



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET BOARD

*Immediately Following Scrutiny Committee on
THURSDAY, 28 APRIL 2016*

COMMITTEE ROOMS A/B - NEATH CIVIC CENTRE

(Please note Venue)

PART 1

1. To agree the Chairman for this Meeting
2. To receive any declarations of interests from Members
3. To receive the Forward Work Programme 2016/17 (*Pages 5 - 8*)

To receive the Report of the Head of Children and Young People Services

4. Fostering Statement of Purpose (*Pages 9 - 26*)
5. Neath Port Talbot Fostering Service Regulation 42 Quality of Care Report 2015/16 (*Pages 27 - 46*)
6. Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy and Finance Policy (*Pages 47 - 96*)

Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Head of Transformation

7. Financing of Schools Scheme (*Pages 97 - 148*)

To receive the Report of the Head of Participation

8. Play Sufficiency Assessment and Play Strategy (*Pages 149 - 190*)
9. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Year Three Action Plan 2016/2017 (*Pages 191 - 212*)
10. Home to School Transport Appeals Panel (*Pages 213 - 222*)
11. Review of School Music Service (*Pages 223 - 244*)

To receive the Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing

12. Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service Performance Report (*Pages 245 - 254*)
13. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Statutory Instrument 2001 No 2290 (as amended)
14. Access to Meetings - to resolve to exclude the public for the following items pursuant to Regulation 4 (3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

PART 2

To receive the Private Reports of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing

15. Hillside Placement Fees (Exempt Under Paragraph 13) (*Pages 255 - 256*)
16. The Children's Home (Wales) Regulations 2002 (Exempt Under Paragraph 13) (*Pages 257 - 282*)
17. The Manager's Report on Hillside Secure Children's Home (Exempt Under Paragraph 13) (*Pages 283 - 294*)

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Thursday, 21st April 2016

Cabinet Board Members:

Councillors: P.A.Rees and P.D.Richards

Notes:

- (1) *If any Cabinet Board Member is unable to attend, any other Cabinet Member may substitute as a voting Member on the Committee. Members are asked to make these arrangements direct and then to advise the committee Section.*
- (2) *The views of the earlier Scrutiny Committee are to be taken into account in arriving at decisions (pre decision scrutiny process).*

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Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board – Forward Work Programme (DRAFT)

2016/2017 FORWARD WORK PLAN (DRAFT)

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET BOARD

Dates to be confirmed at the Annual Meeting of Council in May

Meeting Date and Time	Agenda Items	Type (Decision, Monitoring or Information)	Rotation (Topical, Annual, Biannual, Quarterly, Monthly)	Contact Officer/Head of Service
2 nd June 16	Children's			
	Annual Complaints Report	Monitoring	Annual	Leighton Jones/ Angela Thomas
	Children & Young People Services Strategic Plan 2016/17 (Business Plan)	Decision	Annual	A.Jarrett
	Supported Accommodation Commissioning Plan	Decision	Annual	A.Thomas
	Local Safeguarding Annual Report	Monitoring	Annual	Caroline Dyer/Nick Jarman
	Contract between Hillside and Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School (after Consultation)	Decision	Topical	Mark Lazarus/Nick Jarman
	Partnership Agreement for Western Bay Adoption Service	Decision	Topical	Delyth Berni/Nick Jarman
	Local Safeguarding Annual Report	Monitoring	Annual	Nick Jarman
	Education			
	Business Plans	Decision	Annual	C.Millis
	School Terms and Holiday Dates 17/18 - 19/20	Decision	Annual	Helen Lewis/Andrew Thomas

Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board – Forward Work Programme (DRAFT)

Meeting Date and Time	Agenda Items	Type (Decision, Monitoring or Information)	Rotation (Topical, Annual, Biannual, Quarterly, Monthly)	Contact Officer/ Head of Service
30th June 16	Children's			
	Western Bay Adoption Service Partnership Agreement	Decision	Topical	Nick Jarman
	Western Bay Adoption Service Business Plan and Annual Report	Monitoring	Annual	Nick Jarman/ Val Jones
	Performance Data Quarter 4 15/16	Monitoring	Quarterly	David Harding/Angela Thomas
	Family Support Services – Annual Report	Monitoring	Annual	Andrew Jarrett/Julie Davies
	Young Carers Strategy Permission to Consult	Decision	Topical	Andrew Jarrett/Julie Davies/Aileen Flynn
	Education			
	Families First Annual Report	Information	Annual	C.Millis/ Neil Thomas
	Flying Start Annual Report	Information	Annual	C.Millis/ Neil Thomas
	Attendance Report – Feb, March, April, May	Monitoring	Quarterly	John Burge, Andrew Thomas
	Performance Data Quarter 4 15/16	Monitoring	Quarterly	Carl Glover/ Andrew Thomas
	SEREN 14-19 Pathway	Monitoring	Topical	Chris Millis

Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board – Forward Work Programme (DRAFT)

Meeting Date and Time	Agenda Items	Type (Decision, Monitoring or Information)	Rotation (Topical, Annual, Biannual, Quarterly, Monthly)	Contact Officer/ Head of Service
28th July 16	Children's			
	Western Bay Safeguarding Annual Report	Monitoring	Annual	Lisa Edley/Nick Jarman
	Western Bay Youth Offending Service Annual Report	Monitoring	Annual	Caroline Dyer/NJ
	Education			
	School Terms and Holiday Dates 17/18 - 18/19	Decision	Annual	Helen Lewis/Andrew Thomas
	Student Awards Report	Information	Annual	Andrew Thomas

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

CABINET BOARD

28TH APRIL 2016

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES – A. JARRETT

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All wards

Fostering Statement of Purpose

Purpose of the Report

To provide Members with information in relation to the Foster carers Statement of Purpose 2016.

