risk of being NEET opportunities to move into education, employment or training, with the aim of improving their future life chances
Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	X		The Strategy supports the long term well-being of young people and is linked directly to wellbeing objectives 1 and 4.
Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	X		Young people and key stakeholders have been involved in the development of this strategy.
Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions	X		There have been workshops and consultations with young people, key stakeholders and internal partners in developing the Strategy and a key component of the Strategy is collaboration and <u>multi agency</u> working.

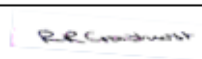
	Yes	No	Details
Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	x		If adopted, the strategy supports an early intervention and prevention model of working wherever possible.

8. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):

A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required	x
Reasons for this conclusion	
Having completed the screening assessment it has been determined that a full impact assessment is not required as the adoption of the Youth Engagement Strategy has no negative impacts. The screening indicates that the protected characteristic of Age is likely to be positively impacted upon from the adoption of the strategy and that the strategy supports the sustainable development principles.	

A full impact assessment (second stage) is required	
Reasons for this conclusion	

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Jason Haeney	Principal Youth & Community Officer		14/10/24

Signed off by	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Head of Service/Director		15.10.24
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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

24th October 2024

Report of the Director of Education

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title: Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET) in non-maintained settings, primary and secondary schools, all age schools and into Post 16.

Purpose of the Report:

This report will provide Members with an update on the progress to date with the actions that schools and the Local Authority (LA) have taken in meeting the statutory duties around ALNET implementation and the support schools have received.

Executive Summary:

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, and the accompanying Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code for Wales 2021, makes provision for a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). This replaces the existing legislation surrounding Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the assessment of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) in post-16 education and training.

The Act creates:

- a) A unified legislative framework to support all children of compulsory school age or below with ALN, and young people with ALN in school or Further Education (FE).
- b) An integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring, which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions.
- c) A fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

The increased statutory responsibilities to the LA as a result of the ALNET are as follows:

- Responsibility for Children and Young People (CYP) with ALN across the extended age range of 0-25.
- The replacement of all statutory plans (Statements of SEN) and non-statutory plans (Individual Education Plans) with a single statutory Individual Development Plan (IDP), which is appealable to the Education Tribunal for Wales (ETW).
- The development and maintenance of IDPs for all Children who are Looked After (CLA) and have ALN.
- The development and maintenance of IDPs for all Children with ALN who are dual registered.

- The implementation of effective arrangements for the early intervention and dispute resolution. These are to be provided free of charge to CYP with ALN and their parents/ carers at the point of delivery.

In addition to the increased responsibilities outlined above, the new legislation has also significantly reduced the statutory timescale, during which the LA must undertake the decision making process and produce new LA Maintained IDPs, from 26 weeks to 12 weeks. Furthermore, Welsh Government have introduced the requirement for all LAs to have an online IDP platform, which will ensure schools, CYP, their families and all relevant professionals have access to an electronic copy of the plan and are able to contribute to it through virtual means.

Welsh Government have adopted a phased approach to the implementation of the new statutory framework, which has run alongside delivery of the wider ALN Transformation Programme, in order for institutions and practitioners to understand the new system and effectively manage and transfer learners from the existing to the new system.

This phased approach commenced in September 2021 and spans a three year period. Therefore, by the end of this academic year (24-25), all learners with ALN should have transferred to the new ALN System and should have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) in place of the current SEN Statement, Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Learning and Skills Plan. As at January 2024, Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) noted the number of pupils on roll of a maintained school in NPT was 20,741, of which 13.5% were noted to have ALN. This was above the national average recorded at this time of 11.2%.

Background:

The Neath Port Talbot Inclusion Service is part of the wider 'Early Years, Inclusion and Partnerships Service'. It comprises of a Coordinator, 6 Service Managers and over 100 core funded staff across a number of teams who support Children and Young People both within and outside of school settings. These include:

- The Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
- The School Based Counselling Service (SBCS)
- The Support for Learning Service (SfL)
- The Wellbeing and Behaviour Service (WBS)
- Education of Children Looked After (CLA)
- The Additional Learning Needs Support Service (ALNSS)

The overall purpose of the Inclusion Service is to:

“Support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all children and young people are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.”

In order to achieve the above, the successful implementation of the ALNET Act 2018 and the ALN Code for Wales 2021, across both LA services and in schools within Neath Port Talbot, is key.

This report will seek to provide an update in relation of the above, outlining a summary of the activity undertaken and the impact measured to date.

Early Intervention

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 introduced a new statutory 'Early Years ALN Lead Officer (EYALNLO)' role, whose responsibility it is to:

- co-ordinate the LA's responsibilities for supporting early identification of ALN in pre-school children;
- support the development of plans for children with severe and complex needs;
- assist in the provision of ALN training, awareness raising and advice in pre-school settings in NPT; and
- work collaboratively with partner services such as Health and Children's Services.

The EYALNLO has worked effectively with partner agencies to establish an Early Years Multi Agency Panel (EYMAP), which consists of both LA (Education and Social Services) and Health professionals. Children from as young as 18 months are discussed, supported and monitored. Support is provided to children and their families in a variety of ways.

Since its implementation, 559 children have been discussed at EYMAP and all have been provided with a level of support. 147 of those discussed have also been provided with a LA Maintained IDP, which clearly outlines their ALN and the ALP required to meet them. To date, there has been no appeal lodged to ETW for pre-school children therefore highlighting that the decision making process EYMAP performs is robust and the plans produced are of high quality.

Since January 2021, the ALNSS has also appointed 2 EY ALN Transition and Partnership Officers (TPOs), who have worked closely with the EYALNLO to ensure that children with identified ALN have targeted support to transition from home in to a pre-school setting/ school, or from a pre-school setting to school. These officers have supported 172 children to transition into school and 41 pre-school

children into childcare to date. Furthermore, these officers, along with the EYALNLO, facilitate EYs multi agency 'school starters' cluster planning meetings, which have been embedded across the school clusters, as part of the early identification support offer from the LA. The sessions run twice a year and identify cohorts of children going into a mainstream school who may have a developmental support need or identified ALN. So far 536 children across 53 schools have been discussed. The sessions are reported to be worthwhile and allow schools to effectively plan for their Inclusive Learning Provision (ILP) and ALP upon the child's transition to school. Questionnaires are sent to either the Head Teacher or ALNCo following the session, and 97% have reported they found the sessions excellent and a highly effective use of time. 100% have also reported that the sessions have assisted the school with planning for transition and provision.

In addition to the 2 EY TPOs, in October 2022, the ALNSS also appointed 3 EY ALN Support Officers. These are temporary, grant funded posts, whose focus is to provide strategic, systemic support across NPT pre-schools. This includes guidance in relation to new, innovative ways of working, along with the provision of advice and bespoke packages of support for those children who have identified or potential ALN. To date, these officers have had involvement with 168 children and feedback from settings has indicated that they have assisted the setting and practitioners to better understand the children's needs. 83% found that communication between the Support Officers and themselves was excellent, with 78% reporting that they feel strongly that the roles have made a positive impact on the child's development.

Alongside the recruitment of additional staff to increase the capacity of the ALNSS in relation to meeting the needs of the EY cohort, during 2023, the 'Caterpillars' ALN Playgroup was also successfully established. This is attended by pre-school children from as young as 15 months of age, who have had developmental delay/ emerging needs identified by the Health Visiting Service through their routine developmental checks. It runs on a weekly basis and is supported by a multi-agency team which includes representatives from ALNSS,

Portage, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, the EPS and the Childcare Disability Team (CDT). To date, 44 children have accessed this playgroup and of the feedback provided 100% of parents have reported that they found the sessions helpful and that their confidence in supporting and understanding their child's needs has also increased.

The increased capacity of the ALNSS in relation to the EY cohort has ensured that a strong training offer of support is available to childcare settings, parents / carers and nursery staff. This universal offer of support ensures consistent advice and strategies are provided, and staff within childcare settings have a good knowledge and understanding of new ALN legislation and processes, child development, and ALN. Training is offered flexibly and in response to need. Strong support is also provided to the sector through trained Person Centred Practice (PCP) practitioners and PCP Champions. The settings report the training to be informative and supportive.

Finally, the EYALNLO has a robust tracking and monitoring system in place, and this data feeds in strategically to the Education Directorate in terms of planned places pressures, allocation of resources and grants and creation of new posts, in order to fulfil the Council's statutory duties.

Conversion of Statements of SEN and IEPs

Conversion of Statements of SEN to IDPs

The responsibility for the conversion of Statements of SEN to IDPs sits with the ALNSS, who are currently adhering to Welsh Government's timeline for implementation and conversions. All learners in mandated cohorts with Statements of SEN have been identified and efficient processes have been established to ensure both the LA and schools are clear in their respective roles and responsibilities within these. Person Centred paperwork has also been produced to support these

processes, which ensures that the views and wishes of the CYP and their parents/ carers are at the heart of the decision-making process. Below is an overview of progress to date:

- During the academic year 2022-2023 there were 425 pupils in the mandated cohorts that required their Statements of SEN converted to IDPs. These have been successfully completed and all have an IDP in place.
- During the academic year 2023-2024, there were 229 pupils in the mandated cohorts that required their Statements of SEN converted to IDPs. To date, 46% have an IDP in place. Whilst it is acknowledged that the service has not reached the target set yet for the last academic year, there is a clear plan in place to ensure that all will have an IDP in place by the end of the autumn term. Furthermore, it is clear from discussions at both a regional and national level that this is a similar picture across Wales.

Looking ahead to the current academic year 2024-2025, it has been identified that there are 496 pupils in the mandated cohorts that require their Statements of SEN converted to IDPs.

Adhering to WG's timeline of conversion will continue to be a focus for the ALNSS and ALN Grant Funding has been allocated to create additional capacity within the ALNSS, on a temporary basis, to assist in the completion of conversions and ensure that all Statements of SEN are converted to IDPs by the end of the academic year 2024-2025.

Conversion of IEPs to IDPs

The Inclusion Service has worked collaboratively and purposefully to provide robust advice, guidance, support and high quality in-service training for Head Teachers, School Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff in relation to the implementation of ALNET and the roles and responsibilities placed on schools. In line with Welsh Government's requirements NPT have produced a 'Principles and Expectations' document, which clearly outlines these, along with what constitutes effective teaching in meeting the needs of learners with

ALN. Furthermore, the Inclusion Service undertakes a range of activities throughout the year to ensure that there is ongoing and meaningful dialogue with schools, which focuses on supporting schools in moving learners with SEN to the new ALN System. Such activities include:

The most recent data analysis by the IDP Systems and Process Officer confirms that, to date, the majority of learners (68%) who were identified as being in the mandated cohorts for conversion for the academic years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 have been successfully transferred to the ALN System. Furthermore, qualitative data gathered during the 'Plan and Review' sessions evidence that most ALNCoS within schools now have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities under ALNET and feel confident in carrying these duties out.

The Inclusion Service has identified those schools who will now benefit from enhanced support in the term ahead, in order to ensure they adhere to the statutory timescales provided by Welsh Government.

Development of LA IDPs within statutory timescales

In addition to conversions, the ALNSS is also responsible for the development of new Local Authority (LA) Maintained Individual Development Plans (IDPs), and their subsequent maintenance and review. The LA has developed clear and robust decision-making processes to support these duties and a weekly Inclusion Panel operates to ensure that the CYP across the 0-16 age range, who have been identified as having the highest level of need, receive the right support via a LA Maintained IDP. Panel members are well supported in understanding their roles and responsibilities within this statutory decision-making process via the delivery of appropriate training.

The Council is required to develop IDPs within a statutory timeframe of 12 weeks. Performance Indicators (PIs) for the ALNSS for the period

1st January 2024 – 18th September 2024 highlights that where there were no 'exceptions', 100% of IDPs were produced within the statutory timescale. 'Exceptions' refer to those cases whereby it is 'impractical' for the LA to comply with the specified 12 week period, as either:

- The ALN and ALP cannot be described in a meaningful way, i.e. if a key piece of advice by the parent and/ or professional has not been provided to the LA within given timescales, thereby preventing the LA from describing the ALN and ALP in a meaningful way; or
- there are circumstances that are beyond the LA's control, such as where the child or young person is unavailable for a substantial period due to illness, school holiday periods etc.

With exceptions, 25.68% of IDPs were prepared within the specified 12 week timescale, which is a significant increase from the 1.82% of IDPs that were prepared within the specified 12 week timescale at the end of the January –September 2023 reporting period. However, this remains an ongoing area for improvement within the ALNSS and it is hoped that the increased capacity of the service, as a result of the re-structure, will continue to have a positive impact on the upward trajectory of this data.

Finally, as per Welsh Government (WG) requirements, the LA has successfully developed an online IDP platform, along with the support of a commissioned software company, which fully meets Welsh Government requirements. The ALNSS is currently in the process of embedding this system and any new LA Maintained IDPs are now produced using this platform. In terms of next steps, the parents', professionals' and schools' portals now need to become fully functional. A timeline has been developed around this and progress will be reviewed at the end of the academic year.

Development of a robust quality assurance framework in place to monitor and review the impact of Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

An integral function for the Inclusion Service in relation to improving outcomes for CYP with ALN is the development of high quality IDPs, at both a school and LA level, which are underpinned by PCP.

The service currently has 8 accredited PCP trainers who actively support colleagues within the wider directorate, school staff and partner agencies, such as Health, to understand what makes a good quality IDP.

This has ensured that PCP is now embedded across both Inclusion Services and schools within NPT, and this is demonstrated within the paperwork that is submitted to, and reviewed by, the ALNSS on a weekly basis. Furthermore, a recent thematic report produced by ESTYN, which reviews the implementation of ALN reform in Wales, highlights that PCP has 'enhanced' relationships between schools and families on a national scale.

In addition to the 8 accredited PCP trainers highlighted above, the ALNSS has also appointed a 'Lead IDP Systems and Process Officer' whose role it is to support schools in producing high quality school maintained IDPs. From September 2022, an IDP quality assurance activity has been undertaken on a half-termly basis, which has reviewed the samples of IDPs provided by schools and identified areas for development. This in turn informed the development of a comprehensive and effective training package, which was successfully implemented during the academic year 2023-2024 on a cluster basis.

In addition to the above, the IDP Systems and Process Officer also supports the Manager of the ALNSS to quality assure IDPs developed by LA staff on a weekly basis. This in turn informs future training needs and areas for development on both a strategic and operational level.

In terms of the impact of the above work, this can be measured by the very low number of appeals lodged against NPT with the ETW since

the implementation of ALNET. Since this time, only 3 appeals have been lodged to ETW. Two of these were withdrawn following successful mediation and 1 was upheld only in part following the Tribunal Process. Furthermore, feedback from parents and carers highlighted that nearly all felt that they had been listened to and treated respectfully throughout the IDP process.

The quality of IDPs can also be measured by the impact they make on the progress of learners with ALN. Since July 22, 24 schools across NPT have been inspected by ESTYN and analysis of the reports has highlighted that ALN provision is effective. Furthermore, as a result of this, most pupils with ALN in these schools have made positive progress in their learning from their varied starting points. In addition, 2 of the reports specifically referenced how well the schools had been prepared for the implementation of ALNET.

Working with partners to ensure the Local Authority fulfils its statutory duties in relation to post 16 provision for young people ALN.

Since the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales 2018 Act the Coordinator for Inclusion has established and chaired a Post-16 Steering Group, which includes representation from SBUHB, NPT College and third sector providers. This group has facilitated purposeful work streams which have resulted in the development of a 'Post 16 transition protocol for young people with ALN', and an 'Enhanced Transition Framework' which includes a Multiagency Transition Screening Meeting (MATSM).

The aim of the MATSM is to ensure a co-ordinated approach to support for young people who need enhanced transition into post 16 provision. This may include young people who have ALN, face challenging circumstances, have mental health issues, and/ or who are disengaged from education or any other reason. This has been successfully piloted in two secondary schools to date and all NCY 11 learners in these schools last year, who were identified as being at risk of disengagement and in need of enhanced transition support during the process, were allocated a key worker who supported their transition to

their chosen FEI. Impact/ success will be measured in autumn term 24. The LA is now in the process of rolling out MATSM, with a view to all secondary schools participating in summer term 2025. Furthermore, there will also be a MATSM for learners who are Electively Home Educated (EHE).

Within the ALNSS, there is also an appointed ALN Lead Officer for Post 16, who has developed strong, productive partnership links with NPT College. This has ensured that not only is there consistent College representation in the Person-Centred Reviews (PCRs) of learners in years 10 and 11, but schools have a better understanding of the Universal/ Inclusive offer of support provided by college. This enables timely identification of:

- Those learners who will require an IDP that can be maintained by the FEI.
- Those learners who will continue to require a LA Maintained IDP when they attend a FEI.
- Those who will potentially require an Independent Specialist Post 16 Institution (ISPI).

Financial Impacts:

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There is no impact or implications.

Workforce Impacts:

There are no workforce implications associated with this report.

Legal Impacts:

The update will assist the Authority in monitoring compliance with its Statutory duties.

Risk Management Impacts:

No implications.

Crime and Disorder Impacts:

No implications

Counter Terrorism Impacts:

No implications

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts:

No implications

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

The report is for information.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Not applicable .

Implementation of Decision:

Not applicable.

Appendices:

None

List of Background Papers:

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act
2018

The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code for Wales 2021

Officer Contact:

Zoe Ashton-Thomas (Coordinator for Inclusion). z.ashton@npt.gov.uk

Sophie Griffiths (Manager of the ALNSS) s.griffiths6@npt.gov.uk

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

24th October 2024

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Budget 2025/26

Purpose of Report

To consider the savings and income generation proposals currently subject to early engagement, as agreed at Cabinet 2nd October 2024.

Background

On 2nd October 2024 Cabinet agreed that early engagement could be undertaken on a suite of savings and income generation proposals which have been developed to assist in closing the 2025/26 budget gap.

Appendix 1 of this report includes the proposals within the purview of the scrutiny committee.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Not applicable.

Workforce Impacts

Not applicable.

Legal Impacts

Not applicable.

Risk Management Impacts

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

Not applicable.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts

Not applicable.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the constitution for consultation on this item.

Recommendations

Member of the committee scrutinise the proposals and if appropriate suggest alternatives for Cabinet to consider.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

List of Background Papers

Not applicable.