Executive Summary

The fostering Statement of purpose sets out Neath Port Talbot's Fostering Service aims and objectives and outlines the services that will be provided.

Background

Part 1, Regulation 4 of The fostering Regulations (Wales) 2003 sets a requirement for the following:

3.—(1) The fostering service provider must compile, in relation to the fostering service, a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as the “statement of purpose”) which must consist of—

- (a) a statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service; and
- (b) a statement as to the services and facilities to be provided by the fostering service.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this report

Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report

Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report

Risk Management

There are no risk management issues associated with this report

Consultation

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

Recommendations

That Members note the report.

Appendices

Neath Port Talbot Fostering Statement of Purpose

List of Background Papers

Fostering Regulations (Wales) 2003

Officer Contact

Delyth Berni

Principal Officer

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d.berni@npt.gov.uk

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Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Fostering Service

Statement of Purpose

Mission Statement

Neath Port Talbot Fostering Service aims to provide safe, high quality care for children and young people; with foster carers who are skilled and motivated to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes in life.

THE FOSTERING SERVICE

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

We are committed to working in the best interests of children and young people and this underpins the development and provision of all services.

We want to ensure that children and young people achieve in their childhood, and that they can be successful in their futures. That every child is treated as an individual and each child or young person in foster care is protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, deprivation and exploitation.

We want to work successfully with children and young people, their parents and families and partner agencies to help young people achieve the best outcomes.

Children and young people have the right to be listened to and have their views respected, to participate in the plans for their care, and to inform future service needs.

Permanency and continuity is essential for all children in order to provide stable and secure relationships. This will ideally be achieved within their birth family, but where this is not possible the aim will be to provide secure high quality long-term placements.

AIMS

The primary aim of the Fostering Service is to provide quality care to meet the needs of children and young people looked after. To do this we will:

- Provide placements which are safe, caring and a stimulating environment for looked after children. To safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people and to ensure their physical, emotional and intellectual development.
- Develop Fostering Services to meet individual needs, including linguistic, religious and ethnicity of the child/young person.
- Provide the best possible care and support in placements that meet their needs to help children and young people achieve the best outcomes.
- Provide placements within the boundaries of Neath Port Talbot in order to maintain their relationships with their family, peers and to enable them to continue to maintain their links with education, health and other services that may be involved with them, unless there is a reason why this would not be in their best interest.
- Assist young people when needed to remain in their placements until they are ready to move to independence.

OBJECTIVES

- To deliver a Foster Carer Recruitment strategy which is based on understanding the needs of Looked After Children and understands and recognises the required skills and support needs of foster carers
- To reduce the numbers of looked after children, by supporting plans for children to be rehabilitated to their birth families or to be looked after in permanent families.
- To provide a wide range of support and advisory services to foster carers including out of hours support.

- To ensure all foster carers receive quality training to develop the skills, abilities and competencies required to ensure they are able to provide the best possible standards of care, opportunities and experiences to children and young people.
- To increase the resource available to meet the needs of the children and young people, including assessment placements for parents and babies, children with disabilities and additional needs, teenagers and sibling groups.
- To ensure that the voice of the child informs how the service is delivered and developed and to ensure that foster carers and children are consulted with.
- To promote and develop a clear career pathway through continuous learning for foster carer development to include an opportunity to gain a Diploma qualification in child care.
- To develop positive working relationships with other agencies and professionals.
- To annually review the Statement of Purpose and update as required.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Fostering ensures that all children and young people who are looked after are provided with the best possible care and support in placements that meet their needs.

The Service consists of Recruitment & Assessment Team and a Supervising Social Work Team

The service has a recruitment and retention officer and a placement coordinator.

The service supports family and friends who are foster carers and provides financial assessments for Special Guardianship carers where the Local Authority has been involved in the application.

Wherever possible the service aims to support placements within the boundaries of Neath Port Talbot in order for children and young people to remain within their local communities and have stability.