Officer Contract

Andrew Thomas - Corporate Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning

Nicola Pearce – Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	£
ELLL	Chris Saunders	ELLL-A	Margam Country Park	Staff changes and possible reductions. Driving income through changes to the car parking arrangements, increasing the programme of events	150,000
ELLL	Chris Saunders	ELLL-B	Pontardawe Arts Centre	New cinema and improved catering arrangements	40,000
ELLL	Chris Saunders	ELLL-C	Indoor leisure	Indoor Leisure - trading improvements & cost reduction	175,000
ELLL	Chris Saunders	ELLL-D	Indoor Leisure	Temporary estimated full year saving from the closure of Pontardwe Swimming Pool on H&S grounds.	233,250
ELLL	Chris Saunders	ELLL-E	Aberafan Seafront	Additional/funfair and events	25,000
ELLL	Chris Saunders	ELLL-F	Education Learning Resource Service	Increased income target	10,000
ELLL	Chris Saunders	ELLL-G	Libraries	Reduce resources budget - stop purchase of DVD's	10,000
ELLL	Rhiannon Crowhurst	ELLL-H	Home to school transport	Externally led review of all existing arrangements	500,000
ELLL	Rhiannon Crowhurst	ELLL-I	Primary school cleaning	Full cost recovery - Increase cleaning recharge to schools phased over three years	317,000
ELLL	Rhiannon Crowhurst	ELLL-J	Education Support Services	Reducing hours and service remodelling	80,000
ELLL	Chris Millis	ELLL-K	Education Development Service	Reduce staff costs/offset against specific grant	25,000
ELLL	Andrew Thomas	ELLL-L	Pension & Early Retirement	Core budget requirement has reduced	15,000
ELLL	Hayley Lervy	ELLL-M	Education Psychology Service	Offset costs against grant	9,000
ELLL	Hayley Lervy	ELLL-N	Specialist Commissioning for Schools	This saving will be for one year only. OT post commissioned from Health will be funded from reserves instead of core.	55,000
ELLL	Hayley Lervy	ELLL-O	Learning Difficulty Team	Staff costs offset against grant funding.	12,000
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-Q	Pest Control	Delivered through increased income target. Potential to achieve without increasing fees.	9,000
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-R	Pollution Control (Including Giants Grave Land Fill)	Delivered through recharging of officer time where appropriate and reduction of the materials budget for Giants Grave	11,000
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-X	Trading Standards	Delivered through [1] deletion of a Career Grade opportunity currently built into the structure (i.e. Enforcement Officer to Trading Standards Officer) (£11,000); and [2] reduction of the	19,884

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	£
				professional fees budget used for Barristers/Court Proceedings (£8,884).	
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-Y	General Environmental Health	Deletion of a post either within the 'Housing Enforcement Team' or the 'Public Health and Safety Team'.	43,000
ENV	Ceri Morris	ENV-Z	Food & Health Protection	Deletion of vacant part-time EHO Post (GR9).	29,000
Total					1,768,134



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

23rd October 2024

Report of the Head of Education Development – Christopher Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title. Service Improvement Plans from Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate

Purpose of the Report:

To receive information regarding an example of Service Improvement Plans within ELLL;

- Child and Family Service Improvement Plan
- Early Years Service Improvement Plan
- Education Development Service Improvement Plan
- Project Development and Funding Unit
- Tourism Service Improvement Plan

Executive Summary:

The Service Improvement Plan (SIP) is a key level (strand) in the 'Golden Thread' of the council's revised Corporate Performance Management Framework. Primarily they are detailed service led documents that help to inform and develop the Directorates Strategic Improvement Plan. They are used as a key planning tool for the service, underpinning planning and performance arrangements. They allow us to undertake an honest, objective and transparent evaluation of performance and demonstrate self-awareness from evidenced based analysis. They support us to determine if adequate resources (including workforce) are available to improve our services and provide assurance that our services are doing the right things, outlining what we want to achieve and what we need to do to improve the service that we provide for stakeholders. Within our Directorate, Coordinators are invited into SMT to discuss the progress of Service Improvement Plans that sit within their portfolios. They are also part of the professional development review (PDR).

Background:

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (Part 6, Chapter 1) came into effect from 1st April 2021. This chapter of the Act has a number of performance and governance related duties one of which is to report on performance through self-assessment, and requires each council to keep under

review the extent to which it is meeting its performance requirements. Whilst the Act requires each council to complete an annual self- assessment at corporate level, in order for self–assessment to be embedded across the organisation it is important to also facilitate self-assessment at service level. Whilst not every service within Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning would be subject to the statutory functions of the Act it's important a consistent approach is taken throughout with the same principles being applied. At its simplest level, self-assessment is about asking the questions of:

How well are we doing? How do we know? What and how can we do better?

The attached Service Improvement Plans will have the below information under a number of key headings;

- Purpose
- Vision
- How well are we doing?
- How and what can we do better?
- How do we know?
- Any risks?
- Key Actions
- Performance Measures

As with many services, across all directorates, if funding is reduced or grants are unavailable, it will directly impact on that service and what it can provide

Financial Impacts:

There are no financial impacts as this report is for information

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications as this includes information that affects all areas of NPT

Workforce Impacts:

No implications

Legal Impacts:

There are no legal impacts as this report is for monitoring purposes.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item as this report is for monitoring purposes.

Recommendations:

No recommendations as this is a report for Information purposes only.

Reason for Proposed Decision:

No decision required

Implementation of Decision:

N/A

Appendices:

Appendix 1 -Child and Family Service Improvement Plan

Appendix 2 -Early Years Service Improvement Plan

Appendix 3 -Education Development Service Improvement Plan

Appendix 4 -Project Development and Funding Unit

Appendix 5 -Tourism Service Improvement Plan

Officer Contact:

- Chris Millis – Head of Education Development c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk
- Chris Saunders – Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture c.saunders@npt.gov.uk
- Hayley Lervy -Head of Early Years, Inclusion and Partnerships h.lervy@npt.gov.uk
- Rhiannon Crowhurst - Head of Support Services and Transformation r.crowhurst@npt.gov.uk

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SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023 – 2026 (Updated, September, '24)

Directorate: Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning

Service Area: Child & Family Support

Accountable Manager: John Burge

Purpose

The Child and Family Support Team provides an extended range of services to schools, governors, authority officers, pupils, parents and the wider community. Such teams bridge links between school and home supporting, enabling and resolving issues that might be impacting upon a child.

The service is sub-divided into eight areas:

- Admissions
- School Governance
- Education Welfare
- Safeguarding
- Elective Home Education
- Vulnerable Learners



- Case Assessment & Progression
- Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

We support school governors by ensuring they receive high quality advice and training in order for them to undertake their statutory responsibilities at their respective schools. We ensure that all regulatory requirements are fulfilled in accordance with statutory provisions placed upon us as a local authority. We support schools and families on issues relating to pupil attendance, with the aim to assist and facilitate an early return to school through various strategies that encourage and improve regular attendance. We provide safeguarding advice and support across the whole of the Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning Directorate and its schools ensuring the highest level of standards are maintained in order to protect our pupils. We manage the admission arrangements for pupils entering nursery, reception and secondary phases of education at all maintained schools across the County Borough, as well as by agreement the admission process for St. Joseph's RC Voluntary Aided School & 6th Form. We support families in financial difficulty with free school meals, school uniform grants, trust funds for postgraduate students and provide female pupils with free sanitary wear via the Period Dignity grant. We provide a welcoming, safe and reassuring learning environment for pupils whose first language is not English; including supporting Afghan refugees and Ukrainians fleeing war. We provide support and a voice for Gypsy/Traveller children ensuring they are heard and made to feel included and welcomed at our schools.

Vision

As a service we are committed to the Council's priority that 'all children get the best start in life'. Within the Corporate Plan we have committed to working with schools and partners ensuring as many pupils as possible physically re-connect and engage with school reducing the number of pupils not within the education system. We will work hard to support schools to improve the attendance of pupils in both the primary and secondary phase. We will make sure what matters to children and families is at the centre of the way we plan and provide our services and support. We will make sure we do all we can for those children in need of protection to ensure they are safeguarded so they can grow up in a loving and stable family.



Values

Our values are driven by our commitment to support schools, pupils and families to the very best of our ability. We will connect with our service users through regular newsletters and updates; by greater use of electronic means such as social media; organised coffee mornings for families educating their children at home, and by reaching out directly to communities including Gypsy/Traveller families. We will work collaboratively with our partners such as schools, other internal education services, other directorates and external agencies such as health and the youth offending service. We care by ensuring all children are seen as individuals, especially those who are vulnerable and need our support more than others. We are confident that our people within the team are passionate, knowledgeable and experienced at what they do, but we are never complacent and continue to seek improvement and to better ourselves.

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How well are we doing?

1.5 Delivering Priorities and Outcomes:

The service is largely performing well to the benefit of pupils, families and schools within Neath Port Talbot. Staffing in all-but-one service area is stable with strong and experienced leadership of all teams. The manager of one service area has recently left our employment following a long period of ill-health. Arrangements are in place for a temporary job-share appointment which is working very successfully.

The annual pupil admissions round into schools (Secondary and Primary) for 2024/25 was completed ahead of schedule with some 2709 pupils being offered their first-place choice of school (99.7%) and just 8 pupils being offered their second-place choice of school (0.3%). There were no appeals. Officers have already commenced the process of managing the 2025/26 admission round.

As the time of the Covid pandemic we had to diversify our governor training offer which was moved online to allow the continuation of training during the lockdowns. This had a positive consequence when we saw governor attendance and participation increase. When



we moved away from the Covid period we re-introduce face-to-face training once more, however, we continued to offer online training as separate events. This has meant working governors or those with caring responsibilities do not miss out on these important training opportunities. Currently we do not have the capabilities to offer hybrid training sessions; however, this is something we are developing with our IT colleagues.

There is strong support in place to assist schools manage pupil attendance and exclusions. Pupil attendance rates in Neath Port Talbot stand at 90.97% (Primary) and 87.61% (secondary) with a combined whole authority rate of 88.0% [Sept '23 - July '24]. Whilst there are currently no published attendances rates across Wales that compare Primary and Secondary attendance, Welsh Government does publish the combined local authority attendance rate which for the same period has a Welsh average of 89.0%. Neath Port Talbot is currently 21st from 22 local authorities in Wales in terms of pupil attendance. Pupil attendance for the full year prior to the Covid pandemic was: 94.02% (Primary) and 92.96% (Secondary). There is no combined local authority data available for this period.

Currently there are no published exclusion rates across Wales, however, our own internal exclusion data highlights a clear concern that the rates of pupil exclusions within Neath Port Talbot are much higher than they have been in recent years. The number of pupils permanently excluded from Neath Port Talbot Schools was 37 [Sept '23 – July '24] and the number of fixed-term exclusions issued for the same period is 1886. This compares with 17 permanent exclusions and 1189 fixed-term exclusions issued during the full year prior to the Covid pandemic.

The Covid pandemic has had a clear impact on the wellbeing and routine of pupils across the globe which has been well documented. Schools are seeing an increase in behavioural issues, some of which are particularly challenging and have resulted in exclusion. As a result of these concerns the Education Senior Management Team created a new service to support schools where pupils were starting to display behavioural issues that could manifest into longer fixed-term or permanent exclusions. The Case Assessment and Progression Team has been setup to coordinate and hold to account multi-disciplinary services and agencies to ensure vulnerable pupils have the support they need and those services providing that support are being effective. The new service is young and has been soft launched through 2023/24.



The Education Safeguarding Team has a significant role in supporting schools to keep our pupils safe. This may be in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service and schools in tackling the over reliance on reduced timetables, which have a potential impact on both attendance and exclusion rates. It may be in providing safeguarding training to the service, schools and partners and being available for colleagues to raise concerns and be supported where child protection issue need to be escalated.

2. Understanding needs and engaging:

As mirrored across every local authority in Wales the number of parents choosing to educate their child(ren) themselves via Elective Home Education (EHE) has been increasing year-on-year. Covid accelerated this number substantially, although Covid is not the reason for the increase. Currently [Jan '24] there are 339 pupils registered in Neath Port Talbot as EHE. To support families home visits are offered where there is an opportunity to discuss the education being delivered at home and to provide any support and advice parents may require on curriculum planning, sources of learning materials and links to other home educators and support groups.

As a result of the national increase in EHE numbers, Welsh Government has provided each local authority with additional funding to support EHE families. One method of expenditure Neath Port Talbot has made from the funding was to provide monthly coffee mornings for EHE families at a central venue where they are free to attend, meet one another and engage with local authority officers and guest speakers. These events have proved valuable in understanding the needs of the EHE community and the type of support they want and need. Recently we have started undertaking an annual survey of satisfaction of all EHE families. The overwhelming response was that parents were happy with the support they receive. They are also an opportunity to ensure we incorporate the views of the child/parent and carer voice into our planning for spending the Welsh Government funding.

We work hard at ensuring we maintain positive relations with the local Gypsy/Traveller community. We are regular participants at the Gypsy/Traveller Forum. The forum is made up of stakeholders who support the Gypsy/Traveller community in a range of ways with the aim of providing a joined-up approach to the delivery of services.



We contribute to meetings of the Neath Port Talbot's Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Association and have links with the Bengali, Polish, Romanian and Arabic communities through VLS' bi-lingual teaching assistants (BTAs) who support ethnic minority learners and their families. We also have established links with our Afghan and Ukrainian refugee communities through VLS' Farsi and Ukrainian/Russian speaking teaching assistants and through attending NPT's Ukrainian, Refugee and Asylum Dispersal Meetings.

We have a very successful relationship with our governing bodies and individual governors. There are approximately 850 governors serving on governing bodies in Neath Port Talbot schools. Principally we work very closely with the Chair and Vice-chair of Governors from each school. The Education Senior Management Team and Officers from with the School Governance Team meet with Chairs and Vice on a termly basis where they are provided with presentations, speakers, information and opportunity for a Q&A session on any subject matter they wish to raise. These meetings are usually well attended with positive feedback. We engage further with governors via a seat on the Governors Management Group and we provide all governors with a termly newsletter. We have a dedicated governors email address where we receive a number of queries from governors seeking support and advice. Governor training feedback sheets are nearly always positive with all responses read and considered for improvement. We trialled communicating with governors via social media, however, our engagement was hampered by our lack of ability to communicate simultaneously in Welsh and with the delay in translation this ended. We would like to reinstate this one day.

We have a strong presence on the Council's website (<https://www.npt.gov.uk/1347>) where we offer information about what we do and what we can assist with. A number of our services are now available to residents/families online, such as applying for school admissions, free school meals or for a clothing grant.

We are regular contributors at Council Cabinet meetings and also at Education Scrutiny Committee where we submit reports on various areas of the service. During the past 18 months we have submitted reports on pupil attendance, exclusions, elective home education, period poverty, pupil admissions, safeguarding and school term-dates.

3. Collaboration:



All services within the Child & Family Support Team rely heavily on good positive partnership working with other internal service areas and external agencies. There is a strong relationship between colleagues that allows for a constructive dialogue that benefits the children we work with. Officers know their areas of expertise well and in return many other service areas approach us for help, support and guidance which we are pleased to assist with. Officers are not afraid to raise contentious issues or challenge others where necessary when they feel it is required.

Officers have well established networks with their counterparts across Wales sharing good practice, learning from one another and helping Welsh Government to shape strategic direction, policy and guidance. Pre-Covid, meetings used to take place face-to-face often in Mid-Wales where whole days would be consumed with travel; however, nearly all network meetings are now held remotely allowing more people from around Wales to attend and making the input much sharper and shorter.

The success of the new Case Assessment & Progression Team revolves wholly around collaborative working, utilising diplomatic and persuasion skills in order to ensure other services/agencies, both internal and external, are supporting individual pupils as best and as promptly as they can. Agencies/practitioners are often supporting the same pupil and without a joined-up approach there is often a duplication of input. Instead, the Case Assessment & Progression Team bring those agencies/practitioners together to coordinate interventions in the best interest of the pupil. To date there have been a number of successes from this collaboration with support for vulnerable pupils being stepped-up and interventions delivered much quicker. This in turn allows for better engagement by pupils in schools, better attendance rates and lower rates of exclusions.

The Gypsy/Traveller Team within the Vulnerable Learners Service has established some positive relationships recently with both the Elective Home Education Team and Youth Service. Home visits and family introductions are underway and going well despite some challenges. This process of working together is much improved on previous years where regular meetings are planned and it is hoped that we will begin to see the impact on attendance and engagement with education over the coming months.



There are several collaborative projects underway which include Swansea University, Afan College and Tir Morfa with a focus on engaging Gypsy/Traveller pupils and adults in education. 'There and Back Again' will be engaging with the community to get them cooking and talking. Also, the EM/EAL provision within the Vulnerable Learners Service has provided translation support for the Education Welfare Service to ensure correspondence is now available in the six commonest ethnic minority languages within the Local Authority as well as working closely with the service to support families from ethnic minority communities most noticeable the Romanian (ROMA) community within Neath Port Talbot. The Vulnerable Learners Service is part of the MEGRT Local Authorities Group which represents EM/EAL/GRT services across Wales and meets every two months to share information and good practice as well as to influence policy makers from the Welsh Government, ESTYN and Welsh Local Government Association who also attend this meeting.

The Education Safeguarding team has built excellent and productive working relationships with schools, the directorate and other agencies. This enables difficult conversations to take place in a mutually respectful environment. Ultimately this plays a key role in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.

The Education Safeguarding Officer works very closely with her counterparts across Wales and with Welsh Government and Estyn as part of the Safeguarding Education Group (SEG). This group has become very influential and now has significant input into Welsh Government planning and delivery of safeguarding of children in schools.

The Education Safeguarding Officer represents the Directorate on a number of regional meetings e.g.: West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board management groups, Channel panel, Western Bay Anti-Slavery Forum. This increases positive working relationships across multiple agencies and supports the work of schools and Directorate staff.

Additionally, the Education Safeguarding Officer oversees and participates in the process of School Safeguarding Peer Reviews. This process helps schools identify areas for development where peer reviewer takes the role of a critical friend. These reviews are positively received by schools who value this direct support.



We have re-started truancy patrols in both Neath and Port Talbot Town Centres working in partnership with the Police. Such patrols allow for pupils to be identified who should be in school during the school day and also to reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour taking place in the town centres resulting in complaints being made by local businesses.

4. Decision Making, Planning and Risk:

Each of the service areas within the team are managed by experienced professionals who are specialists in their field of work. As a group of managers we meet collectively every half-term for team meetings which include briefings updates, feedback, sharing concerns and to discuss whole service issues such as staffing, future strategic direction of the service, planning, budget and identifying where improvement is needed.

Data analysis and trends is an important measure for some of our services, most notably the Education Welfare Service who use pupil attendance data to better understand the picture at each of our schools and how this compares both across schools in Neath Port Talbot and across Wales benchmarked against other local authorities. Currently there is only one pupil attendance measure published across Wales that allows for benchmarking. This rate show Neath Port Talbot to be 21st out of 22 local authorities. As a result of this a lot of work and effort is going in to better understand why the pupils of Neath Port Talbot have not returned to our schools in numbers as they have in other authorities. One explanation links regular attendance with poverty. We already know that Neath Port Talbot has one of the highest levels of poverty in Wales. We also know from national research that disadvantaged pupils are more likely to have higher absence rates than pupils who are from more affluent backgrounds. Both pupil attendance and poverty are identified as important well-being objectives within the Council's Corporate Plan [Well-being Objective 1: To improve the well-being of children and young people, and Well-being Objective 2 - To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough].

Our School Governance Team have a high level of knowledge of legislation and regulations surrounding governing bodies. We have supported 13 brand new governing bodies from the point of creation through to being fully operational. We have supported 21 other governing bodies to wind-up their affairs and cease operating. The legal complexity in these areas along with the potential consequences of getting it wrong cannot be underestimated in terms of reputational and financial damages for the Council.



Our Vulnerable Learners Service and Admissions Team have both been wholly involved in the planning arrangements for the influx of Ukrainian refugees as a result of the war by Russia. Multi-agency partnership working by the service was undertaken to provide housing, financial and educational support for refugees arriving in Neath Port Talbot. The response to date has been very successful.

The team is good at service planning, identifying various priority areas of work and preparing for known busy periods. The Admissions Team are adept at managing exceptionally busy periods during the annual admissions round from their pre-planning and preparations. Thousands of families apply within a time window for access to school rolls. This is a statutory function with statutory timescales where we consistently achieve a 100% success rate.

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Currently the service does not have a succession plan in place, however, work will commence towards completing this by June, '23.

Staff sickness rates across the service are generally very low. Hybrid working has resulted in fewer days of sickness being reported.

5. Value for Money:

The Admissions Team have streamlined their operation in recent years with greater use of technology meaning their staffing complement has successfully reduced by natural turnover whilst workload has increased. This has resulted in a higher level of service for families and residents providing better value for money.

We maximise income opportunities by offsetting any staff salaries against any Welsh Government grants that allow. Where offsetting is not permitted under the terms of reference we ensure an administration allowance is applied, again where permissible. We have increased our income charging structure to an almost full cost recovery for those governing bodies who have a service level agreement with us for the professional clerking service and should be in a position of actual full cost recovery within the next 12-18 months. We have been working with Supporting Service Children in Education Cymru (SSCE) where we have been given a grant to specifically assist



pupils who are children of Armed Forces personnel. This has allowed us to undertake activities outside of our core funding stream which would not otherwise have been possible.

Our Education Welfare Service was recently successful with a business case put forward to Welsh Government to fully fund a Wales-wide attendance conference for the 22 local authorities. Not only did this allow for a training opportunity for our staff to learn from successes from other local authorities, but it was hosted in the Princess Royal Theatre allowing for other Neath Port Talbot services to benefit from the income generation.

The Co-ordinator of the service meets regularly with the Group Accountant to go through the budget and identify any financial pressures. Arising from the closure of the 2023/24 financial year a significant saving had been achieved from prudent budgeting. The Co-ordinator successfully applied to the Corporate Director's Group for £50k to be carried forward into the new financial year to allow for the recruitment of an additional temporary Education Welfare Officer to assist with the Council priority of improving pupil attendance.

6.1 Duties and Standards:

Our Vulnerable Learners Service work wholly with pupils and families from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) to ensure every child is offered the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. We work closely with Gypsy/Traveller families and BAME learners. We have and continue to assist families who have had to flee from countries of war such as Syria/Afghanistan and more recently Ukraine. We work with schools to encourage an inclusive and anti-racist approach to teaching and school experiences. We believe that minority groups of pupils should have their voices heard and listened to and never feel they are judged by their colour, ethnicity or sexual orientation. The Vulnerable Learners Service has worked with the Youth Service to ensure Neath Port Talbot's Youth Council has representatives from ethnic minority backgrounds and refugee backgrounds. Governors are provided training on issues relating to inclusion and diversity both internally by our ALN Service and externally by organisations such as 'Show Racism the Red Card' and 'ASDinfoWales'.



All staff working with schools, children and their families have undertaken training in safeguarding, equalities and diversity practices. Officers who write reports for Council scrutiny or Cabinet meetings have been fully trained in considering and writing Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs).

The service is currently in the process of upgrading all of our online content to make it accessible to assist our users who might have sight or hearing difficulties. Given we have a significant number of documents on the Council website, some of which are very large in size, this is a task that will take some time. We plan to have all documents in accessible format by the end of the year which will assist with our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Public documents are mostly published bilingually. We are aware that some older documents need translating into Welsh and this is currently being done to ensure full compliance with our Welsh Language Standards.

7.6 Socio-Economic Duty:

The Welsh Government have previously said that “attendance has a strong impact on learner outcomes, standards and progression and that examination outcomes strongly correlate to attendance rates”. This ultimately impacts on a young person’s longer-term education, training and employment opportunities. Missing school may also have an impact on pupils' wellbeing. This includes mixing with friendship groups, building resilience and accessing the mental health support that schools can offer to its learners. The current economic crisis has a significant impact on inequality, the evidence demonstrates that the poorest areas have experienced the greatest impact both in terms of health, education and financial impacts. Addressing these inequalities is highlighted in the Council’s Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality Plan under each wellbeing objective to try to explicitly close the gap between those who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage and those who have not.

There is a significant attendance gap between pupils who are categorised as eligible for free school meals and non-free school meals. This gap was identified pre-Covid, however, grew wider during the Covid period. The local authority provides additional support to narrow this gap in terms of identifying and intervening with disadvantaged 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.

The Child & Family Support Team administers several Welsh Government poverty-based grants, including:

The School Essentials Grant which is available to pupils who are eligible for assessed free school meals. The purpose of the grant is to assist families on low incomes for the purchase of: School uniform including coats and shoes; School sports kit including footwear; Uniform for enrichment activities; Equipment e.g. school bags and stationery; Specialist equipment where new curriculum activities begin such as design and technology; Equipment for out of school hour's trips such as outdoor learning e.g. waterproofs, and laptops or tablets.

Productive Home Education grant in the form of providing Laptops, vouchers to help towards the cost of purchasing books, pens and resources; swimming lessons; free access to Margam Park; Welsh lessons have been provided in the last two years and will resume when a new provider is sourced to continue the offering at either beginners, intermediate or advanced level. Parents can attend and participate in Welsh lessons along with their child. The authority also uses the grant by purchasing tickets to educational centres/activities such as Dan Yr Orgof Caves and Techniquet; plus the opportunity to learn via distance learning through online subscriptions such as Twinkl and sourced on-line iGCSE provided by a nearby college.

Period Poverty grant where secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot are funded to purchase and distribute to female pupil's period products of their choice. Primary schools are issued with products of their choice free of charge upon request. Foodbanks, libraries, community centres, churches and sports clubs are also contacted along with specific services within Social Services who deal with families and are supplied with their choice of products free of charge. The supply of free period products assists in taking away the stress of paying for these items so that families can try and deal with other financial pressures they might have.



8. DARE Strategy:

All officers across the team have the provision of laptops with full remote access to all software packages they need to undertake their jobs. This allows for remote working and the participation in online meetings rather than time-consuming and unnecessary travel. Approximately 50% of the team utilise the Council's Agile Working Policy allowing staff to work from alternative locations and from home. Again, this saves on unnecessary travel to and from a place of work and contributes towards the Council's reduction in carbon emissions.

9. Digital Opportunities:

The Covid pandemic accelerated the modernisation and deployment of digital opportunities for all service areas within the Child & Family Support Team. From the initial lockdown officers were forced to move away from traditional desktop PCs to laptops. This allows for far greater efficiencies in terms of working time and arrangements. A number customer facing services have been transferred online, including the roll-out of the annual admissions application process where several thousand applications are processed each year. Traditionally applications would be paper based, submitted online and responded to via hardcopy letter. Now the process is entirely online with responses to parents provided by email.

Nearly all policies, procedures and guidance documents that are produced by the Child & Family Support Team are available on our pages within the Council's website and/or internal intranet site. This has removed the need for thousands of pages of policies being posted to schools on an annual basis. It also allows for the most up-to-date version to be available at all times to avoid confusion as what is the current document.

Applications for free school meals and school uniform grant are now conducted via an online application with financial assistance provided direct into parents' bank account rather than paper cheques being posted out.



Each Chair and Vice-chair of Governor is provided with an official HWB email address which is secure and authorised allowing them to correspond with the headteacher of the school and local authority officers regarding confidential matters without breaching GDPR Regulations.

Governor training is now offered face-to-face and online for those governors who are working or who have caring responsibilities; however, these are sessions independent of each other. Further work is required in order to consider offering simultaneous hybrid training opportunities rather than single sessions.

How do we know?

We use a number of different methods for understanding how well the service is performing. Principally we are a service that supports others to achieve their outcomes, such as schools, pupils and families. We measure our performance by the number of compliments and complaints received; training feedback sheets and regular discussions with various stakeholders. Our Elective Home Education Team have recently started collating formal feedback from parents on the level of support and advice they receive and whether any improvements are necessary.

We also use hard data to understand the impact our services are having when supporting schools, such as pupil attendance and exclusions data. Internally we know the attendance and exclusions rates of every school in Neath Port Talbot. Currently we are unable to compare these with other schools across Wales as Welsh Government are not collecting this data, however, we can compare high level local authority data. This is a useful measure and enables us to challenge schools more directly where there is need.

Each service area has been held to account by Elected Members when presenting reports to Cabinet and Education Scrutiny Committee on the work of that area. Members provide robust challenge and compliment officers where and when they see fit.



The Education Welfare Service was nominated and shortlisted at the 2021 national APSE local government frontline service awards for its involvement with families at the height of the Covid pandemic; and more recently received an endorsement of their work from Estyn following an extended LA Link Inspection (June '24).

Education Safeguarding was heavily involved and complimented for its work and participation in a recent Joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) where statutory inspection services ESTYN, Care Inspectorate Wales, Health Inspectorate Wales, HM Constabulary and HM Probation Inspectorate came together to perform a deep dive on several vulnerable children living in Neath Port Talbot.

We also must report regularly to Welsh Government as part of the grant conditions for the funding of Period Dignity; Elective Home Education and School Uniform. The terms and conditions of the grant require regular updates of the work we are doing otherwise the Council is at risk of having the grant withdrawn.

How and what we can do better?

Our ability to support schools in managing pupil attendance is good and the team is strong; however, whilst attendance improves year-on-year Neath Port Talbot remains too close to the bottom in Wales amongst other local authorities. Pupils' attendance in both the primary and secondary sectors needs to improve at a faster rate than it has to date. Together with our school partners we need to consider new strategies and tactics to achieve this.

Exclusion rates from schools are too high and need to be reduced. We know behavioural reasons are the main driving factor behind the increase, however, we need to work with schools to understand the reasons for the rise in behavioural problems and, together with other LA services, support schools with more creative solutions where pupils have more welcoming and positive experiences at school.



Whilst significant improvements have been made with shifting parental applications for school admission places from paper-based applications to online applications further work is needed to improve uptake of online applications amongst the nursery sector.

With priority within the safeguarding team being diverted to tackling the review and audit of Pastoral Support Programmes (PSPs) and Reduced Timetables (RTTs).

The Vulnerable Learners Service has received additional council funding from reserves to provide support for schools with refugees. The funding is no longer available and service needs have changed. Therefore, a service restructure is being undertaken. This is likely to result in a small number of compulsory redundancies.

Despite funding being available to allow for supply cover in schools to release staff members, there remains a reluctance by some schools in releasing staff to attend CPD events to better support the children of Armed Forces personnel. We need to find ways to encourage a better take-up to support this group of pupils.

Communication between the various agencies in regards to Gypsy/Traveller pupils needs to improve, information isn't always being shared which can be vital to continuing positive relationships with our families and protecting staff visiting families. We need to work closely with the Gypsy/Traveller Forum to look at ways to improve this.

Budget, Resource Management and Organisational Development

The total budget of the Child & Family Support Team for the 2024/25 financial year is £3.1M. This is predominantly made-up of Welsh Government grants, employee salaries and associated costs such as the need for IT equipment, resources and travel expenses.

There are 55 staff employed across the various teams within the service. Capacity is currently a concern given that a number of the Council's priorities identified in the Corporate Plan either sit or straddle a number of the teams within the service e.g., increasing pupil attendance; decreasing pupil exclusions; reducing the dependency on reduced timetables is linked with safeguarding and anti-social



behavioural issues in town centres; supporting refugees arriving from Ukraine; alternative educational providers are not currently being checked for safeguarding issues and funding for Afghan and Ukrainian refugee learners supported the Vulnerable Learners Service is at risk of being withdrawn. We utilise the Welsh Government Elective Home Education grant to cover the cost of one of our EHE Coordinator posts which saves the Authority £50k per annum in core funding. We also use the Welsh Government Attendance Grant to employ four temporary Attendance Support Officers. The funding issue relating to the Vulnerable Learners Service is unlikely to be known until January '25 when the Council considered its next cycle of budgets

We have increased our income charging structure to a near full-cost recovery for those governing bodies who have a service level agreement with us for the professional clerking service with the aim for a full cost recovery within the next 12-18 months.

Regarding our interdependencies, all services within the Child and Family Support Team rely heavily on a number of different IT systems and support from both internally by the Digital Services Team and externally by software providers such as EMS CAPTIA. Several of our functions also depend on other internal services areas such as the Finance Department for processing free school meals and uniform grant payments, and on our Social Services colleagues when working with vulnerable children.

SWOT Analysis	
<p>KEY STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services that are respected by our customers; • Experienced and knowledgeable staff; • High level of customer satisfaction; • Solid track record of partnership working; • Low staff sickness levels; 	<p>MAIN WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff capacity and wellbeing issues due to continuous heavy workloads; • Service continuity difficulties in some areas should key individuals be absent from their roles long-term; • Succession management;



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year-on-year budget savings achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large service covering many different areas of work.
<p>KEY OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of externally funded grants; Representation on a number of national groups and forums allows us to help shape future guidance/policy; Agile working has brought about a better level of work/life balance for some staff than pre-Covid; To build on successful relationships with other internal and external service providers to improve our offer of support further. 	<p>MAIN THREATS (see also risk area below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff wellbeing due to increased work demands and pressures; Inability to offer key statutory services or functions with staff absences; Pending Local Authority Estyn Inspection; Key performance indicators, such as pupil attendance and exclusions not improving quickly enough; Budget reduction and grant withdrawals, specifically for the Vulnerable Learners Service.

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Risk Management				
Risk Title	Date From	Date To	Risk rating	
			Original	Latest
Risk 1: Pupil attendance fails to improve	04/23	03/24	20 (5x4)	20 (5x4)
Risk action 1: Full review of current support provision required to better understand what works and what doesn't work.	04/23	06/23	N/A	N/A
Risk action 2: Additional capacity/posts are created using new WG Grant.	05/23	08/23	N/A	N/A
Risk action 3: Promote attendance and managing pupil absences amongst Headteachers/Governors and partners.	04/23	03/24	N/A	N/A



Risk 2: Long-term absence of key service staff	05/23	03/24	12 (3x4)	12 (3x4)
Risk action 1: Additional internal training required.	05/23	03/24	N/A	N/A
Risk action 2: Need to identify spare capacity.	05/23	03/24	N/A	N/A
Risk action 3: Complete succession plan	05/23	06/23	N/A	N/A
Risk 3: Significant safeguarding issue within an alternative provider	05/23	03/24	10 (2x5)	10 (2x5)
Risk action 1: Engage additional member of staff to kick-start and create a system of checking-the-checker for additional providers.	06/23	12/23	N/A	N/A
Risk action 2: Reducing capacity elsewhere in order to increase capacity here.	01/24	03/24	N/A	N/A
Add more risks if required				

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Key Actions		Responsible Officer	Start Date	End Date	Well-Being Objective / Governance & Resource <i>(contributes to)</i>
1	Expenditure forecast to be contained within budget.	John Burge	04/24	03/25	Gov. & Resource
2	Support schools to increase pupil attendance across the board	Hayley Thomas	09/24	07/25	WBO1, WBO4,
3	Re-evaluate the Vulnerable Learners Service to consider the reduction of agency workers, financial security of the service and ensure appropriate staffing levels are in place based on demand/need.	Julie Stapleton/Heather Thomas	05/24	12/24	WBO1, WBO 2, WBO3, WBO4, Gov. & Resource



4	Make arrangements for a greater number of nursery admissions applications to be made online rather than paper based.	Helen Lewis	09/24	11/24	WBO1
5	Increase options available to governors to participate in training via face-to-face, online or both options for each session.	Kath Gilbert	09/23	12/24	WBO1, WBO4, Gov. & Resource

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EARLY YEARS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024 - 2025

Directorate: Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning

Service Area: Early Years

Accountable Manager: Sarah Griffiths

Purpose

The Neath Port Talbot Early Years and Flying Start team comprises of an Early Years & Flying Start manager, an Early Years Integration and Transformation lead, a Childcare lead, a Flying Start Parenting lead and 26 local authority staff across three teams who support children, families and childcare providers. Early Years and Childcare within Neath Port Talbot is delivered by the following teams:

- o Early Years and Flying Start Childcare (Core/Welsh Government (WG) CCG Grant funded)
- o Early Years and Flying Start Family Support (funded within the CCG Flying Start programme). This workstream has evolved to take forward the Early Years Integration Transformation programme work and Flying Start Parenting support.
- o Flying Start core programme teams – Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) Health Visiting, Midwifery, Speech, Language and Communication teams and the local authority Early Years Education Psychology Team (WG CCG Grant Funded)

The teams work together cohesively to provide the best start in life for children in Neath Port Talbot. A shared purpose, collaboration across the teams and the ongoing development of effective partnership working with key internal and external partners provides a key



strategic and operational driver as we aim to ensure a high quality, equitable and consistent Early Years offer across the local authority.

- The purpose of the **Early Years and Flying Start Childcare Team** is to support the authority in meeting its legislative duties in relation to:
 - Sections 22 and 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 – secure sufficient provision of childcare and to undertake childcare sufficiency assessments (CSA).
 - Section 27 of the Childcare Act 2006 - to provide information for children, young people, families and professionals on a wide range of family related topics; by taking ownership of childcare sufficiency audit.