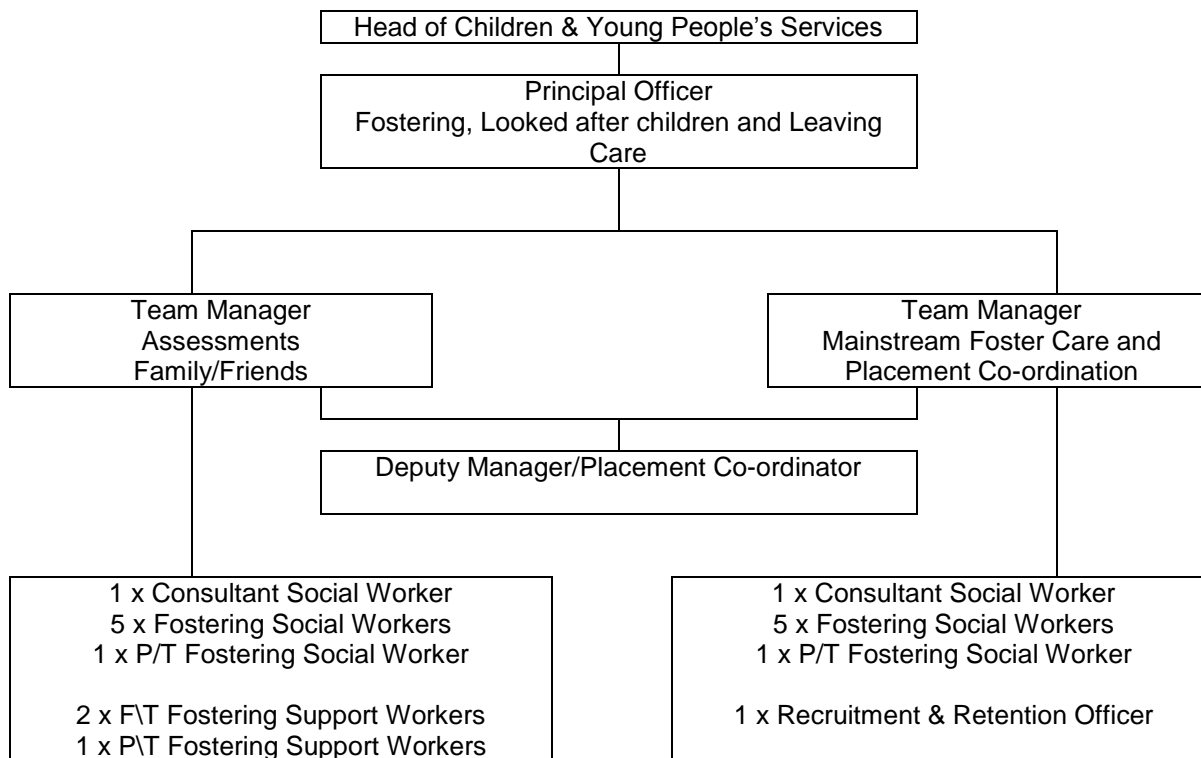
Placements

The range of placements provided include:-

- Foster plus scheme – to provide placements to children and young people with complex needs
- Short term task centred placements for children and young people
- Long term permanent placements for children and young people who are unable to return home or whose permanency has not been achieved through adoption or other Court orders.
- Family and friends foster carers
- Shared care placements where children and young people receive ongoing care between their parents and Foster Carer. Shared care enables children and young people to maintain family and community life and eases the pressures on families who may be experiencing difficulties.
- NPT commissions a short break service for children with disabilities through Action for Children.
- The fostering service provides a support to Foster Carers who become Special Guardianship Carers.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

The structure below shows the line management arrangements for the Fostering Service and the composition of the Team.



Fostering Service Staff

The Team Manager, Deputy, Consultant and Fostering Social Workers are qualified social workers registered with the Care Council for Wales and have valuable experience of child care services and child protection cases.

The Fostering Support Workers all have vast experience in working with children and young people and have experience of supervision of Family/Friends carers.

Regular team meetings are held with invitations to guest speakers to include the Principal Officer and Head of Service. Weekly placement meetings are held to discuss current placements.

Regular supervision of staff and access to an extensive training programme for staff to ensure workers are knowledgeable on key changes in legislation and practice issues.

RECRUITING AND APPROVING FOSTER CARERS

Recruitment

There are many significant benefits in promoting the growth in local foster carers. Our primary aim is to provide a service with a diversity of placements capable of meeting a wide range of children's needs.

There is a strong competitive local market with NPT Fostering having to compete with large neighbouring local authorities and a high number of independent fostering agencies recruiting within its locality.

NPT must ensure it has a marketing strategy which is visible and offers an attractive package of support. The service must be robust and in a position to deliver effective support to foster carers in order to offer a competitive service.

The aim is to plan for future needs and the strategy is informed by:-

1. Current placement demand
2. Evaluation of recruitment activity
3. Consultation with existing carers
4. Local and national trends and developments

A variety of recruitment activities are used including, social media through our NPT Facebook account, features in the local press, radio adverts and interviews, posters and leaflet campaigns.

Recruitment activities are run throughout the year with particular emphasis on the National Foster Care Fortnight campaign.

The strategy has regard to the need to recruit carers from ethnic minority groups, Welsh speakers and different religious persuasion.

The Fostering Service requires a robust focus on identifying the needs of children and young people and ensuring that it can meet a range of needs including supporting children with complex needs.

The fostering finance policy reflects the need to support placements for children with complex needs, and that this links with the need to develop skills and competencies.

Assessment Process

Enquiries from potential foster carers are dealt directly within the Fostering Team. The Recruitment & Retention Officer completes an initial enquiry form over the telephone with an information pack sent out within two days. This pack provides further details on the different types of fostering available and highlighting the support we can offer for them and their families. The Fostering Service will prioritise assessments in line with the demand on the service.

The Initial Visit

Following the initial telephone call, a Fostering Social Worker arranges an initial visit within two weeks. During this visit the Fostering Social Worker provides detailed

information about fostering and what is involved in the fostering application process. If applicants wish to proceed with their enquiry, DBS, health and Local Authority checks are taken up at this stage.

Preparation Training Course

If following checks applicants are potentially suitable, taking into account the children and young people requiring foster placements, the applicants will be invited to attend our Preparation Training Course.

The Service runs training courses four times a year, shared with the City & County of Swansea Fostering Service and the course consists of 4 sessions run by an experienced trainer. At the training sessions, applicants are encouraged to share their own experiences and knowledge and to participate fully in group activities.