- **Flying Start** is the Welsh Government's (WG) targeted early years programme for families with children under 4 years of age who live in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales. Flying Start aims to make a decisive difference to the life chances of children by mitigating the impact of poverty, which is linked to poor life outcomes in early childhood, including health outcomes. The Programme comprises of four entitlements, which in Neath Port Talbot (NPT) provide:
 - **Funded quality, part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds**; includes approximately 45 high quality childcare settings, with high quality staff, monitored via Service Level Agreements
 - **An intensive health visiting service** - consisting of 21 health visitors (HV), 11 community nursery nurses (CNN), two staff management, one Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), providing Healthy Child Wales (HCW) programme plus enhanced visits, support and tailored groups
 - **Access to enhanced parenting support** – a team of 11 parenting staff supporting parents with structured parenting course, drop ins, 1:1 support, early years groups, joint working with Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) staff for a holistic support package
 - **Support for speech, language and communication development** - 4 speech and language therapists (SALT) plus two SALT Assistants providing Wellcomm Screening, targeted support, adult-child interaction therapy/Hanen, multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings to support transition, childcare support.
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Across Neath Port Talbot there is a strong **Flying Start Outreach programme** that supports children and families to access the support they need.

The objectives of the Outreach programme are to:

- Extend the reach of Flying Start to families with identified need living in non-Flying Start areas.
- Provide an element of flexibility in the delivery of the programme by local authorities.
- Provide continuity of support to children and families moving out of Flying Start areas, or for whom there needs to be continuity of provision before being in receipt of other services or provision.

In addition, in Neath Port Talbot we offer:

- o NPT wide specialist midwifery support for expectant mother under the age of 22 – two midwives, one CNN providing a strong range of support including parenting, infant feeding and intensive antenatal visits.
- o Early Year Education Psychology Service (EY EPS) support, enabling the service to run across the local authority (**please see the Inclusion Service Plan for further information**).

The Welsh Government's phased expansion of Early Years provision (**Flying Start Expansion**) to include all two year olds commenced in September 2022. Phase 1 involved the expansion of the full Flying Start programme across identified areas within the local authority and was completed in March 2023. Phase 2 commenced in April 2023 and included the high-quality childcare element of Flying Start only. Phase 2 of expansion was completed in March 2024.

- **The Early Years Integration Transformation programme** was a Welsh Government funded co-construction programme involving nine pathfinder Public Service Boards. At a local level the programme was regional partnership project with Swansea Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board funded by Welsh Government. The purpose of the programme was to develop joined up and responsive Early Years' services to ensure every child has the best start in life. Children should be at the centre of excellent, integrated services that put their needs first, regardless of traditional organisational and professional structures. The aims of the programme were:



- To create an Early Years system to deliver services in a co-ordinated, integrated and timely way and offer a universal service to all families.
- To support local partners to re-configure Early Years services focusing on planning, commissioning and identifying and addressing needs.
- Through this process to identify barriers to integration and ways to remove, reduce or rationalise them.

Following the end of funding in March 2024, the steering group made up of representatives across the region will continue to meet quarterly to strategically align partnership work streams and to report to the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Public Service Boards (PSBs) respectively. As a local authority we remain committed to developing an integrated early years system. In Neath Port Talbot (NPT), the integrated family support element of the work will be progressed through the Early Years and Flying Start Parenting/Family Support team workstream.

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Across the Early Years' service, we are committed to embedding the following cross-cutting elements within our work:

- The development of the Welsh language and access to Welsh language provision in line with the **NPT Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)** targets, with a focus upon WESP Objective 1.
- **Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform**
- **Welsh Government Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC)** guidance.
- **Curriculum for Wales (3-16)** – to ensure our children transition into school successfully to be able develop the knowledge, skills and experiences to become:
 - ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives
 - enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work
 - ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world
 - healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society



Vision

The vision of the Early Years service is to enable all children and young people in Neath Port Talbot to have the best start in life. Across the local authority, we aim to deliver an equitable early years' offer by ensuring an inclusive, high quality, child-centred early years service is in place. Children, families and young people will have access to relevant information and support from integrated early years services at the point of need. We aim to achieve this through multi-agency partnership working and support from appropriate professionals including the Inclusion Service, Social Services, Health and regional partners.

The service contributes to the delivery of the four corporate wellbeing objectives by developing, delivering and supporting services for children and families in their early years. This is achieved through:

Wellbeing Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

The service supports children, young people and families throughout their early years journey. We aim to ensure inclusive, equitable, integrated early years services are available to all children and families. A key element of achieving this is facilitating high quality funded childcare provision through the Flying Start Programme and Flying Start expansion programme, which is currently being rolled out across the local authority. Working with Welsh Government and partners in the sector to increase access to childcare is a key priority. We facilitate access to free parenting groups and enhanced early intervention and support services including Health, Inclusion Service and Social Services where appropriate. We support low-income families to access help towards childcare costs. We enable and support high quality childcare across the sector, this includes supporting the sustainability of providers. We provide funding support for children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or emerging needs to access childcare and work closely with the Early Years Multi-Agency Panel (EYMAP) to meet the needs of families. Working in partnership with families, early years partners and the childcare sector to develop a more equitable Early Years offer is key to ensuring our youngest learners transition into education successfully. It should be highlighted that these actions also support the delivery of the **Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board Wellbeing Objective 1**.



Wellbeing Objective 2 - Communities are thriving and sustainable

The service enables children, young people and families to actively participate and engage in their communities by providing relevant, local information and access to high quality early years services. This includes supporting parents with childcare costs, including funded places and parenting support. We work with community partners and local businesses, including the third sector and childcare businesses. The local authority supports the creation of high-quality childcare provision through the effective use of Welsh Government capital investment. In addition, the service provides sustainability advice, support and funding to the childcare sector. The service is working in partnership with early years partners to develop equitable and universal ways of supporting children, young people and families through the next phase of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme.

Wellbeing Objective 3 - Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations

The Early Years service actively promotes the use of Welsh within our communities by providing relevant information and support for families and our childcare sector. The service provides information to families regarding Welsh language childcare provision. Support for the childcare sectors includes:

- o Establishing a Welsh Award available to all childcare settings increasing the use of Welsh.
- o Developing new or increase capacity of Welsh childcare settings using capital investment.
- o Developing new childcare locations with outdoor play spaces, improving the local environment for children's play.
- o Providing Welsh courses and training specifically targeted at childcare settings, to improve their use of Welsh with young children.

The service is working with early years partners in the Inclusion Service, Education, Health and Social Services to develop Parenting Hubs/Cafés to give families ownership of their communities. Early years support provided to children and young people facilitates access to curriculum provision in schools. This provides children and families with opportunities to experience and develop a sound understanding of their locality, culture and heritage.



Wellbeing Objective 4 – Local people are skilled and access high quality green jobs

The service provides a wide range of information and signposting to services that support the wellbeing of families and supports their ability to access financial support, skills and training. The service support families to access funded childcare which enable them to access work, further education and training. The service supports the childcare sector by providing financial advice, support and workforce training and development. This includes offering volunteering opportunities and some accredited training to parents and childcare workers for career development.

How well are we doing?

Delivering Priorities and Outcomes:

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In Early Years and Childcare, priorities and outcomes are articulated through the following delivery plans:

- The Childcare and Play Plan funded through the WG Children and Communities Grant (CCG)
- Flying Start Programme funded through the WG CCG
 - Flying Start Expansion Programme funded through the WG CCG
 - Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan
 - Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme funded by WG

The plans provide the operational vehicle to deliver key priorities within Wellbeing objective 1. All programmes follow clear guidance and grant criteria as set out by WG. Decisions and information are reported to members via cabinet scrutiny committees as required, with detailed quarterly reports submitted to WG as part of the wider Children and Communities Grant funding reporting mechanisms. Local and national reporting is informed by termly comprehensive monitoring. In addition, all teams contribute to the NPT ELLS self-evaluation report and Directorate Plan and respond to Estyn recommendations as appropriate.



Overall, teams are delivering planned priorities effectively and achieving outcomes successfully, as demonstrated through quantitative and qualitative delivery plan monitoring evidence.

Early Years and Flying Start Team: Childcare

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)

Facilitating and expanding access to high quality, equitable childcare across Neath Port Talbot is a key priority. The NPT Childcare Sufficiency Assessment evidences that engagement with childcare within the borough is high, particularly for children aged 2-4. Enabling families to access high quality childcare is a priority across the service. However, the CSA highlights that there is a gap in childcare provision regarding:

- After school club provision
- Holiday provision
- Times childcare is available
- Accessible Welsh Medium provision for all families who require it
 - Families' ability to choose the childcare they want for children with a disability/additional learning needs

The priorities in the CSA are being addressed and monitored through the CSA Action Plan. The CSA priorities are actioned through three CSA sub-groups who meet to review progress on a termly basis.

Partnership work is on-going with the childcare sector and relevant partners including Education, third sector and umbrella organisations to support the increase in demand for out of school provision.

The Early Years and Flying Start Advisory Teacher co-ordinates the Welsh Medium and Welsh Language development within childcare and early years, linking up CSA and WESP objectives. Currently, areas for development include the first Welsh Festival in NPT, "Cael tro, have a go" videos promoting Welsh Medium provision on Early Years and Flying Start social media, a myth busting booklet ensuring clear



information around accessing Welsh childcare and Welsh education and the promotion of Camau, the early years Welsh language scheme.

Training and Support

The Early Years, Flying Start Childcare team provide high quality training and support to childcare providers. All training is in line with mandatory requirements, Welsh Government's vision for Early Childhood Play Learning and Care and Curriculum for Wales guidance to ensure children are ready to learn and transition into setting/education successfully. The team are responsive to the needs of providers and provide pre/post Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection support. Training for childcare providers is now offered flexibly through online and face to face training. In 2023/24, 471 childcare practitioners attended training courses funded by the LA. In addition, 458 practitioners attended four Flying Start Development Days including child led play, attachment training, Curriculum for Wales and Trauma Informed Practice. The Welsh in Childcare Award continues to be implemented by the Welsh Development Officer, as well as Cymefin and Welsh language training on a setting by setting basis as requested.

The service works effectively with early years partners to develop a consistent and collaborative approach to training across the early years. This work is being led by the NPT Early Years Professional Learning Group. This group consists of professionals from the Early Years and Flying Start Childcare team, the Foundation Learning Education Support Officer (ESO), the Inclusion Service, Headteacher representation and health. The group have mapped the current training offer across the early years in NPT to identify areas of strength and gaps in training and support. As a result, it has been identified that training to support a greater understanding of child development and the pedagogy to implement the WG Enabling Learning approach is needed. The group have also recognised that working collaboratively to co-construct and co-deliver training to practitioners from childcare settings and schools will secure a consistent approach to the delivery of training, whilst also facilitating the sharing of best practice across the sector. Work is currently on-going to co-construct and deliver training to meet identified training needs for childcare providers and early years staff in schools, which is being delivered by individual teams and collaboratively where appropriate. To launch this approach the first NPT Early Years Conference took place in March 2024. The in-person conference was attended by 130 childcare staff, nursery teachers and internal and external professionals. The conference focused upon the importance of play in the Early Years, underpinned by the Enabling Learning pedagogical



approach and sharing of Early Years service information. As a service we will continue to work with early years colleagues to develop and deliver training to early years staff in settings and schools to communicate pedagogical approaches consistently. The impact of this approach will be monitored by the Early Years Professional Learning Group and evaluation information used to inform further training and support needs.

NPT Skills & Training Unit continue with their Childcare Apprenticeship programme as well offering a commercial training programme. NPT College continues to deliver Childcare courses. NPT College delivery of funded Level 3 Transition to Playworks. Safeguarding and Paediatric First Aid training is currently being delivered to ensure providers meet the revised requirements under the National Minimum Standards for Childcare by November 2024.

The team work effectively with the Early Years ALN and Early Years Education Psychology Teams to support settings to implement ALN reform. Development officers continue to use the skills developed as part of Person-Centred Practices (PCP) training to support childcare practitioners as part of their visits, with completion of person-centred tools where required. They continue to promote the EYMAP panel guidelines to settings, share ALN updates including information regarding the Education Psychology helpline for parents and the Education Psychologists 'Work it Together Wednesday' sessions. It should be noted that all support visits take place in person.

Transition

The team is working closely with partners to continue to develop transition processes from home to provider and from provider to school. Childcare providers continue to build relationships with schools around transition of children from setting to school. This builds positive relationships and communication as well as raising the profile of childcare providers in a professional capacity. Where required information is shared by the Flying Start Training and Transition Officer at cluster meetings and at individual transition meetings arranged in line with Neath Port Talbot protocol. Training in relation to transition has been increased due to demand, with sessions looking at transition into setting and within setting as well as from setting to school. Staff are finding training sessions particularly useful for upskilling and awareness of strategies to support transition. In addition to formal transition training the Flying Start Training and Transition Officer has spent time with individual settings supporting the transition of individual children into setting and to manage transitions within their day. The Training and Transition Officer has worked with ALN Transition and Partnership Officer to develop an



Early Years Passport. This contains all relevant information in relation the child and is a working document, started on transition into setting, updated accordingly during the child’s time at a setting and then moves with the child to school as part of their transition journey. New Child Development Tracking documents created in line with Flying Start guidance, ECPLC guidance and Curriculum for Wales, have also been included in Early Years Passport, with training and support delivered around this. The Early Years Flying Start Childcare Lead in collaboration with ALN Transition and Partnership Officer, has co-ordinated “Cuppa With Your Cluster” sessions, that are aimed at school based senior leaders and nursery staff, childcare settings and all early years professionals within the cluster community. They are held in central locations within communities and are informal sessions aimed at developing relationships between settings and schools to support the transition process. Initial meetings have been very successful with positive feedback from most participants. Moving forward sessions will take place on a six monthly basis with sessions being arranged by the Early Years Flying Start Training and Transition Officer (TTO) and ALN Transition and Partnership Officer. Overall, transition to school is working well, however, the team continue to develop effective partnership working with the Early Years ALN team and schools to ensure this process is effective. Working with the childcare sector and partners to develop a more equitable Early Years offer to ensure our youngest learners transition into education successfully is a key priority for the service.

Support for children with emerging or additional learning needs to access childcare

The team work closely with the Inclusion Service and multi-agency professionals to ensure all children are able to access inclusive childcare that meets their needs. Children with emerging or identified additional needs are supported to access and fully participate in childcare through childcare funding schemes such as O Gam I Gam and the Childcare Offer Additional Support Grant. However, multi-agency professionals across all early years services have identified that the number of pre-school/nursery children who require additional support to access childcare is increasing. As a result, a review of the needs of children who require additional support to access childcare and how this is funded will take place in 2024/25 to ensure we continue to meet children’s needs when accessing childcare effectively.

Childcare Provider Sustainability

With the aim of supporting childcare sufficiency, access to Welsh Language provision, and children with additional learning needs, the team administers grant funding via an Early Years Grant panel, awarding childcare provision with sustainability grants. The Early Years Grant Panel make these awards in a joint panel with Childcare and Early Years Capital Grants to remove any duplication. However, across



the childcare sector, staff recruitment, retention and sustainability are becoming an increasing issue. The local authority is providing sustainability support to the sector as set out in the CSA Action Plan and programme delivery plans.

As of March 2024, there are 2393 registered childcare places available in Neath Port Talbot, a decrease of 33 places. This decrease reflects the fragile nature of the sector in challenging economic climate. Supporting the quality within and sustainability of the childcare sector is a key priority.

NPT Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The NPT WESP clearly demonstrates the local authority's commitment to expanding high quality Welsh-medium places across childcare settings and schools. The team have benefitted from the appointment of a Development Officer (DO) who leads on supporting providers to develop the Welsh language. The team are passionate about the Welsh Language, and work with the English Medium settings to improve the Welsh they offer through an award based Welsh Language quality assurance scheme "Welsh in Childcare", which includes support, access to training and drop-in Welsh language acquisition sessions. The change in categories may mean over time a move from category 1 English language settings to category 2 English / Welsh language settings. The Welsh DO continues to work with other DOs to support and promote the use of Welsh in all childcare settings. This includes providing fortnightly Welsh sessions to the team to raise their knowledge and confidence in the Welsh language.

The **WG Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme** provides funding for Flying Start expansion and the continuing development of the sector to support The Childcare Offer for Wales. Areas of need identified in the CSA and WESP are used to identify and plan childcare capital builds in partnership with the LA SSIP team and WG. Through recent capital grant funding four additional Welsh medium/bilingual childcare settings are due to open during 2024/2025: Neath Central, YGG Trebannws, Cwmavon Community and YGG Blaendulais. In total this will provide approximately 70 additional Welsh/bilingual childcare places across Neath Port Talbot. Further need identified by the WESP and CSA will continue be addressed by the local authority. This will continue to be a priority for the service.



The Flying Start Programme:

A total of 2046 eligible children aged 0-4 have benefited from Flying Start during 2023/24, this includes 1129 children who have benefitted from Flying Start funded childcare. An additional 92 children accessed Flying Start childcare via an outreach childcare placement as agreed by our Early Years Multi-Agency Panel (EYMAP). 28 families have accessed parenting support via our EYMAP panel. For a detailed evaluation of the programme, please see the Welsh Government Flying Start Progress Reports 2023/24.

Early Years and Flying Start Parenting/Family Support: The Flying Start Parenting team provide an effective range of targeted support to families. Setting staff and Flying Start professionals provide valuable advice and guidance to parents to help them to support their children's social and emotional development as well as their learning needs. Parents can access a good range of structured group programmes and bespoke parenting support. It should be noted that the parenting team have worked effectively and proactively within their allocated cluster area/communities whilst also covering areas which have been without a designated worker due to staff shortages during the last financial year. However, the parenting team have engaged effectively with parents, with contacts ranging from wellbeing checks to formal courses in all areas of Flying Start including expansion areas and outreach cases. The team have re-established their Stay & Plays in all areas across NPT Flying Start areas and these have continued to be well attended and utilised in order to respond to the individual needs of each area across the county. These groups offer a place for play opportunities for children and promoting positive parent/child interaction. As well as it being a base for their hubs to work alongside the wider Flying Start agencies e.g. Health, SALT and Education. In addition, they have continued to secure attendance from outside agencies on an 'ad hock' basis to offer advice and information that is of relevance to further the families support and journey with Flying Start Parenting Support.

The team continue to implement the 'Henry' programme, which provides a wide range of support for families from pregnancy to age 12 including workshops, programmes, resources and online help. All support for families is underpinned by the HENRY approach to supporting behaviour change which helps parents gain the confidence, knowledge and skills they need to help the whole family adopt a healthier, happier lifestyle and to give their children a great start in life. Officers report that this programme has had a valuable impact upon families who have engaged in the programme. Currently the team have also been planning and implementing packages of support for families in NPT that will or could be affected by TATA steel closures/job losses. Drop in support and groups are in place for families to



receive information and support as and when needed. Outside agencies can be invited along to these such as career opportunities/financial aid support/advice. The team will continue to provide support in a responsive and flexible manner. The Male Carers Support Group continues to run weekly with dad's and carers coming along to meet with our dad's worker in a safe place where they can speak openly and learn how to play comfortably with their children.

In total, during 2023/24, the team have offered over 90 formal and informal courses. 1424 parents signed up to take part in courses with the majority attending the sessions. Team evaluations demonstrate a clear positive distance travelled as a result of attending courses for the majority of families. Flying Start professionals highlight the parental engagement in group sessions continues to be inconsistent since the pandemic. Increasing parental engagement in family support programmes is a priority. The team are currently continuing to plan family support service delivery with the Families First Children and Families team to ensure consistency and avoid duplication to address the increasing need of the communities they work with. Working across both parenting teams to develop a consistent universal and targeted offer is a priority for the service.

Health Visiting and health staff including CNN's and midwives continue to provide vital support for children and families. Community based contacts and group sessions have been undertaken successfully. Full compliance with the Heathy Child Wales Programme has been maintained. However, it should be highlighted that safeguarding issues are increasing in Neath Port Talbot and mental health issues are more prevalent. Work is progressing with PRAMS to work closely in clusters to develop services for young mums in the peri-natal period. In addition, the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme Perinatal Mental Health and Emotional Support project supported families across the local authority in 2023/24. As a LA, we continue to work with SBUHB to continue to progress this work following the cessation of funding. The team continue to work closely with colleagues in Health and Social Services to support families.

The Midwifery team continues to work effectively with families across Neath Port Talbot. The team has been affected by capacity issues, however, these are being managed appropriately. Current caseload (40 cases at March 2024) includes 62.5% living in Flying Start areas and the remainder of clients accessing support through Outreach. 5% of clients were 15 years or under, 12.5% were 16 years old, 20%



were 17, 15% were 18 & 47.5% were 19+ years old. 27 postnatal and 13 antenatal. The team provide valuable support to clients, this includes support with breast feeding and baby wearing.

The Speech and Language team provide effective support to children and families. The team offer universal and targeted support to children and families. Universal messages have been delivered via the social media accounts of Neath Port Talbot Flying Start and Swansea Bay Speech and Language Therapy (SLT). This included strategies from BBC's Tiny Happy People and the Talk With Me campaign. The team delivered 21 Elklan's Let's Talk with Your Baby (LTWYB) courses. This course is offered universally and reached 141 parent/carers and their children. Feedback from parents evidences that the majority of parents felt more confident following the course.

During 2023/24, 163 requests for SLT assessments were received, which is a slight increase compared to 2022/23. Requests were received from the Flying Start Health Visiting team, the generic Health Visiting team, Childcare WellComm screening, Paediatrician's and children in receipt of an outreach placement identified as needing SLT support. The SLT team provided assessment, support and intervention.

At a targeted level, 80 children and their families completed a Hanen Intervention package. The aim of this intervention is to equip the parents with strategies they need to support their child's language development through everyday interactions. An additional 59 children were supported via a bespoke contact with the Speech and Language Therapist. Examples of a bespoke contact would be either a visit into their childcare setting to further support the staff working with the child; a review of the child in their home or supporting the transition into or out of a Flying Start childcare setting via a child centred transition meeting. As a result of this intervention parents and staff equipped with the strategies to continue to support their children's communication development.

198 Flying Start Flying Start children were supported through multi-disciplinary team meetings with the Flying Start Educational Psychology service, Health Visitor, Child Care setting and/or school. These meeting are conducted to support those children identified to be at high risk/vulnerable to developing persistent SLC difficulties or with an emerging ALN. 16 children were supported via a bespoke transition meeting or via a Child Centred Review resulting in 14 of these children acquiring an Individual Development Plan as a result. However, school-based monitoring data evidences that across the local authority many children's speech, language and communication



skills are below the expected developmental level on entry to school. As part of the local authority's approach to address this issue, investment from Flying Start funding has been used to recruit two additional speech and language assistants. As a result, a coordinated universal offer of speech and language support is being implemented in partnership with Health services. This development will build on the success of the Early Years Integration Programme and existing Flying Start speech and language intervention and governance and will build on the evidence-based practice already in place. The impact of this initiative will be monitored as part of Flying Start programme monitoring. The service is committed to supporting the continued work of the Speech and Language team to support the development of children's speech, language and communication skills. This is a priority for the service.

Flying Start Expansion

The Flying Start expansion programme is currently being rolled out across the local authority. As of 31st March 2024, Neath Port Talbot has made significant progress in ensuring a more equitable Early Years offer, by exceeding its Phase 1 Flying Start expansion goal of engaging an additional 127 children aged 0-4 into the Flying Start programme. Phase 2 commenced in April 2023 and included the high-quality childcare element of Flying Start only. As of March 31st 2024, 322 eligible children have been offered funded Flying Start childcare, with 184 places accepted to date. As a result of expansion, an increased number of children in a growing geographical range of areas have accessed high quality early years funded childcare provision that supports their early developmental skills, including speech, language and communication and personal, social and wellbeing skills. However, the expansion of Flying Start childcare has put additional pressure on childcare providers to offer additional spaces whilst meeting the criteria to become a Flying Start provider. Expansion has put additional pressure on the capacity of the Early Years and Flying Start Childcare teams to provide support and guidance to new Flying Start settings, including the increased impact upon capital maintenance and developments. In addition, the expansion of Flying Start childcare has begun to put pressure upon parenting teams, the Early Years ALN team, Health and Social Services as more children access childcare provision and work with childcare professionals. However, due to skilful work of the team, 45 childcare settings and 4 childminders offer funded Flying Start Childcare. Before this initiative was introduced, funded Flying Start childcare was available in 28 settings. By implementing expansion through offering all providers the opportunity to offer Flying Start funded places, the service is enabling and securing capacity within the sector as expansion continues to progress. We are currently awaiting further information from WG regarding the next phase of expansion.



Early Years Integration Transformation Programme

During 2022 – 2024, WG funding for the Early Years Integration Transformation programme supported the development of an integrated approach across early years' service. However, funding for the programme ended in March 2024. Continuous self-evaluation identified the needs of the community and informed the work of the programme. The programme investigated different models of working in an integrated way through the six pilot projects. For example, in the Dulais Valley, health visitor services worked in partnership with schools and local community projects to provide effective advice and support for parents, including speech and language support through 'Baby Massage' and breast-feeding support. Professionals involved in the project note that there has been a change in culture with regards to integrated working and early monitoring evidence demonstrates that there have been improvements in outcomes for children and families in the area, helping to reduce isolation, encouraging new relationships, increased health outcomes for families, improved wellbeing and development. The development of models to support integrated working will continue to be implemented across the Swansea Bay University Health Board region through the Early Years Integration Steering Group. A final evaluation of the programme is currently taking place, with the results being used to inform the local, regional and Welsh Government's national approach to early years integration. Following the cessation of Early Years Integration funding, the integrated family support element of the work will be progressed through the Early Years and Flying Start Parenting/Family Support workstream.

Understanding needs, engaging and collaboration:

Across the Early Years Service:

- The Neath Port Talbot Childcare Sufficiency Audit (CSA) involves consultation with childcare settings, parents, and children about the services they receive, with WG also funding national family consultations. Outcomes of the CSA are published on the NPT website and inform short, medium and long term plans over a five year period.
- All Early Years and Childcare teams are widely represented on many national and local meetings, forums and boards. As a result, the teams are well informed and able to respond to national and local issues that impact service needs and outcomes.
- Families across the authority are informed of the services the teams provide through the NPT website including the Family Information Service and Flying Start pages, NPT social media channels, information from health professionals and information from childcare providers.



- Elected members are kept informed about the performance of the service through reports to Cabinet Scrutiny committee.
- All teams engage with childcare settings, children, families and professionals to collate, monitor and evaluate feedback in relation to the four WG funded Early Years programmes.
- Across the sector, families and professionals are actively encouraged to engage with national consultation in relation to early years services, for example, Flying Start.

Early Years and Flying Start Childcare Team:

- The team collect evaluation and monitoring information from childcare settings, specifically around training, grants and other schemes such as Health and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (HSPSS).
- Childcare settings are asked for feedback regarding the services provided at many points during their involvement with the team, so that adaptations can be made where possible to future work and support provided. The team collected detailed monitoring data from childcare settings, some of which is collected via Flying Start monitoring processes. This is submitted to WG quarterly, contributing to national data set and evaluations.
- The team plan to continue to take 'The Right Way' children's right based approach forward. This will include core staff delivery, and training to embed the new 'Right Way in the Early Years' training from the Children's Commissioner for Wales into childcare settings and groups that we run.
- The team have many childcare provider forum events with the sector, both to provide information and listen to the sectors' views collaboratively.

Flying Start Teams:

- Families are asked for feedback regarding the services provided at many points during their journey through Flying Start services, so that adaptations can be made where possible to future work and support provided. Detailed data is collected via monitoring from all teams and staff members and submitted to WG quarterly. This contributes to national data sets and evaluations, including valued distance travelled data.
- Flying Start Expansion: Data from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), inclusion data around children with emerging needs or ALN, Early Years Multi-Agency Panel (EYMAP) referrals and Early



Intervention Panel (EIP) data has been collected. This will continue to inform any rationale regarding geographical areas for expansion, alongside any modifications to referral process and criteria, to ensure that we understand and respond to the needs of the children and families within NPT, encouraging continued high levels of engagement with the programme.

Early Years Integration Transformation Programme:

- The final evaluation of the programme will be used to inform the work of Early Years services, particularly in relation to Early Years and Flying Start Parenting/Family support.
- The final evaluation of the programme will be used to inform the work of strategic regional partnership working.

The service collaborates effectively with wider teams across the ELLS directorate and across Health, Social Services, childcare providers and third sector partners. There is a strategic directorate approach to planning to meet the needs of children, young people and their families. As a result, appropriate support is developed and implemented to enable children to grow and develop through engaging experiences and effective environments facilitated by enabling adults in the early years.

Teams within the service work on distinct programme areas, which are funded separately. However, collaboration between teams is strong, driven by an ethos of partnership working. Delivery plans are developed and monitored jointly across the teams, at an operational and strategic level. This mitigates against duplication across the service. Wherever possible within the terms of grant funding streams, resources and funding are used across teams to secure efficiency of service and expand capacity of teams. Across the service, teams work with childcare providers successfully to support the delivery of high-quality childcare. The children, families and communities that teams work within are key stakeholders in informing and shaping the services and outcomes.

How and what can we do better

During 2023/24 the **NPT Early Years, Children and Young People's plan** was developed. This partnership plan articulates the local authority's approach to delivering and improving Early Years services across Neath Port Talbot. The plan will be directly linked to corporate, directorate and service plans as appropriate.



Self-evaluation evidence including programme monitoring evidence, participation evidence and the CSA inform our priorities. All actions support service, directorate and corporate priorities:

- On-going monitoring and review of the service to ensure sufficient capacity to offer effective, sustainable support as the service evolves.
- Continue to use quantitative and qualitative data effectively, including the CSA, to evaluate the impact of priorities and actions and inform future planning.
- Continue to manage budgets effectively to secure planned outcomes across all teams.
- Continue to plan effectively for the on-going expansion of Flying Start childcare as part of the wider system review to develop equitable early years offer with internal and external partners.
- Continue to progress towards equitable early years offer of family support, taking forward the work of the Early Years Integration programme and Flying Start Parenting support.
- Continue to engage with communities, especially hard to reach families, to understand needs and inform future planning.
- Continue to develop a collaborative approach to training and support across the childcare sector and schools.
- Continue to improve transition systems and processes to support all children to access childcare and education successfully.
- Review data monitoring systems to help understand the impact of services on children and families.
- Invest in and improve database systems that can link with health and education data, for longitudinal progress tracking of children.
- Continue to support childcare providers to be sustainable and recruit and retain staff through workforce development.
- Continue to promote the childcare sector and advocate further at WG level for a higher profile of the sector. This will support NPT to sustain and further develop high quality, equitable, childcare provision that is supported by internal and external services through effective integration in the early years.
- Continue to have clear continuing professional development (CPD) plans for staff to support career progression, succession planning and staff retention.
- Continue to provide appropriate on-going training for staff to ensure they undertake their roles skilfully; this includes support for staff well-being.



- Continue to work with internal and external partner effectively, including third sector partners. This includes securing clear commitment to the integration of services at an operational and strategic level
- Continue to plan and co-ordinate with other early years services to help avoid wider duplication and to ensure consistency of messages. This includes continued implementation of the legacy of Early Years Integration work and joint work with Education and Children & Young People Services.
- Continue to work to meet the objectives within the NPT WESP.

How do we know

Across the service outcomes are evaluated effectively and inform future priorities using the following self-evaluation evidence:

- All areas of the service make good use of quarterly and annual monitoring data to evaluate progress against service, directorate and corporate priorities.
- The CSA articulates the areas of strength and development within NPT. Actions are reviewed regularly by relevant subgroups and an annual progress report is created to evaluate progress against priorities. The next review will be undertaken in June 2024.
- In line with programme plans, all budgets are spent effectively and on time to ensure planned outcomes are achieved (as articulated through monitoring of CCG plans).
- All teams meet on a regular basis to share information and feedback, evaluate progress and plan next steps in service delivery.

Early Years and Flying Start Childcare

- Childcare monitoring visits support and secure high quality across the sector.
- Services are in line with WG guidance. Team leads are responsible for ensuring all aspects of their service area is compliant with the guidance. WG feedback is always positive and shows confidence in NPT.
- Quarterly reports show good progress and clear improvement to the childcare sector.
- Support for sustainability of childcare providers has had a positive impact upon the sufficiency of provision.
- Feedback from childcare providers and families is positive.
- Capital build spend is fully utilised and spent on time.



Flying Start

- Termly programme monitoring for WG demonstrates successful compliance against monitoring criteria in relation to the Flying Start Programme.
- Comprehensive WG statistics are collated, and compliance is strong. The local authority is a green local authority for monitoring.
- Quarterly reports show good progress across the programme core objectives.
- Feedback from stakeholders' evidences that programme reputation is high with communities and members.
- The programme has often over exceeded the CAP expected number of children and worked with many more within budget.

Early Years Integration Transformation Programme (2023/24):

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- Dedicated Coordinator in place to evaluate impact of integration work and create a model to take forward beyond the funding.
- External evaluation evidences progress being made against planned outcomes and the impact the project/pilots are having on families/communities.
- Information is shared back quarterly with the EYI steering group. They make any decisions regarding the success of the project, budget, further outcomes and if any changes are to be made in line with the business plan.
- All the projects complete scorecards monthly which feed into the report for the Steering Group which then feeds into the PSB and contributes to the WG Progress report which is submitted on a six monthly basis.
- There is a monthly Project leads and Coordinators meeting where any information/ issues are dealt with and if necessary, these will be escalated to the Steering Group for action.
- There are also regular meetings with the project leads to discuss any day to day issues with the projects and to report on successes.
- Every project keeps data relevant to their service and this is used in the wider pathfinder context to look at integration across the board.

Risk



The Early Years service is predominantly grant funded. As a result, delivery and continuity of service is reliant upon continued funding from Welsh Government. This also has a potential negative impact upon the recruitment and retention of staff as most posts are grant funded. Overall, recruitment of staff is not a challenge, and the retention of staff is good. However, the expansion of Flying Start creates a possible risk around the capacity of existing staff. As part of expansion, there are strategic plans in place to increase the capacity of the team and create sustainability within the programme in the short, medium and long term. Succession planning is in place and will continue to evolve as capacity within the team develops to deliver priorities and outcomes.

The on-going impact of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and the War in Ukraine continue to put significant pressure on communities within Neath Port Talbot and in turn demands upon service demand and delivery. However, strategic and operational plans direct the work of the service and mitigate known risk as appropriate

Risk Management				
Risk Title	Date From	Date To	Risk rating	
			Original	Latest
Risk 1: THREAT - Limited capacity of existing Early Years and Childcare Team	01.04.2023	31.03.2025	6 Likelihood 2: unlikely,	6 Likelihood 2: unlikely,



			Impact 3: Medium risk	Impact 3: Medium risk
Risk action 1: recruit additional staff from Flying Start expansion funding			N/A	N/A
Risk action 2: contribute to service restructure with clear gap analysis			N/A	N/A
Risk 2: THREAT - Loss of grant funding or changes to grant criteria, especially in relation to Early Years Integration	01.04.2022	31.03.2025	6 Likelihood 2: unlikely, Impact 3: Medium risk	12 Likelihood 4: Very likely, Impact 3: High risk
Risk action 1: Continue to attend Welsh Government meetings to understand potential changes to funding.			N/A	N/A
Risk action 2: Report any potential threats to ELLL senior managers, outlining impacts to services and to children and families.			N/A	N/A
Risk action 3: Identify and apply for additional funding when it becomes available.			N/A	N/A
Risk 3: THREAT: Various processes not 100% digital	01.04.2022	31.03.2025	6 Likelihood 2: unlikely, Impact 3: Medium risk	4 Likelihood 2: unlikely, Impact 2: Low risk



Risk action 1: Online pilot grant form under development			N/A	N/A
Risk action 2: Develop further evaluations and data collection digitally			N/A	N/A
Risk 4: THREAT: Childcare Provider sufficiency: workforce recruitment and retention, particularly regarding Welsh speaking staff	01.04.2023	31.03.2025	6 Likelihood 2: unlikely, Impact 3: Medium risk	9 Likelihood 3: likely, Impact 3: Medium risk
Risk action 1: Continue to provide sufficiency support through grant WG grant funding			N/A	N/A
Risk action 2: Continue to provide training and support to childcare providers			N/A	N/A

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Key Actions		Responsible Officer	Start Date	End Date	Well-Being Objective / Governance & Resource <i>(contributes to)</i>
1	Expenditure forecast to be contained within budget.	Lisa Clement-Jones Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	Gov. & Resource
2	Early Years, Children and Young People's Plan implemented to direct the work of the service.	Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2024	31/03/2029	WBO1



3	Monitor and review the structure of the service to ensure sufficient capacity to offer effective, sustainable support to children, young people and families.	Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	Gov. & Resource
4	To work with partners to use the outcomes from the Early Years Integration pilot projects to inform next steps in developing an equitable and integrated early years system.	Cathy Bowley Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1
5	Ensure a more equitable Early Years offer is available across the borough to improve the readiness of our youngest learners for education by expanding high quality childcare, including Flying Start funded childcare.	Lisa Clement-Jones Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1, WBO 3, WBO 4
6	To review with partners how we meet the needs of children with additional needs in receipt of childcare support funding. The outcomes of evaluation work will be used to inform future planning to ensure the needs of children continue to be met through a responsive and sustainable model.	Lisa Clement-Jones Natasha Walsh Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	WBO1, WBO4
Page 198 ⁰⁰	Ensure identified childcare settings benefit from capital funding for improvement.	Lynne Baker Lisa Clement-Jones Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1, WBO 2, WBO 3, WBO 4
	Ensure revenue support for childcare providers to secure sustainability and quality improvement.	Lynne Baker Lisa Clement-Jones / Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1, WBO 2, WBO 3, WBO 4
9	To develop a clearly articulated transition pathway of support to enable children to access childcare and education. This will include working with childcare providers, schools and professionals to implement purposeful systems, processes and resources to support children and families during their transitional journey.	Lynne Baker/Lisa Clement-Jones/ Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1
10	Continue to provide high quality training opportunities for the Early Years and childcare sector in line with Welsh Government's vision for Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care and Curriculum for Wales guidance, along with wider mandatory training. This will enable practitioners to support children to make progress and achieve their developmental milestones.	Lynne Baker Lisa Clement-Jones Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1, WBO 2, WBO 4