The course explores the following areas:-

- the type of needs, characteristics and backgrounds of the range of children and young people who need foster placements, and their families
- safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare
- the requirements, structures and procedures of the Department
- the legal framework
- roles and responsibilities of foster carers, social workers and the child's own parents
- the strengths and vulnerabilities of the applicants and their family members
- the range of services available to support foster carers.

The course is based on a nationally recognised format for pre-approval training and participants are provided with a training booklet to complete and to refer to during the assessment process.

Assessment

Following successful completion of the training course, applicants who wish to continue are asked to complete a comprehensive assessment. Applicants are required to provide three references one of which must be a family member. Employer references are also taken up when considered relevant to the assessment. Personal referees will be asked to provide a written reference and will also be interviewed by the Fostering Social Worker.

The assessment process is designed to gather evidence of the qualities, skills and competences needed in foster care. Information from the training course will be included.

In addition the named Fostering Social Worker will visit the applicant at home to carry out a number of individual and joint interviews with the applicants and any other household members. The applicants are also invited to make significant written contributions to the assessment. All the information is recorded and will form the basis of the written report which has a standard format and is competency based. The completed report is shared with the applicants for discussion and their signature before submission for Fostering panel.

The applicant's suitability is reviewed at each stage of the process. The withdrawal of any applicants is confirmed in writing and reasons for withdrawal are monitored.

Applicants who are felt to be unsuitable prior to consideration by the Fostering Panel are informed in writing by the Fostering Service and reasons given. In these circumstances applicants are informed that we may need to share this information should we be consulted about the applicant. The Fostering Social Worker records a Statement of Unsuitability on the carers file.

Approval

The completed assessment is presented with evidence of the satisfactory completion of the checks and references and considered by the Fostering Panel which makes independent recommendations about the suitability of the applicant to be approved as Foster Carers and the terms and conditions of their approval.

The Fostering Panel is made up of professional Social Workers, Foster Carers, Medical Advisor, Education Advisor, Legal Advisor (where applicable), Independent Persons with experience of Fostering and Elected Members.

Applicants are invited to attend part of the meeting when their application is being considered by the Fostering Panel. The decision to approve the applicant or not is based on the Panel's recommendation and is made by the agency decision maker who is the Head of Children and Young People Services. Applicants are informed personally by the respective Fostering Social Worker of the decision within 24 hours and receive written communication as soon as is practically possible.

Right to Appeal in line with IRM

Where the agency decision maker does not approve the application, applicants will always receive written notification of the decision including the reasons for the decision and of the Panel's recommendations. The applicant will be invited to make any written representation within 28 days of the notification in writing if they wish to appeal this decision.

The applicants may also have recourse to an Independent Panel Review who provide an independent review of the decision and advice the Agency Decision Maker of their finding. The Agency Decision Maker will review the decision, and if required will return the matter to the fostering panel before the final decision is made.

FOSTER CARER SUPPORT

Once approved Foster Carers are allocated a designated Fostering Social Worker who will be their supervising social worker and who ensures that they receive appropriate support both personal and practical through regular visits and formal supervision sessions.

Emergency Support\On Call Service

Outside of normal working hours, our foster carers have access to our on-call service via telephone, which are manned by our senior members of the Fostering Team. Also, the Authority provides a 24 hour emergency duty line which can be accessed in the case of emergencies and is manned by qualified social workers.

Supervisions

Regular supervisions are held by your dedicated fostering social worker and are an opportunity to discuss the placement, foster carers training and learning development and the child's care plan. Also discussed at the supervision are challenges, difficulties or concerns the foster carer may have regarding the placement, support or the service. Supervision is intended to be an opportunity to reflect on experiences, improve practice and set goals and actions for tasks or learning.

Unannounced Visits

In line with national standards and regulations, the fostering social worker is required to carry out unannounced visits to all foster carers.

Recordings and written records

Foster carers are required to maintain accurate and up to date daily records on the children they care for. Maintaining records are an extremely important and to help the social worker monitor the child's placement and progress during their time with the foster carer. Foster carer recordings can may be required as evidence for Court, and a young person can request access to their records. Training is provided to carers on recording,

Annual Reviews

All our foster carers have an annual review undertaken by a reviewing officer, who will be a social worker not involved in supporting the carers.

Information is gathered from the foster carers, children and young people in placement, the child and young person's social worker and parents. Also included in the review are the views from the son and/or daughter of the foster carers.

The completed review report is signed by all the parties and submitted to the Fostering Panel.

Reviews are completed every 12 months or where there is a significant change in circumstances and/or allegations or complaints made against the foster carer.

In circumstances where foster carers wish to give up fostering, written confirmation is sought from the foster carers and formal notice of termination is sent out to the foster carer via the Team Manager, Fostering Service and the Chair of the Panel.

Policies & Procedures

Once approved, foster carers receive a comprehensive handbook, detailing the policies and procedures for the Fostering Service, along with information on finance, health and safety matters and the Authority's complaints procedure. The content of the handbook is also available on the membership pages on the Neath Port Talbot Fostering web site.

Statutory Checks

Medical Checks and Disclosure & Barring Service checks for current foster carers must be updated every three years. It is also a requirement to complete Disclosure and Barring Checks for household members over the age of 18.

Training Opportunities

Following approval the Foster Carers and Fostering Social Worker agree on what further training and support is needed arising from the assessment process and what further skills and knowledge need to be gained.

The service runs a Foster Carer Training Programme, and carers must attend a minimum of three training courses per year. A commitment to participating in learning is part of the foster carers agreement.