11	To work with members of the Early Years Professional Learning Group to develop and implement a collaborative approach to training and support across the childcare sector and schools.	Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2024	31/03/2026	WBO1
12	To continue to implement actions within the WESP Outcome 1 plan	Lisa Clement-Jones Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1, WBO 3
13	To continue to develop Early Years Integration, with a focus upon supporting families to access and engage with family support, Flying Start parenting and promoting the Flying Start Outreach programme.	Cathy Bowley Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1
14	Continue to develop collaborative working between the Flying Start and Children and Families parenting teams and partners to secure a consistent family support offer.	Cathy Bowley Rebecca Thomas Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1, WBO 2, WBO 4
Page 199	Working in partnership with SBU HB, to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flying Start Health Visiting services for all Flying Start eligible children under the age of 4, reaching the CAP of 1972 children. Flying Start Midwifery service: this will include antenatal one to one support with young vulnerable mothers. Every child in a Flying Start area should have early access to ongoing appropriate support for speech language and communication development, resulting in meaningful contacts with appropriate staff. An effective Outreach programme, with a focus upon developing 'Born into Care' midwifery support. 	Lisa Clement-Jones /SBUHB/ Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	WBO1, WBO 4
16	To work with SB UHB Speech and Language Therapy team and the Inclusion Service to further develop an equitable universal and targeted support model to support children's speech, language and communication development.	Lisa Clement-Jones /SBUHB/ Sarah Griffiths			
17	To further develop digital monitoring systems to capture relevant information.	Allison Harris / Lisa Clement Jones/ Sarah Griffiths	01/04/2023	31/03/2025	Gov. & Resource



Performance Measures		Actual 2022/23 (full year)	Actual 2023/24 (full year)	Target 2024/25	Well-Being Objective / Governance & Resource (contributes to)
1	Increase number of Welsh Language and Bilingual registered childcare spaces – Flying Start settings/Private settings.	291	328	>350	WBO1, WBO 2, WBO3, WBO4,
2	Increase number of English Medium registered childcare spaces - Flying Start settings/Private settings.	2116	2065	>2065	WBO1, WBO 2, WBO4,
Page 200	Increase the number of unique beneficiaries reached in Flying Start expansion areas.	129 (Phase 1)	322 (Phase 2)	Continue to implement programme (Awaiting further information from WG)	WBO1

Version Control	
Final draft agreed with Head of Service: Hayley Lervy	Date: 31.05.2023
Copy shared with Relevant Cabinet Member: Cllr Nia Jenkins	Date: 31.05.2023
Latest version approved by Head of Service (if changes made):	Date: 31.05.24



Date of last completed self- assessment cycle: April 2024

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SERVICE PLAN 2024 - 2025

Directorate: Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning

Service Area: Education Development

Accountable Manager: Mike Daley

Purpose

The purpose of the NPT School Support Service is to collaborate with optimism and humility to provide inspirational opportunities so that everyone in NPT schools can thrive and flourish. These outcomes are made explicit in the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales. Within the context of the new curriculum, the NPT school improvement team aims to foster sustainable school improvement through a clear framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability. Within this framework, there is a clear distinction between evaluation and improvement activities and accountability. The majority of the energy and focus in the system should be on delivering school improvement, guided by effective self-evaluation, improvement planning and support in all schools. As part of evaluation and improvement, practitioners and school leaders should have the support and confidence to learn and improve their practice continually. This will enable them to thrive in a supportive and collaborative environment that will raise standards and ensure every young person can fulfil their potential.

Fundamental to the new arrangements is robust and continuous self-evaluation by schools. Effective self-evaluation will be complemented by professional dialogue between schools, local authority and where relevant diocesan authorities, to agree on schools' improvement priorities and support. Informed by this, all schools will have a single, School Development Plan they are working towards. Underpinning the arrangements will be a broad range of high-quality information about schools, and other parts of the system, which will need to be used in a timely, intelligent and supportive way.

The accountability system, in contrast, is the safety net for when evaluation and improvement is not functioning effectively. It should not drive school improvement activity, although it should ensure that problems are identified and addressed. A self-improving system, which enables schools to focus evaluation and improvement on a wider range of evidence, will also help and encourage them to consider how they can contribute towards well-being goals when designing, adopting and implementing their curriculum and engaging learners. This will be increasingly important as schools embed a whole-school approach to health and well-being.

Bringing strategic clarity and coherence to local education systems, councils act as independent and impartial brokers and evaluators for school improvement support, resulting in stronger support for schools and ultimately lead to a self-improving system.

Vision

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Values

- Pupil centred – All our work and the work of schools should ultimately make a difference to the progress and experiences of children and young people in NPT
- Purpose driven – That there is a clear link to the Curriculum for Wales, its four purposes and the National Mission for Education
- Supportive – That the NPT school development team exists to support schools and that the priorities in the Service plan are met.
- Collaborative – That in order to meet our objectives we do not work in isolation. We work with internal and external partners and all of our schools

- Developmental – That we as a school development team are a learning organisation and aim to meet the objectives of what it is to be a learning organisation
- Innovative – That we encourage and foster creativity in order to meet the reform agenda and realise the purposes of the Curriculum for Wales and the objectives of the National Mission

How well are we doing?

1. Delivering Priorities and Outcomes:

- Each of our priorities contribute directly to the Directorate plan. Each impact report written by the school improvement service makes explicit the link between our Service plan and the three overarching Directorate priorities. Broadly these priorities are around tackling poverty, ensuring progress and creating inclusive communities. These in turn contribute to the Council's wellbeing objectives around providing NPT residents with the best start in life.
- The school improvement team has led a strategy to support schools to improve their self-evaluation processes to focus on pupils' standards, wellbeing and pupils' development of the four purposes.
- To remain in line with the evaluation and accountability framework and school improvement guidance from Welsh government we need to consider how we look at attainment as a measure of success. The guidance states quite clearly that, 'Published external examinationinformation is, limited by design in what it can convey. It should not be used in isolation or out of context, nor presented as evidence of how effective a school is. In this way, the information is useful for self-evaluation, but should not be used in isolation, either for this purpose or for accountability. These indicators are designed for a specific purpose, which is to frame data in a manner appropriate for self-evaluation and as a starting point for analysis and planning. The information is, therefore, limited by design in what it can convey.'
- The NPT support for schools' programme aims to support the wider ranging and more holistic approach to self-evaluation. Our activities support schools to identify priorities and plan for improvement. The team will verify and model if required the process of self-evaluation. This is successful in most of our schools. In a very few schools more sustained support is required with this process whether it be with supporting effective self-evaluation or with improvement planning.
- This process is going well but in many cases this is a cultural shift, particularly at secondary school because the accountability system has led to an over-reliance on data as the sole source of self-evaluation. As the draft guidance points out, 'using external examinations data, out of context, for accountability purposes can lead to perverse behaviours and choices by schools that are not necessarily in the best interests of learners.' Many of our primary schools have effective processes for evaluating pupil progress, however the process of evolving the culture at secondary schools is slower but it is moving forward.

- Nearly all primary schools and many secondary schools in NPT are at the appropriate stage regarding curriculum reform. By September 2023 all schools have developed a vision for the new curriculum and are trialling approaches to teaching. The NPT Learning and teaching strategy supports this process and has been shared and developed with all schools. The support offer that accompanies this is currently in motion and there are three cohorts (including colleagues from primary and secondary) with over sixty teachers participating.
- In a thematic visit Estyn stated that '*NPT has a strong, shared vision for the Curriculum for Wales that makes sense and is clearly articulated. The NPT team have shown bravery in asking schools to re-think and review their curriculum with a focus on the why.*

There is a strong moral purpose at its core, it is pupil-centred and there is a clear focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. There is a clear link between the language of the four purposes and the language of metacognition. There is a clear approach to deepening thinking in NPT schools and they have useful links with partners in particular a symbiotic relationship with Higher Education Institutions and the Inclusion services. There are powerful examples of how hugely helpful partnerships exist with external and internal partners when discussing curriculum design. There is clear recognition of the need to support and improve teaching and there is a strong emphasis on learning.'

- Evaluation in schools has identified the need to develop an agreed approach to literacy and numeracy. High levels of support in collaboration with Read, Write Inc. have established a long-term approach to tackling inconsistent approaches to teaching early literacy. This is expensive, however there is a significant impact on pupils' reading skills and their wider literacy. A majority of schools have also adopted the CPA (Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract) approach to mathematics, supported by White Rose Maths. This is going well, however all training stresses the need to maintain a broad and balanced approach to mathematics, so that it is not just number that is being taught.
- An enhanced Local Authority Lead Inspection visit in June 2024 Estyn reported the following:
 - You have developed a vision for curriculum in NPT and communicated this widely and regularly with your schools and stakeholders.
 - You have continued to support schools to develop their curriculum in line with the local authority's vision and interpretation of the principles of the Curriculum for Wales.
 - The officers and headteachers we met were positive about the approach and are embracing these changes. They said that they valued the way you support clusters of schools to engage in discussions about curriculum design and progression.
 - In our discussions, your teams were able to provide a few examples of areas and subjects where good practice has been identified.
 - You are continuing to provide schools with a range of professional learning, including for governors. The headteachers we met were generally positive about this, although this support tends to be more focussed on primary whole school approaches than it is on secondary schools with distinct departments. Although they were able to give instances of activities they have introduced, they found it harder to explain how this professional learning has improved the quality of teaching or learning in their schools.
 - The headteachers said that they value the support from ESOs to discuss curriculum approaches and welcome that officers are research-informed and allow each headteacher to plan their own approach.

Estyn also asked us to consider the following:

- How well does the range and quality of the evidence your ESOs gather support you to consider the impact of the local authority's work?

- How well is your evaluation recognising strengths and areas of development within a whole school approach to developing their curriculum and the impact that professional learning has on this?
- How will you ensure that schools do not mainly focus on planning for the four purposes or a specific approach, for example developing of concepts, but also consider pupils' learning and progress? Some headteachers we met talked about a specific approach to curriculum but did not talk as much about the difference that their curriculum is making to teaching or pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- How will you ensure that schools, in particular secondary schools, have access to subject and phase specific support to develop the teaching and learning as they develop their curriculum? How could you strengthen your subject networks to support this more effectively?
- How will you ensure that Welsh-medium schools have access to all professional learning and support through the medium of Welsh?
- How are you supporting schools to share and learn from practice in other local authorities?

2. Understanding needs and engaging:

- The levels of engagement in NPT are very high. The school support service works daily with the Chair of the primary headteacher group (Llan) and regularly with the secondary Chair (NAASH).
- Regular sessions to support progression and assessment are well attended by all schools at Camau (Welsh govt. in collaboration with UWTSD and Glasgow university) cluster meetings
- Termly governor training sessions are provided by the school support service on mandatory issues such as data training as well as Curriculum for Wales training and school development plan training.
- Elected members receive helpful reports for scrutiny/information on a wide range of issues including support for Welsh in English medium schools, the Seren programme, community focussed schools and the roll out for the curriculum for Wales.
- The school standards and partnership group meet every half term with two NPT schools where their context, successes, challenges and priorities are discussed.
- The needs of schools are identified through a range of activities primarily by supporting schools with their self-evaluation process. Regular (at least termly) visits support schools to monitor progress against agreed priorities. Schools is a form of follow-up with Estyn also receive additional support to address the recommendations.

3. Collaboration:

- The school support service collaborates with a wide range of partners – Primarily all schools and their governing bodies within NPT
- Fortnightly collaboration with UWTSD and Glasgow university as part of Camau i'r dyfodol help to inform the approach to progression, assessment and curriculum design in NPT schools as well as informing the national picture

- A long-term collaboration with Geoff Cresswell who offers bespoke one to one support for senior leaders in NPT schools has been a very successful model for both leadership and their well-being
- Strong links exist with colleagues in Welsh government and there are frequent discussions and meetings with them to support the roll-out of the curriculum for Wales. This has been further strengthened by the Lead ESO being seconded as a professional adviser to the Welsh government for two days a week to support curriculum design across Wales
- Strong links exist with different forums within the county borough for example presentations and discussions around the curriculum for Wales have taken place with the local SACRE group, BAME group, VAWDAAW group and teams within the education directorate.

4. Decision Making, Planning and Risk:

- The service has four clear objectives which align with Directorate, Corporate and national priorities (see below – key actions).
- The service contributes effectively to delivery of the council’s well-being objectives and corporate priorities, particularly around the priority for the best start in life but also to ensuring our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.
- All recommendations arising from inspections have been addressed/implemented.
- The service can evidence it has a culture which promotes performance and accountability and delivers continuous improvement through Estyn inspections, Welsh government discussions, local government scrutiny as well as each school’s governing body.
- The service has a regularly reviewed continuity and succession plan
- Employees are clear on what their expectations are

5. Value for Money:

The service uses its resources, including assets such as the training centre in Baglan well. We achieve good value for money and we securing Welsh government grants well. We know this because of our continual monitoring of NPT schools and this is nearly always supported by Estyn judgements. The budget is continually monitored throughout the year and the budget supports priorities being delivered.

6. Duties and Standards:

- The service follows integrated impact assessment procedures when required to do so. Several members of the team have received appropriate training.

- The team fully complies with the Welsh language standards particularly in terms of training and recruitment but also in terms of the day to day operation of the service.

7. Socio-Economic Duty:

Strategic decision involving learners who are likely to be impacted by socio-economic disadvantage are at the heart of much of our work. Research into how the curriculum for Wales could further disadvantage socio-economically disadvantaged young people has been considered and the effective use of the Pupil Development Grant is central to one of our four priorities (i.e. To ensure that parents are involved in pupils' learning).

8. DARE Strategy:

One of the four purposes of the curriculum for Wales is that all pupils develop as ethical and informed citizens as well as healthy and confident individuals. As a result, our training is targeted at realising this in all NPT schools.

9. Digital Opportunities:

The service uses a number of approaches that take advantage of digital opportunities. Many meetings now take place online. This happens on a daily basis and allows us to collaborate with colleagues across the county borough and Wales. Employees are able to access services from home and this enables a certain amount of agile/hybrid working for nearly all team members who wish to use this approach.

How do we know?

- The modelling of effective self-evaluation processes with middle and senior leaders has strengthened school leadership significantly as evidenced by NPT's Estyn profile. Only a half of schools had been judged by Estyn to have effective leadership for the four years prior to the implementation of this strategy.
- A wide range of impact reports form the basis of team's self-evaluation. These reports identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Continual feedback from headteachers and senior leaders through the strong relationships between LA and school has allowed us to co-construct the approach to reform and support.
- Regular attendance at local authority scrutiny meetings, seminars for members and governors allows both internal and external challenge
- Regular team meetings to discuss what is going well and what needs to be better helps to inform our direction and approach

- Performance Management which has developed through the culture of coaching and mentoring enables a culture of development and consistency. All targets are aligned with the service plan and the directorate plan (all of which align with Welsh government priorities)
- Regular updates of targets on the CPMS system / or its equivalent monitor progress

How and what we can do better?

- Support secondary schools in making the cultural shift away from a system which measured attainment above all other aspects of a child's development towards the realisation of the four purposes. Due to the phased implementation of the new assessment and accountability system influencing change at secondary schools is understandably more challenging. Colleagues in secondary schools are understandably reticent to shift practice too much until they know what they qualifications are going to look like. As a result, it is more challenging (nationally as well as locally), to ask schools to make a leap of faith.
- Access and contribute to cross-regional and national working groups. There are many groups both at Welsh Government and cross regional level that exist. As we are no longer part of a region, access to these groups is occasionally an issue, as is our capacity to have a representative on every group.
- Of the schools inspected this academic year, three primary schools and one secondary school have been placed in a formal category. The primary schools two are in Special Measures, one is need of significant improvement and the secondary school is in need of Significant Improvement. All schools are receiving additional appropriate levels of support. One primary school had significant challenges around staffing in the lead up to the inspection.

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Budget, Resource Management and Organisational Development

This means that the School Improvement team receives direct funding of £1,364,941. Total allocation £18,255,700. 7.4% is retained by the LA. 92.6% is allocated directly to schools. Of the 7.4% retained by the LA £207,845 will go to schools. Therefore, of the total allocation of £17,098,604 to schools which equates to 93.6%.

SWOT Analysis	
<p>KEY STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural of being a learning organisation – Strong culture of collaboration and innovation • Stability within the team – Most of the team are full time and permanent • The team is very experienced, and we are able to continually second ‘new blood’ into the team which freshens up our ideas and thinking and also provides them with rich experiences. • Strong relationships exist between all sectors • Strong external links exist between individuals in organisations such as Estyn, Welsh Government, the region etc) 	<p>MAIN WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity – limits our ability to carry out action research (Business development) and be part of national and cross-regional groups • Grant funding leads to annual anxiety and does not promote long term planning culture (also leads to considerable amount of time retaining and recruiting staff – constantly reacting rather than developing) • attendance, alternative curriculum development (particularly at secondary school) reducing exclusions, • Recruitment and retention of senior leaders in schools is becoming an increasing problem with over half of NPT schools having new or acting headteachers
<p>KEY OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national reform agenda • No longer being part of a regional consortia 	<p>MAIN THREATS (see also risk area below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national reform agenda – time to bring about cultural change • Recovery from the cost of living that is impacting across all sectors • Unknown outcomes of Welsh government’s middle tier review (findings due March 2024)

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Risk Management				
Risk Title	Date From	Date To	Risk rating	
			Original	Latest

Risk 1: Grant funding withdrawn – This would have a significant impact as many of the key posts are grant funded including the Welsh support team, the professional learning lead post and all the 14-19 work including SEREN. These are all national priorities. However, as they are national priorities the funding is unlikely to cease. Originally the likelihood 3 Impact 5. That has moved to likelihood is 3 and the impact is 3 as many of the projects are now more embedded and understood.			15	9
Risk action 1: Treating – seeking funding from other sources			N/A	N/A
Risk 2: Covid continues to have a negative impact – This has been downgraded over time, however the impact has been significant and remains a factor in terms of staff anxiety and sickness. Originally the likelihood was 3 and the impact is now 3 but as the threat of covid has receded the likelihood has reduced to 2.			12	6
Risk action 1: Treating – practice changed to minimize impact			N/A	N/A
Risk 3:				
Risk action 1:			N/A	N/A
Risk action 2: add more if required			N/A	N/A
Add more risks if required				

Key Actions <i>(refer to Guidance Note 9)</i>		Responsible Officer	Start Date	End Date	Well-Being Objective / Governance & Resource <i>(contributes to)</i>
1	Provide high quality support for teaching that supports the evolution of pedagogy and how to plan for progression in the CfW	MD & TH	01/04/23	31/3/24	WBO 1 & WBO 3
2	To provide high quality responsive support for leadership at all levels including induction, support staff, leadership training etc.	MD & AH	01/04/23	31/3/24	WBO1
3	To engage with a range of partners both within the LA and beyond to ensure progression within our schools e.g. Camau, NPEP, Let's think, Talk pedagogy, NNC etc.	MD & GS	01/04/23	31/3/24	WBO1

4	To ensure that parents are involved in pupils' learning	MD & JR	01/04/23	31/3/24	WBO 1 & WBO 3
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Performance Measures <i>(refer to Guidance Note 10)</i>		Actual 2021/22 (full year)	Actual 2022/23 (full year)	Target 2023/24	Well-Being Objective / Governance & Resource <i>(contributes to)</i>
1	Most schools will have developed a vision for the curriculum for Wales and will be trialling new approaches to teaching	80%	85%	Maintain 100%	WBO 1 & WBO 3
2	Most schools will be part of a professional network of school leaders sharing ideas and resources	80%	85%	Maintain 100%	WBO 1
3	Most schools will provide evidence that pupils are effectively developing the four purposes of the curriculum because teaching will have evolved (more teachers will be following the approach to developing higher order thinking as explained in the training and learning and teaching strategy)	80%	85%	Maintain 100%	WBO 1

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SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024 - 2025

Directorate: Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning

Service Area: Project Development and Funding Unit

Accountable Manager : Paul Hinder

Purpose and Vision

To provide an efficient and effective Project Management and Funding Unit, one that is of fundamental importance to citizens and local Groups wishing to access Grant schemes and acquire funding.

The Unit manages Renewable Energy Funds, is an integral part of the SSIP Team and its expertise extends towards project management of in- house schemes from inception to completion.

The Unit is the Grant Management Organisation and Administrator of a raft of Community Benefit Funds associated with the out- turn from Wind, Biomass, Solar and mineral deposits. These Grants are readily accessible to the public.

The Unit is called upon to assist Corporate Grant schemes such as the Third Sector Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund.

In the performance of the above duties the Unit regularly attracts over £1 million/annum for its customers. This money is sought from external grant aid and extra voluntary contributions. The Unit is also associated with building capacity, social capital and expertise in the voluntary sector.

The Unit contributes to the Council's vision by assisting schools to secure grant aid for their pupils giving 'children the best start in life'.

The Unit works across the entire County serving its 34 Wards. Grants are sourced and invested to build resilience and to ensure that 'communities are thriving and sustainable'.

Groups that benefit from the grant aid that the Unit routinely attracts have their roots in sport, art, education, biodiversity, conservation and community development hence the Unit contributes to the Council's aim of protecting 'our local environment, culture and industrial heritage for future generations'.

Values

The Unit prides itself on being:-

- *Citizen centred
- *Fair and equitable
- *Developmental
- *Innovative and problem solving
- *Accurate and efficient
- *Supportive and inventive

In so doing the Unit is responsive, collaborative (working with citizens and partners), will achieve more with less and add value. Does the right things, well.

Budget, Resource Management and Organisational Development

The Unit has an 'in year' operational budget of £5,000 and this is used to facilitate and pump prime or 'top and tail' grant Applications. The Unit also receives a 3% Administration Fee from Renewable Energy providers and this budget is also used to add value and plug funding gaps on priority projects that the Unit is asked to develop. The Unit funds and manages 100+ projects per annum and there is no additional revenue impact on the NPTCBC.

This budget is sufficient in the short term.

In the medium term there will be a need for more employees. A 'Spend To Save' initiative could involve the appointment of more staff working on the basis that 2FTEs generate £1million- to £1.5 million per annum, a third member of staff could significantly add to the Multiplier Effect.

Staffing resilience, service continuity, employee training and development will be an issue and there is a need for more resources. The Unit currently has suitably skilled and qualified employees but that will not remain the case in the medium (2 years) to long term. There will be a need for another Project Development and Funding Officer to fill the void left from the impending retirement of the Manager.

There is insufficient capacity for research and development at this time but much depends on the future workload which is largely governed by the advent of still further Renewable Energy Community Benefit Funds and continued investment in the Council's Additional Works Programme sponsored from Reserves.

There are no interdependencies as the Unit is self-contained, self-managed and self-motivated. The Unit benefits from good relations with Technical Accounts, I.T. and the Planning Dept. It is not reliant on other services to make improvement or change.

Page

SWOT Analysis

KEY STRENGTHS

- *Experienced staff, who are resourceful, caring and have a good work ethic
- *Flexible and adaptive
- *Very good partnership working
- *Innovative, problem solving, 'going extra mile'
- *Economic in use of resources, time and funding
- *Exemplary sickness records
- *Whatever it takes attitude, more than a 'can do' attitude

MAIN WEAKNESSES

- *New demands and duties places strain on the service
- *Staff resilience, business continuity and succession planning
- *Reacting rather than developing and forward planning
- *Capacity – only 2FTEs

<p>*Exceptional knowledge of the County, its people and its facilities at grassroots level – work towards filling known gaps in provision</p>	
<p>KEY OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Agile or hybrid working *Marketing the service *Recruitment *Further collaboration *Broaden skill set <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 218</p>	<p>MAIN THREATS (see also risk area below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Funds change and opportunities to apply are diminished (an organic process that is difficult to predict with any certainty) *Limited experienced staffing resource *Need to ensure all the projects developed by the Unit are financially and environmentally sustainable during times of austerity *Unit not being able to keep pace with demand

Key Actions for Improvement and Service Change		Responsible Officer	Start date	End Date
1	To concentrate on those grant acquisitions and to project manage schemes that yield most compared to time invested(cost benefit analysis)	PH	1.04.24	31.03.25
2	To keep pace with the growing number of Renewable Energy Community Funds and to offer assistance as appropriate, acting as the grant Management Organisation (GMO)	PH	1.04.24	31.03.25
Page 219	To keep abreast of all relevant grant giving information and to link that information to bringing added value to County Borough initiatives	PH	1.04.24	31.03.25
4	To act as a Clearing House for Grant givers as a strategic first point of contact in NPTCB. A 'One Stop Shop' for grant advice.	PH	1.04.24	31.03.25
5	To again manage a proportion of the Additional Works Programme (met from Reserves) , if called upon to do so by the Corporate Body	PH	1.04.24	31.03.25
6	To concentrate on those grant acquisitions that are modest in terms of ongoing revenue implication	PH	1.04.24	31.03.25

7	To provide an accessible and affective Project Development & Funding Service. Work towards 100% customer satisfaction	PH	1.04.24	31.03.25
8	Expenditure forecast to be contained within budget	PH	1.04.24	31.03.25

Evaluation of progress 2023-24 (What has gone well, what has been a challenge?)		Next steps
1	<p>The Unit has been efficient and effective in its use of the Additional Works Programme Reserves to realise the 8 play area refurbishments that were allotted to it. This was completed across the County and the total investment and project management expertise generated projects worth £453,962 in the Neath, Port Talbot, Cwmavon, Briton Ferry and Cimla area.</p> <p>The challenge has been getting Ward Councillors to agree investment as decision making has not always been timely particularly when it involves Section 106 'Open Space' contributions.</p>	Should the Council wish to repeat this exercise, the Unit can achieve the same outputs in yet another Financial Year (depending upon allocation of Reserves).
2	The Unit has managed 12 individual Renewable Energy and Mineral Deposit Community Funds and has acted as the Grant Management Organisation for each of them. This has been run like clockwork with good feedback from grant recipients on how the Unit processed claims in a timely fashion and kept the Applicant informed. This is always a challenge with only 2FTEs in the Unit.	Repeat in 2024/25
3	<p>Inter – Directorate working has added value to projects that have helped the Council with Energy Efficiency bids, refurbishment projects and Shared Prosperity Funding.</p> <p>The main challenges have been the criteria that SPF and other grants (like the Corporate Third Sector Funds) are governed by as they do not work in the Applicant's favour and can hinder the delivery of time- sensitive projects. These Funds will be subject to a review in 2025/26</p>	Better communication with SPF Officers and the Corporate Body to share experiences and make the linkages.
4	<p>The Unit has invested 70% of its time, effort and resource championing the cause of the Third Sector. Capacity building amongst the Third Sector and the Community Councils still remains an issue. There is a general lack of experience which requires a far more 'hands on' approach by the Unit if a project is to be delivered from inception to completion. This is very time consuming for a Unit of 2FTEs.</p> <p>Only 54% (or 64) of the 'Assists' (a total of 119 in 2023/24,) that the Unit has responded to actually generated grant aid, which ultimately led to tangible projects. Many of the enquirers, following receipt of advice, did not pursue the grant aid. This reflects badly on Performance Indicators and could be attributed to would – be Applicants losing the will to see the process through or finding processes too</p>	Unit to continue to assist the Third Sector and Town/Community Councils. They will learn by doing.

	difficult for them (sometimes a change of personnel in an Organisation temporarily de-rails or changes the focus of the Group, possibly away from the intent to apply for Grant aid in favour of new priorities).	
5	<p>The Unit has invested, possibly, an unprecedented amount of time and effort in attracting grant aid to two iconic project proposals in Trefelin and Glynneath. The pay back on these two projects in 2024/25 could be grant aid to the value of £428,926 and £800,000 respectively.</p> <p>The challenges, from a Project Management perspective are that projects of this stature include the need to meet all legislative requirements. The Unit will spend time developing these Statutory Undertakings as part of its role in assisting the project owner. The legislative requirements have grown exponentially and are a challenge. They include Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SuDS), Flood Consequence Plans, Coal Risk Mining Assessments, Tree Management Plans, Artificial Lights at Night (ALAN), Japanese Knotweed Treatment Programmes, Section 106 'Open Space' requirements, etc.</p>	<p>Unit to continue to learn from these experiences and embrace the challenge.</p> <p>Gain knowledge on each of the Planning issues to be better equipped to advise clients.</p>

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SERVICE PLAN 2024 / 2025

Directorate: Education

Service Area: Visitor Economy Team (Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events)

Accountable Manager: Karleigh Davies

Service overview

The Neath Port Talbot Council Visitor Economy Team is responsible for encouraging the growth of the visitor economy through the delivery of compelling destination marketing campaigns, securing external funding to deliver improvements to visitor infrastructure across the County and delivering advice and guidance to the tourism sector and local stakeholders to encourage investment and participation.

As a result of SPF funding the team also has responsibility for the delivery of the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund up until March 2025. The HCTE Fund seeks to deliver priority heritage, culture and tourism projects and initiatives across Neath Port Talbot as identified in the Neath Port Talbot Council Corporate Plan. This consists of two revenue and capital project interventions open to public and third sector organisations and an events intervention open to public, private and third sector organisations

The activity of the Visitor Economy Team is guided by the NPT Destination Management Plan, a partnership document which contains a comprehensive set of the agreed actions required to deliver the sustainable growth of the sector between 2023 and 2028.

The team consists of:

Visitor Economy Manager (Full Time, Permanent)



Visitor Economy Officer (Full Time, Permanent)

HCTE Fund Project Manager (Full Time, Fixed Term until 31st March 2025)

HCTE Fund Project Development Officer (Full Time, Fixed Term until 31st March 2025)

The Visitor Economy Manager administers an operational budget for the delivery of destination marketing and destination management actions. In addition to this the HCTE Fund has a total of £2.5 million to allocate to eligible projects up until March 2025.

The Visitor Economy Manager is also responsible (as part of a wider project delivery team) for the delivery of the UK LUF funded Waterfall Country Visitor Infrastructure Scheme (£7.7m) and the Gnoll Country Park Heritage and Visitor Infrastructure Project (£12m) in addition to a range of other visitor infrastructure projects as detailed in the tables below.

Pending a review of the wider service structure it is intended that Commercial Marketing and Festivals and Events will also come into the service.

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Review of 23/24

- Continued delivery of the SPF funded Destination Marketing and Pride of Place campaigns and exceeded targets for cumulative campaign reach (number of people reached through campaign activity).
- Secured £350,000 to deliver the Neath Abbey Car Parking project and undertake a wider masterplan of the site.
- Commenced implementation of the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund and allocated £2.2m (up to Dec 23) to eligible projects
- Devised and adopted the new Destination Management Plan 2023-2028.
- Provided advice and assistance to 22 (up to Dec 2023) new, existing and proposed businesses in the tourism sector within the county.

Collaboration:



The Visitor Economy Team works with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to deliver the Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan and the wider work of the team. This includes; Natural Resources Wales, Visit Wales, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, town councils, community councils, National Trust, Cadw, Wildlife Trust South and West Wales etc.

Key risks:

- Potential loss of skilled and experienced staff in March 2024 as a result of SPF funding coming to an end.
- Risk of maintaining marketing campaigns to existing level once SPF funding comes to an end. Currently external funding for marketing campaigns amounts to £250k over 2 financial years. Current internal budget for destination marketing activity stands at approx. £25k per year.
- Cost of living crisis is continuing to have a significant impact on the profitability and viability of many businesses in the tourism sector, this could result in limiting the potential for growth and demand for advice and assistance in the sector increasing.
- Welsh Government’s forthcoming plans to introduce Statutory Registration for accommodation providers, a Visitor Levy to raise revenue from overnight stays, the proposed Reform of the School Year, and the regulations around second home and the 180 days rule, will have an impact on the workload of the team and potentially the way that the team operates in future.

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Key Actions		Responsible Officer	Start Date	End Date	Well-Being Objective / Governance & Resource <i>(contributes to)</i>	Performance Measures
1	<p>Deliver the NPT Destination Management Plan</p> <p>1. Establish new DMP Steering Group, terms of reference and agree DMP priorities for delivery.</p>	Karleigh Davies/ Gareth Bowden	Apr 24	Mar 25	<p>WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	Number of destination Management Plan actions delivered. (existing SRP output)



Page 226	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Implement year 1 priorities identified within the DMP. 3. Strengthen the partnership approach with NRW in Afan Forest Park and formalise Afan Forest Park Masterplan. 4. Continue to work in partnership with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and other partners as part of the Waterfall Country Partnership in order to manage visitor pressures. 5. Continue with the co-ordination of the Aberavon Seafront Management Group and delivery of the seafront management plan. 6. Deliver the visitor economy actions identified within the Aberavon Seafront Masterplan 7. Continue to attend regional fora relevant to the visitor economy. 					
2	<p>Encourage private sector investment in the visitor economy within NPT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver advice and assistance to new and existing businesses within the tourism sector. 2. Continue to support developers of major tourism proposals including Wildfox, Rheola etc. 	<p>Karleigh Davies</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>Number of tourism operators supported by the Visitor Economy Team (existing SRP output)</p>



<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 227</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Issue regular communications to the tourism sector via the Visitor Economy trade newsletter. 4. Increase sign ups to visitor economy newsletter through engagement with new and existing businesses and stakeholders. 5. Organise first NPT Tourism Industry Summit 6. Organise a series of familiarisation visits and experiences to encourage product knowledge with partners and businesses within the visitor economy. 					
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">3</p>	<p>Deliver the SPF Funded Heritage Culture Tourism and Events Fund</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to attract a range of projects from the public, private and voluntary sectors to invest in heritage, tourism and culture within NPT. 2. Support project applicants to deliver against agreed outputs and profiled spend in order to ensure that all agreed outputs and expenditure can be evidenced by 31st December 2024. 3. Submit all financial claims as required, ensuring that all claims are appropriately evidenced. 4. Continue to manage the SPF Funding Panel (in partnership with the Valleys 	<p>Karleigh Davies/ Bethan Dennedy</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>Number of projects supported/delivered.</p> <p>Total value of grant aid awarded to local projects via the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund (existing WB03 performance measure)</p>



	<p>and Villages Fund) to ensure a regular stream of projects are assessed and that funding decisions are made in accordance with Terms of Reference and fund guidelines.</p> <p>5. Monitor delivery of the 'Attitude Research' commission to evidence the agreed outputs relating to attitude shift against SPF schemes.</p> <p>6. Start to prepare a bid for second round SPF funding</p>					
Page 228 4	<p>Deliver effective destination marketing activity.</p> <p>1. Deliver SPF funded Destination Marketing and Pride of Place campaigns through a range of digital and CRM actions aimed at key target markets</p> <p>2. Continue to deliver destination marketing activity aside from the SPF funded activities which reinforces the Dramatic Heart of Wales place brand.</p> <p>3. Maintain the Dramatic Heart of Wales, We Are NPT and Afan Forest Park websites ensuring content is up to date and relevant to the audience.</p> <p>4. Build upon our accommodation database to increase representation of accommodation providers from across the county on our websites.</p>	<p>Karleigh Davies/ Gareth Bowden</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>Total cumulative reach of destination marketing and pride of place campaigns. (existing WB03 performance measure)</p> <p>Increase in social media engagement</p> <p>Unique visits to website</p> <p>Blogger/ journalists visits undertaken</p> <p>15% positive shift in attitudes of residents within the region</p>



5	<p>Deliver the Neath Constituency Levelling Up Projects at Gnoll Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to work as part of the project team to inform decision making and deliver the Gnoll Country Park Heritage and Visitor Infrastructure project. 2. Continue to work as part of the team to inform decision making and deliver the solutions required to manage visitor impacts at Pontneddfechan and the wider project. 	<p>Karleigh Davies</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience (existing WB03 performance measure)</p>
Page 229	<p>Invest visitor infrastructure at Neath Abbey Ruins</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver the Brilliant Basics funded Neath Abbey Visitor Car Parking Scheme 2. Work in partnership with Cadw to develop the wider Neath Abbey/ Neath Abbey Ironworks Masterplan 	<p>Karleigh Davies</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience (existing WB03 performance measure)</p>
7	<p>Deliver improvements to the Richard Burton Trails and prepare for the 2025 Richard Burton Centenary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procure and deliver the Pontrhydyfen and Port Talbot Richard Burton Trails 2. Prepare a programme of activities in readiness for the 2025 Richard Burton centenary. 	<p>Karleigh Davies/ Esta Lewis</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>Number of projects supported/ delivered linked to the Richard Burton Centenary.</p>
8	<p>Secure external funding to deliver visitor infrastructure investment and enhance quality within Neath Port Talbot</p>	<p>Karleigh Davies/ Bethan</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 WB04</p>	<p>Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor</p>



Page 230 9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek out external funding to deliver priorities which meet the aims of the visitor economy projects identified within the Destination Management Plan and Culture Strategy. 2. Ensure representation of the visitor economy team at meetings with key funders such as Welsh Government (including Visit Wales), NLHF, Arts Council etc. 3. Ensure that visitor economy project priorities are represented when calls for projects are received for specific funding opportunities. 	Dennedy/ Esta Lewis			Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy	experience (existing WB03 performance measure)
	<p>Collate and analyse consumer research to assist in decision making within the Council and within the tourism sector.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collate and monitor accommodation occupancy data from external sources to inform analysis of sector performance and to monitor the impact of the TATA transition on accommodation occupancy. 2. Continue to collect data on visitor numbers to input into the STEAM model to establish the volume and value of the visitor economy within NPT. 3. Undertake research as required (and depending upon budget) to understand visitor motivations to travel. 	Karleigh Davies	Apr 24	Mar 25	WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy	Number of research activities undertaken to inform decision making in the visitor economy.