Our foster carers are also able to access the Children's Services training programme. Where appropriate arrangements can be made foster carers are able to attend external training courses.

The training needs of foster carers are continually assessed by the Fostering Social Workers during general and formal supervision and as part of the Annual Review Process. The training programme is reviewed on an annual basis to reflect the training needs of foster carers and the trends and developments within the service.

Foster Carers are also encouraged to undertake the Diploma in Child Care. A dedicated training officer co-ordinates and delivers the Foster Carer training programme and is available to provide advice on continuous learning and development.

Consultation with Foster Carers

The Authority is committed to working in partnership with Foster Carers at consultation events and support groups involving foster carers and social workers are held regularly. These events provide opportunity for foster carers to meet together, to be kept informed and consulted of Service developments and to contribute to these developments. There is a foster carer representative on the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Allowances

Foster Carers are paid an allowance for the children they care for. The allowances are set in line with the Welsh Government Minimum Payments for foster carers. Allowances are based on a Child's age and include payments for clothing, holidays, Birthdays and pocket money. Mainstream Foster Carers are eligible to a professional fee in respect of each child placed. The professional fee will increase for carers who have completed their Diploma in Child Care and an advanced payment is made for Foster Plus Carers.

Acknowledgement and Recognition

In recognition of the continued commitment by our foster carers and for the value the authority places on its foster carers, foster carers will be awarded for their service.

Foster Carers are recognised for their length of service caring for children and young people on behalf of the Authority. The event seeks to demonstrate the value we have for our Foster Carers and is an opportunity to congratulate and show our appreciation for their dedication and hard work.

Foster Carer Support Groups

The Fostering Service Facilitates a number of support groups for carers. Support groups are a way for carers to get together and share ideas and focus on specific aspects of the role of fostering.

There is an Adoption support group which allows foster carers to discuss how they can assist a child moving on to an adoptive family and the challenges they and their own family experience. The Men who Care group allows our male carers the opportunity to discuss issues which may affect them.

The Fostering Service also provides additional support to foster own sons and daughters. The support includes direct work with children and young people, consultation events and social events.

Foster carers Association

The foster carers association is a group of Neath Port Talbot foster carers who meet independently of the fostering service to provide mutual support for foster carers and represent foster carers as a group. The managers of the fostering service meet regularly with the Foster Carers Association to ensure that carers views are incorporated into service development and planning.

SUPPORT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Neath Port Talbot commissions a number of services which support looked after children through its Family Support Services Strategy.

Action for Children provide intensive work to prevent placement breakdown and support when the plan is for children to be rehabilitated home.

Some children access therapeutic services through CAMHS for looked after children. Other therapeutic services are provided based on the individual need of the child. Where required children are able to access specialist support through SERAF and TAITH services.

Advocacy

All children who are Looked after are offered support from an independent advocate who will represent their views.

The voice of the child

Neath Port Talbot has a dedicated participation and engagement officer who ensures that children, young people and carers are consulted with and that their views are used to inform service delivery and development.

Supporting education

The Letterbox Club is a literacy and numeracy initiative for looked after children aged 7-13. Working in partnership with local Authorities to deliver personalised parcels of books, number games and stationery to help encourage and stimulate reading and learning at home.

The scheme is funded by the Welsh Government in conjunction with Book Trust Cymru. The scheme focuses on improving the education outlook of looked after children for a period of 6 months running from May to October.

The Fostering Team have been managing the distribution of the parcels since 2009 and have received extremely positive feedback from both the children/young people and also from the foster carers.

Foster carers have reported increased engagement in reading from the children/young people who have been part of the scheme.

Continuing with our partnership working, the Recruitment & Retention Officer worked with our Education LAC Co-ordinator in developing and including fostering in the Improving LAC Reading Attainment Policy.

The purpose of the policy is to improve the literacy of children who are looked after by improving their reading ability. The Letterbox scheme was linked into the action plan that accompanied the policy.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Neath Port Talbot has a Quality Assurance Framework which provides a mechanism for having an oversight of the standards of practice and service delivery. Quality of work is scrutinised through data monitoring and audits of practice, as well as consultation and feedback.

Assessment of applicants is undertaken by social workers who have had the necessary safeguard checks and are experienced in childcare and fostering. They work under the supervision of the Fostering Team Manager who advises and scrutinises applications prior to submission to the Fostering Panel and ensures that high professional standards are maintained.

The Fostering Panel will draw attention to any practice issues which arise out of their scrutiny of the work of the service to the Fostering Team manager.

Elected Members have a role in the overall monitoring and review of Children's Services including Fostering Services within Neath Port Talbot

Feedback from foster carers and foster carers children is obtained from the annual carer review, foster carer forum meetings, annual reviews and an annual questionnaire. Looked after children may present their views through consultation events and questionnaires facilitated by the case manager and/or a support worker.

Complaints

Neath Port Talbot Fostering Service aims to provide the best possible service. We take complaints about our service seriously and aim to resolve matters as soon as possible.

Wherever possible complaints should initially be responded to by the Fostering Social Worker or Team Manager. Most complaints can be settled this way. If a complaints that cannot be resolved at this stage a formal complaint can be made by contacting the complaints officer on 01639 763394 or e-mail: complaints@npt.gov.uk

Welsh Government

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Tel 0300 790 0126

Email cssiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner

Children's Commissioner for Wales

01792 765600

Post@childcom.org.uk

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

CABINET BOARD

28TH APRIL 2016

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES – A. JARRETT

MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

NEATH PORT TALBOT FOSTERING SERVICE REGULATION 42 QUALITY OF CARE REPORT 2015/16

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the Neath Port Talbot Fostering Service Regulation 42, Quality of Care Report 2015/16 for the purpose of monitoring the arrangements of the Service.