	4. Utilise research collected externally from the council (such as the Wales Tourism Barometer etc.) to inform the Council's understanding of visitor motivations and trading conditions within the sector.					
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the recommendations from the events and festivals report.• Set up a film office and recruit to roles	Karleigh Davies	June 2024	March 2025	WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy	Implement the recommendations in the Events and Festivals Cabinet report ready for the policy change on 1st April 2024.

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CABINET Forward Work Programmes 24/25

KEY – Items marked in Green have been added to the Planner since Cabinet on the 23rd October 2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of the Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet 13 th November	Assessing Transport Suppliers and Drivers DBS (Home to School and Social Services Transport) Policy	For Decision	Brendan Griffiths/ David Griffiths	This will provide a new Passenger Transport DBS Policy that will guide operators through the application process, sets out the assessment criteria and an appeals process.		Cllr. W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Admission to Community Schools	For Decision	Helen Lewis/ Chris Millis	The Council is the admission authority for community schools in its area and is required to determine its admission arrangements.		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	School Exclusion Update	For Monitoring	John Burge	Making Members aware of the exclusion information for the previous academic year.		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2023/2024	For Monitoring	Caryn Furlow- Harris	To provide an overview of the number of compliments and complaints received during 2023 – 2024.	YES 17 th Oct	Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Corporate Plan Annual Report 2023/2024	For Decision	Louise McAndrew/ Caryn Furlow- Harris	The purpose of the report is to approve the content of both the Corporate Plan Annual Report and Self- Assessment 2023 – 2024. Both documents reflect on progress made during 2023 – 2024. In relation to the delivery of the council’s well-being objectives and how well we performed as a council.	YES All Scrutiny (Post)	Cllr S.Hunt Portfolio 1	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Viva Port Talbot Bid Renewal Ballot 2024	For Decision	Andrew Collins	To decide upon the NPT’s vote in the ballot.	4 th November	Cllr. J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Enviroment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Transfer Station Energy Contract	For Decision	Mike Roberts	Seek Member approval to enter into a contract for the supply of electricity to the Council’s Transfer Station at Crymlyn Burrows		Cllr. S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Report on the 20 mph Speed Limit	For Decision	Joy Smith			Cllr. W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Consideration of Ombudsman Annual Report	For Monitoring	Craig Griffiths			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Christmas New Year Opening Times – Libraries, Leisure Centres etc.	For Decision	Chris Saunders	Details of the Christmas and New Year Opening Times for Libraries and Leisure Centres etc.		Cllr.C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbieng
	Replacement Local Development Strategy 2023 – 2038 For Commending to Council for Approval	For Decision	Ceri Morris/ Lana Beynon			Cllr. W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Arboricultural Management Plan includes the tree policy	For Decision	James Davies		Yes 4 th Nov	Cllr. S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Pilot of Access Approach to Parks and Gardens	For Decision	James Davies		8 th Nov	Cllr.S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration

							and Streetscene Services
Disposal of Off Street Pay and Display Car Parks (Capacity and Utilization Review)	For Decision	David W Griffiths/ Ian Rees	This report considers surplus car parking capacity in the borough, income and expenditure with a view to reducing operational costs and to release the surplus land/buildings for potential re-development/regeneration or lease/asset transfer.	YES 8 th Nov	Cllr. W.Griffiths Portoflo 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services	
Bus Franchising (Network Design)	For Decision	David Griffiths/ Brendan Griffiths	This report will set out the timeline for Bus Franchising and requires endorsement by Council of the new Bus Network that will operate in the County.		Cllr. W Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services.	
Permission to consult on Remodelling of Link	For Decision	Keri Warren Hayley Short		Yes 7 th November	Cllr. S. Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.	
Rheola Estate – Next Steps	For Decision	Andrew Collins	To consider the options available to the Council following a legal request regarding title, from the current owners of the Rheola Estate	4 th Nov	Cllr.J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services	
Improving Recycling Performance Report and Budget Delivery	For Decision	Mike Roberts		YES 8 th Nov	Cllr. S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services	
Permission to Consult on the Remodelling of Park House	For Decision	Keri Warren Hayley Short		Yes 7 th November	Cllr. S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety	
Attendance in Schools	For Monitoring	John Burge	Overview of Attendance across all Schools		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
School Budget Pressures	For Monitoring	Rhiannon Crowhurst		YES (POST) 5 th Dec	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
Youth Engagement Strategy	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Updated Strategy for Approval	YES 24 th Oct	Cllr N.Jenkins Portflio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
Leadership Strategy and its Impact on NPT Workforce in Schools	For Monitoring	Mike Daley	Provides an update on the Leadership Strategy and the impact it has had across all schools.		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
Teaching and Learning support and Development Programme	For Monitoring	Mike Daley	It will provide an update on the progress to date with the actions within the Teaching and Learning Programme across all clusters.		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 in non-maintained settings, primary and secondary schools and all age schools and into Post 16.	For Monitoring	Zoe Ashton- Thomas/ Sophie Griffiths	Provides an update on the progress to date with the actions that schools and the Local Authority have taken in meeting the statutory duties around ALNET implementation and the support schools have received.	Yes 24 th Oct	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
Trust Fund Reports x 2	For Decision	Helen Lewis			Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	

RECURRING ITEMS (IF NEEDED)							
Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths	Various Traffic Orders (If Needed)			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Various Land Disposal Reports (If needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan	Land Disposal (If Needed)			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Select Lists	For Decision	David Griffiths				Cllr.W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Debt Write Offs	For Decision	Huw Jones				Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
Miscellaneous Grant Applications	For Decision	Huw Jones				Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet 4 th December	Revenue Budget Monitoring 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Capital Budget Monitoring 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Treasury Management Outturn 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Third Sector Grant & Commissioning Arrangements	For Decision	Caryn Furlow		YES 28 th Nov	Cllr S. Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Public Participation Strategy 2023-2027- Progress Report	For Monitoring	Caryn Furlow Harris Anita James	It will provide an update on the progress to date with the actions in the Public Participation Strategy. (Deferred from the 23 rd October)	YES 28 th Nov	Leader Portfolio 1	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Contract Procedure Rules	For Decision Commend to Council 27 th Nov 24	Craig Griffiths	To agree new standing orders and procedural rules for contracts that are entered into by Neath Port Talbot Council.	YES 17 th Oct	Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Corporate Plan Six Month Update Quarter 1 and 2	For Monitoring	Louise McAndrew		Com. Finance 28 th November Edu 5 th Dec Env 6 th Dec Soc Ser 12 th Dec	Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	All
	Support visits by Education Support Officers in Schools	For Monitoring	Mike Daley	Provides an update on the progress to date with the actions that follow any support visit across all our schools.		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 23/24	For Decision	Anita James/ Caryn Furlow- Harris	The Annual Report for 2023/2024 provides an account of progress in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and in particular against the equality objectives and actions set out in the Strategic Equality Plan.	YES 17 th Oct	Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Community Focussed Schools	For Monitoring	Mike Daley	Provides an update on the progress of the Community Focussed Schools		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Elective Home Education	For Monitoring	John Burge	All information available on children and young people who are now Educated at Home.		Cllr N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Flood Risk Management Plan	For Decision	Mike Roberts/ Steve Owen		YES 19 th July	Cllr. S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Permission to tender Domicilliary Care Framework	For Decision	Angela Thomas		Yes 7 th November	Cllr. J. Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.
	Permission to extend Contract Arrangements for the Prevention of Wellbeing Service	For Decision	Chele Howard		No	Cllr. J.Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and

							Community Safety.
	Children's Commissioning Placement Strategy NPTC 2024-2027	For Decision	Hayley Short			Cllr. S. Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.
	Fire Safety Guidance Impact Report	For Monitoring	Hayley Short			Cllr. S. Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.
	Appointment of LA Governors	For Decision	John Burge		No	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	RECURRING ITEMS (IF NEEDED)						
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Select Lists	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr. W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Debt Write Offs	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Miscellaneous Grant Applications	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet 15 th January 2025	Hillside Managers Report	For Monitoring	Keri Warren	Private Item		Cllr. S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Hillside Responsible Individuals Report	For Monitoring	Keri Warren	Private Item		Cllr.S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Updating the Side Waste Policy	For Decision	Mike Roberts	To seek Member approval for an updated Side Waste Policy (further to Measure 6 of the approved Waste Strategy Action Plan)	Awaiting Confirmation 6 th Dec	Cllr.S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Management of Japanese Knotweed	For Decision	James Davies	Update on the treatment policy and operational plan.		Cllr. W. Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Permission to Tender a Carers Service	For Decision	Hayley Short			Cllr. J.Hale Porfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Use of Containers on Safari Collections	For Decision	Mike Roberts	To establish policy regarding the use of containers as storage on black bag waste collection rounds.	NO	Cllr.S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Self Assessment 2023/2024	For Decision	Louise McAndrew/ Anita James		YES 28 th Nov	Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Regeneration Strategy	For Decision	Andrew Collins	Work is being undertaken to produce a strategy which will form a reference and guide for future Regeneration Projects going forward	YES 6 th Dec	Cllr.J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Permission to tender a Housing First Service	For Decision	Chele Howard/ Hayley Short		No	Cllr. A. Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Report on HWRC Feasibility	For Decision	Mike Roberts	To inform Members on the outcome of feasibility work into suitable sites for a new HRWC in the Afan Valley area, and seek a decision regarding further work or not (further to Measure 17 of the approved Waste Strategy Action Plan)	Awaiting Confirmation 6 th Dec	Cllr. S.Jones, Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Margam Park Business Plan	For Decision	Chris Saunders		YES 5 th December	Cllr. C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Impact of the Support by Case Assessment and Progression Team.	For Monitoring	John Burge	It will provide an update on the progress to date with the actions from the Case Assessment Progression Team.		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Vulnerable Learners Service	For Monitoring	John Burge	Update on the support offered by the Vulnerable Learners Service and the impact it has had on pupils and families in NPT		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and

							Wellbeing
	Welsh Public Library Standards	For Monitoring	Chris Saunders	Provides an update in respect of the authorities library service performance against current Welsh Language Standards (WPLS) Framework 6 and note the feedback, comments and recommendations in the Welsh Library Report.		Cllr.C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services.

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet 5 th February 2025	Fleet and Heavy Plant Renewals	For Decision	Kevin Lewis	This report seeks approval to procure new and replacement vehicles and heavy plant in 2025/2026 that has reached the end of their economic life cycle and require replacement in line with the Authority's Fleet Renewals Programme.	YES 6 th Dec	Cllr. W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Social Services Directors Annual Report	For Decision (Commending to Council)	Andrew Jarrett			Report of the Director of Social Services.	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Strategic Risk Register	For Monitoring	Caryn Furlow-Harris		YES 9 th Jan	Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Neath Port Talbot Events Strategy	For Decision	Chris Saunders		YES 16 th Jan	Cllr.C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Permission to tender Accommodation Models for Young People	For Decision	Keri Warren	Private Item	Yes 23 rd Jan	Cllr. S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Library Strategy	For Decision		To approve the Library Strategy		Cllr.C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Strategic Development Plan.	For Monitoring	Chris Millis	Provides an Update on the Progress to date with the Actions from within the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Strategic Development Plan.	YES 16 th Jan	Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Young People Housing Support Grant Funded Services (Permission to Re-tender).	For Decision	Hayley Short/ Chele Howard	Proposal for the recommissioning of Young People Housing Support Grant Funded Services		Cllr. A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Aberavon Seafront Masterplan	For Decision	Chris Saunders	To adopt the Seafront Strategy	Scrutiny 16 th Jan	Cllr. Cen Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Permission to Tender Supported Accommodation	For Decision	Hayley Short	Private Item		Cllr.A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Permission to Tender for Emergency Accommodation for Women – Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.	For Decision	Chele Howard/ Hayley Short	To feedback on the outcome of the consultation for the proposed remodel of emergency accommodation and seek permission to retender VAWDASV Emergency Accommodation on the feedback.	Yes, 23 rd Jan	Cllr. A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Direct Payment Whole Service Review this includes the Direct Payments Payroll Service Review	For Decision	Angela Thomas		Yes 12 th Dec	Cllr. J.Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Policies for the use of artificial grass and installation of honeybee hives on NPT Council / managed land.	For Decision	Ceri Morris/ Lana Beynon		TBC	Cllr. S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services

	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee	
Cabinet 26 th February BUDGET 25/26	Revenue Budget Monitoring 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership	
	Capital Budget Monitoring 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership	
	Treasury Management Outturn 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership	
	Education Development – Local Authority Education Grant Spending Plan 2024 -2025.	For Monitoring	Mike Daley	Provides an update on the progress to date with the actions from the grant.		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
	Safeguarding Support within Schools	For Monitoring	John Burge	Overview of all Safeguarding Advice and Training offered to Schools	YES 22 th Jan	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
	Appointment and Removal of Local Authority Governor Representatives	For Decision	John Burge	Information on the Appointment and Removal of Local Authority Governor Representatives		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
	An overview of the Families First Programme	For Information	Sarah Griffiths/ Allison Harris	The report will provide an overview of the Families First Early Intervention support services available to children, young people and families. It will also provide 2023/2024 data demonstrating the impact of the programme on children, young people and families who have accessed the service.		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN Provision at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Results of Consultation and permission to advertise Notice for Objections		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to re-organise ALN Provision at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School.	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Results of Consultation and permission to advertise Notice for Objections		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing	
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9		
Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4			

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 19 th March	Period Dignity Report	For Monitoring	John Burge	Report on the spend and implementation of Period Dignity Scheme.		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Family Support in the Early Years. An overview of the family support provided by the Early Years and Flying Start Family Support Team.	For Information	Sarah Griffiths/ Lisa Clement-Jones	This report will provide an overview of the collaborative work across the Local Authority and Health in relation to providing equitable early help for children and families in the Early Years.	YES 6 th March	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Updating the Missed Bin Policy	For Decision	Mike Roberts	To seek Member approval for an updated Missed Bin Policy (further to the implementation of Measure 1 of the approved Waste Strategy Action Plan, once completed)		Cllr.S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy	For Monitoring	Chele Howard/Elinor Wellington	12 Month Update		Cllr. A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 9 th April	Social Services Complaints Annual Report	For Monitoring	Leighton Jones			Cllr.A.Llewellyn Portfolio 8 Cllr S.Harris Portfolio 6 Cllr J Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Community Safety Strategic Intent Document	For Monitoring	Chele Howard/ Elinor Wellington	12 Month Update		Cllr. A. Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Permission to Consult and Pilot an Alternative Night Time Support Report	For Decision	Keri Warren/ Hayley Short		Yes, 13 th March 2025	Cllr.S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 30 th April	Hillside Managers Report	For Monitoring	Keri Warren			Cllr.S.Harris Portfolio 6	
	Hillside Responsible Individuals Report	For Monitoring	Keri Warren			Cllr.S.Harris Portfolio 6	
	Early Years and Flying Start Childcare	For Monitoring	Sarah Griffiths/Lisa Clement-Jones	This report will provide information in relation to the Early Years and Flying Start Childcare Sector including the impact of Flying Start Expansion.	YES 10 th April	Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
		Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 21 st May	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN provision at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Final Determination of the Proposal		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN provision at Cefn Season Comprehensive School	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Final Determination of the Proposal		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing.
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths				Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9
Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan				Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

(All starting 2pm unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Contact Officer
2024		
24 October	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	Youth Engagement Strategy (Decision)	Rhiannon Crowhurst
	Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 in non-maintained settings, primary and secondary schools and all age schools and into Post 16 (Information)	Zoe Ashton-Thomas / Sophie Griffiths
	2025/2026 Budget	Huw Jones
	Requested by Scrutiny Committee	
	Service Plans from Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate	Chris Millis

5 December	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	Curriculum for Wales (Information)	Mike Daley
	Leadership Strategy and it's impact on Neath Port Talbot Workforce in Schools (Information)	Mike Daley
	Teaching and Learning Support and Development Programme (Information)	Mike Daley
	Corporate Plan Six Monthly Update for Quarter 1 and 2 (Information)	Louise McAndrew/Caryn Furlow-Harris
	School Budgets Pressures (Information)	Rhiannon Crowhurst
	Margam Park Business Plan (Information)	Chris Saunders
	Corporate Plan Annual Report 2023/2024	Noelwyn Daniel
	Requested by Scrutiny Committee	
	School reorganisation in 21 st Century Schools update	Rhiannon Crowhurst
Employability and Skills Strategy	Rhiannon Crowhurst	
2025		

16th January	Budget Consultation 2025/2026	Huw Jones
22nd January	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	Safeguarding Support within Schools (Information)	John Burge
	Library Strategy (Decision)	Chris Saunders
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN Provision at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School - Results of Consultation and permission to advertise Notice for Objections (Decision)	Rhiannon Crowhurst
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to re-organise ALN Provision at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School. - Results of Consultation and permission to advertise Notice for Objections (Decision)	Rhiannon Crowhurst
	Aberavon Seafront Masterplan (Decision)	Chris Saunders
	Neath Port Talbot Events Strategy (Decision)	Chris Saunders

	Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Strategic Development Plan (Information)	Chris Millis
6 March	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	Family Support in the Early Years. An overview of the family support provided by the Early Years and Flying Start Family Support Team (Information)	Sarah Griffiths / Lisa Clement-Jones
	Pontardawe Swimming Pool – Feasibility Study	Chris Saunders
10 April	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	Early Years and Flying Start Childcare (Information)	Sarah Griffiths / Lisa Clement-Jones
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN provision at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School - Final Determination of the Proposal (Decision)	Rhiannon Crowhurst
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN provision at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School - Final Determination of the Proposal (Decision)	Rhiannon Crowhurst
22 May	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	

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To be programmed into the cycle

Provision of Outdoor Activities at Margam Park

School Exclusion Update

Attendance in Schools Report

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