2. Executive Summary

The report outlines the operational and strategic arrangements and developments within the service over the past year. It provides details on the progress of the service over the year and sets out the key actions for the service in 2016/17.

3. Background

In accordance with Regulation 42 of the Fostering Service (Wales) regulations 2003, the service and the registered person must establish and maintain a system to:

- (a) Monitor the matters set out in Schedule 7 at appropriate intervals, and
- (b) Improve the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency.

The Quality of Care Report sets out the activity of the service during 2015/16. The intended improvements to the service are contained within the Looked After Children's Strategy and the Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy and Finance Policy which will be presented separately to Members.

4. Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

6. Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

7. Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

8. Risk Management

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

9. Consultation

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

10. Recommendation

That the report be noted.

11. Reason for Proposed Decision

This report is for monitoring purposes only.

12. Implementation of Decision

This report is for monitoring purposes only.

13. Appendices

Regulation 42 Quality of Care Report 2015/16

14. List of Background Papers

Looked After Children's Strategy

Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy

Finance Policy

15. Officer Contact

Delyth Berni, Principal Officer

Children & Young people services,

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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Neath Port Talbot Fostering Service

Quality of Care Report 2015/2016

(Regulation 42 Fostering Regulations (Wales))

Background

The purpose of this report is to meet the requirements of Regulation 42 of the Fostering Regulations (Wales) 2003 which sets out the duty of the Fostering Service to report the mechanisms for data monitoring and reporting on the quality of care they provide to children who are looked after.

Developments in the service

Children and Young People Services in NPT has continued to see improvements in its workforce stability and service delivery over the past year. The service continues to be driven by its strategic development plan.

In 2015 a number of key strategies were introduced which influenced service delivery. As a result the following have been embedded into practice:

- The quality assurance framework is embedded with a programme of Audit being undertaken by managers across the service on a monthly basis. The lesson learning from audit is monitored with the support of the training and development department and links to training. The fostering service has developed its own audit tools which will be used to monitor regulatory compliance requirements as well as monitoring the quality of care and service provision. There are regular peer review meetings which focus on practice improvements as well as promoting multi agency working.
- NPT has participated in the SSIA Outcomes pilot. Training is being rolled out across all service areas including the Fostering Service.
- The Family Support Strategy has provided a targeted approach to supporting children, young people and their families. The re-commissioning of services has promoted an emphasis on prevention of placement breakdown, and supporting young people on the edge of care.
- An engagement and participation strategy and the appointment of an engagement and participation officer has seen a coordinated approach to supporting young peoples and ensuring that their voices are heard.
- A Looked After Children's Strategy has ensured a safe and measured approach to reducing the number of Looked After Children.

Looked After Children

Actual numbers of LAC

	31.03.11	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.3.15	31.3.15
Number of Looked After Children	411	472	493	467	434	377

The Looked after Children's Strategy set out a commitment to reduce the number of children who are looked after by 26% by 2018 as indicated in the table below. A commitment was given to reducing the actual number of Looked After children to 411 by 31st March 2016. Children's Services has exceeded this target, with the actual number reducing to 377.

Projected numbers of LAC

Financial year	Projected Number of LAC	Reduction	Rate of LAC per 10,000 population
2013/14	467 (actual)		168
2014/15	441	-26	158
2015/16	411	-30	148
2016/17	371	-40	133
2017/18	345	-26	124

The reduction of Looked After Children has been achieved through the following:

- Changes to the way we support children and young people on the edge of care.
- Strengthening the procedures for admission to care.
- The development of a resource panel.
- Improved planning and monitoring arrangements.
- Improved the opportunities for children to have permanency outside of the care system.
- Ensuring that where children are looked after that they receive a high quality service and wherever possible supporting rehabilitation back to family.

Having achieved this reduction to date, there is a need to ensure the continued drive to reducing the numbers further.

Type of placement

	31.03.11	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.3.15	31.3.16
Neath Port Talbot Carers	186	176	169	172	167	158
NPT Family + Friends Carers	63	64	76	74	67	50
Independent Fostering	100	141	131	117	105	75
Independent Living	2	5	7	5	8	3
Pre-adoption	14	26	38	28	18	31
Placed with Parent	27	34	51	56	59	48

Residential/Educ.	17	23	19	14	10	12
Mother and Baby Placement*	1	3	2	0	0	0
Secure Unit	1	0	0	0	0	2
Child in Hospital	0	0	0	1	0	1

There has been a significant reduction in the number of young people placed with Independent Foster carers in 2015/16. There has however been a slight rise in the number of young people placed in a residential provision and in secure accommodation. Although small in number the impact of this type of placement on outcomes for children and young people as well as the financial impact is significant, and the service needs to consider how it can develop alternative provision and support to ensure young people can, wherever possible and appropriate be placed in a family setting.

Number of Children becoming looked after and leaving the LAC system

	31.03.11	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.3.15	31.3.16
Admissions	137	198	145	120	108	73
Discharges	119	137	124	146	128	130

2013/14 saw a change in the trend of the number of admissions and discharges, with the number of children leaving care overtaking the number coming into care.

Placement stability

	31.03.11	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.3.15	31.3.16
Number of children who have had 3 or more placements in a year	35 out of 411	30 out of 472	44 out of 493	30 out of 467	30 out of 434	33 out of 377
Percentage	8.5%	6.4%	8.9%	6.4%	6.9%	8.7%

There has been a slight rise in the number of children who experienced 3 or more changes of placement from the previous 2 years.

It is important to note that the figures for placement moves include planned moves in addition to placement breakdowns. Some moves may be to permanent placements such as pre-adoptive placements or placements to family members. We recognise that the key to stability is the support we offer to placements, which helps young people understand why they are looked after and supports carers to manage difficult situations. It is important that further work is undertaken to understand the reasons for the placement breakdowns in order to develop services and carers skills to reduce the number of children who move between placements.

Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy

Towards the end of 2015/16 a draft Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy was developed with the aim of profiling the carers approved by Neath Port Talbot, the children in placement and to highlight the areas of the service which need to be further developed.

The Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy identified that although the numbers of Looked After Children placed in independent foster care had significantly reduced, over half of the remaining were children aged 11 plus. The available placements for young people over the age of 11 within the pool of Neath Port Talbot carers was very low, with only a very small number of placements being available. Of those available careful matching was required due to needs of other young people placed.

In contrast, due to the impact of preventative services and a confidence in practice, the number of young children being accommodated has reduced resulting in an increased number of vacancies for foster carers approved to look after younger children, in particular those aged 0-5.

The recruitment strategy reviewed the payments made to Neath Port Talbot foster carers with the aim of ensuring that the service was able to offer a competitive level of financial support in the local market. The review of finances identified that in order to promote the recruitment of carers to look after children over the age of 11, that there needed to be an increase in foster carer fees for this age range. The proposal to increase foster carers fees for the age 11 plus carers will be taken forward in 2016/17.

In addition to financial support, the Fostering Recruitment Strategy identified the need to further support foster carers and young people to increase placement stability. This will prevent the number of young people who move between foster placements due to their complex and challenging behaviour. In 2016/17 the service will consider how additional support could be provided through the introduction of clinical support and supervision of foster placements. The service will explore how a joint arrangement with Hillside Secure Unit could support young people with complex needs who are currently unable to access support through core services due to their ineligibility for Cahms Services. .

Foster Carer Information

The table below shows that the number of enquiries to the service from potential carers has again decreased in 2015/16, a trend that has continued to decline over the past 5 years. This continued downward trend reflects the current National Data. Given this, it is positive that the service has managed to continue to achieve its targets for reducing the number of Looked After Children and for reducing the number of children placed in independent foster placements, however it would be a significant cause for concern if this trend continued.

Towards the end of the 2015/16 the service refocused its recruitment to applications for teenage placements. Applications for potential carers for children age 0-5 are now being put on hold, as the current resources easily meets the demand. Some existing carers for children aged 0-5 are experiencing periods where they have no child in placement. Work is being undertaken to support foster carers who have vacancies to consider changing their approval status to consider caring for older children.

Enquiries to Fostering Service

Period	Total household Enquiries
2015-2016	55
2014-2015	64
2013 – 2014	81
2012 – 2013	95
2011 - 2012	113

Number of approved Neath Port Talbot foster carers

	31.03.11	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.3.15	31.3.16
Foster Carer	132	126	129	140	139	137
Foster Carer Plus (* see 7.3)	7	7	7	5	5	4
Relative Carer	63	73	73	67	56	42
Total	202	206	209	212	200	183

Number of Neath Port Talbot placements available

	31.03.11	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.3.15	31.3.16
Foster Carer	248	238	243	259	250	232
Foster Carer Plus	9	9	9	6	6	6
Relative Carer	84	94	101	93	63	52
Total	341	341	353	358	309	290

De-registrations

Period	Mainstream Carers	Family and Friends Carers	Total
2015-2016	11	21*	32
2014-2015	9	3	11
2013 – 2014	13	4	17
2012 – 2013	16	9	25

2011 – 2012	19	0	19
2010 - 2011	2	3	5
2009 - 2010	2	19	21

*The rise in the number of family and friends carers being deregistered reflects the increase in the number of carers who have been granted Special Guardianship Orders.

Pre –approval training

We continue to hold 4 training sessions a year which are jointly run with our neighbouring authority Foster Swansea. All potential applicants are required to attend the training which takes place over either 3 full days or 2 full day and 2 evening sessions. In 2014/15 28 NPT applicants attended the training.

Fostering Panel

The Foster Panel met on 15 occasions. Artie Meakin, a very experienced chair and practitioner in Adoption and Fostering remains the independent chair for Fostering Panel.

Membership of the Foster Panel comprises:

Ms A Meakin	Panel Chairperson
Ms Jo Goodwin	Panel Professional Advisor
Dr D Dyer	Medical Advisor
Mrs A Brown	Independent
Mr G Clifford	Independent
Ms D Hallatt	Independent
Ms S Prosser	Independent/Vice Chair
Ms G Jones	Social Worker
Ms H Pope	Social Worker
Mrs A Hinton	Education
Cllr. Peter Richards	Elected Member

Financial Support

Child based allowances

Payments are made in line with the Welsh Government Guidelines for National Minimum Payments for foster carers. The amount of payment is related to the age of the child in placement and is payable for each child placed. Payments include pocket money and clothing allowance. In addition a holiday allowance, Christmas/religious ceremony, and birthday allowance is paid.

Carer fees

A weekly fee is payable to mainstream foster carers for each child placed. Carers receive an enhanced fee when they have obtained post approval qualifications of diploma or NVQ. In 2015/16 a review of foster carer finances was undertaken. As a result in the next financial year proposals will be taken forward to increase the foster carers fee for those carers who provide a placement to children over the age of 11. This proposal aims to support the recruitment of foster carers for teenagers in order to reduce the number of teenagers who are placed with Independent Foster Carers.

A consultation will be undertaken in 2016/17 to review the current arrangements of paying foster carers a holiday allowance as an annual payment rather than as a weekly payment. This arrangement was established at the request of carers following the implementation of the National Minimum Payments by Welsh Government in 2011, but needs to be reviewed to ensure compliance with the arrangements.

'Foster Plus' Scheme

At March 2016 there are 2 approved parent and baby foster carers and 3 foster carers who are approved for named children within the Foster Plus Scheme. Foster Plus was established to provide foster placements to older children and children with complex needs, who may otherwise be placed in placements external to Neath Port Talbot.

Foster Plus carers receive an enhanced carer fee per week per child (in addition to child allowances) in recognition of the additional support and tasks required to be undertaken.

The Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy recognises that there is a need for a specialist scheme for a small number of children who have significant and complex needs. Going forward the eligibility for Foster Plus carers will be based on the assessed skills of the carers to meet the needs of children with complex and challenging needs. It is recognised that some children who have complex needs may require specialist services to meet these needs e.g. some children with significant and complex disabilities. In these circumstances there may be a continued need to commission specialist carers to meet these needs.

Permanence

In addition to Looked After Childrens Reviews children's permanency plans are considered at a permanency panel. The aim of the panel is to ensure that all children have an effective

permanency plan which is achieved in a timely manner. Wherever possible and appropriate the aim is to seek Permanence for children outside of the Looked After Childrens system.

The fostering service has supported the rise in the number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) being granted for children. The implementation of the unified assessment in considering the most appropriate placement type has been successful in supporting children to remain with their carers without being looked after. The service has been proactive in developing support plans for SGO's which ensure that carers receive the support that they receive. Carers who are granted SGO's are able to maintain contact with and support from the service and are offered the ongoing opportunity to access support groups and training.

When I Am Ready

Neath Port Talbot has recently implemented a When I Am Ready Policy and Guidance which relates to the arrangements that should be considered when a young person wishes to remain living with their foster carers when they become 18. The Policy will be operational from 6th April 2016, and provides details on the planning that is required in advance of the young person turning 18 as well as the financial arrangements that will be required.

In 2016/17 the Local Authority will recruit a When I Am Ready officer post to support the implementation of the scheme as well as to provide an additional support to When I Am Ready carers.

Recruitment and Retention of Foster carers

Recruitment Activity

The Fostering service utilises social media as a means of raising the profile of the service. The NPT fostering website is updated on a regular basis, and has received an increase in the number of visitors. The use of social media enables the service to reach a wide audience and target a demography who may be interested in pursuing fostering as a career.

The service has continued to air radio adverts with a particular focus on teenage placement, sibling groups and parent and baby placements. The service tries to ensure a good visual presence within the local community by advertising in family events; fun days; linking in with a local rugby club and advertising at their games and in the ground, and through the yellow pages and yell.com.

In the past year the fostering service has introduced 'Ziggy', the NPT fostering mascot as a means of further creating a face of fostering within the community. Ziggy, a 7 foot mascot provides a strong visual presence at marketing events and has been animated for use in on-line advertising and on social media, as well as on bus stops and bill boards across NPT.

A programme of recruitment events has run throughout the 2015/16 across the borough of Neath Port Talbot.

NPT fostering service works closely with Fostering Network and during its National Foster Care Fortnight campaign Neath Port Talbot was one of 6 Local Authorities across the UK

who organised a Foster Walk to raise awareness of fostering. The event received coverage through local radio station Nation Hits, and an article was published in the Fostering Network magazine.

There is an urgent need to develop a strong, visual and powerful marketing campaign in order to attract new carers to Neath Port Talbot. The proposals within the recruitment strategy to enhance support and a competitive foster carer fee will add strength to the ability to publicise Neath Port Talbot fostering as an attractive option for those who wish to consider being a foster carer. The Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy has provided a profile of carers and Looked After Children in Neath Port Talbot. Once approved, it will provide a platform for the development of a new marketing strategy.

Training programme for approved carers

A training programme is run throughout each year and includes core training as well as more advanced and specialist programmes. The fostering service is represented at the Fostering Network Training Forum.

We hold weekly training sessions “Training Tuesdays”. Each session is held between school hours, with high quality crèche facilities provided for children below school age. All sessions are held at a fixed venue. The training officer has an open door approach allowing easy access to sessions. This enables foster carers to engage in appropriate training in line with changing placements and shifting needs. It does not fix carers on a training path following initial annual training application; it allows flexibility and is responsive. The structure of the programme comprises of monthly themes such as; Core Training Month, Working with Teens Month, Education Month etc. In 2015/16 the training programme has developed to include information about NPS (new psychoactive substances) to assist carers in learning more about ‘legal highs’ and substance misuse.

Carers have been involved in restorative practice training which places an emphasis on working with people and supporting them to make changes rather than doing things on their behalf.

Out of Hours Programme

In addition to the main training schedule, we have an Out of Hours Programme. All core training is delivered throughout the year on a Saturday morning and via twilight sessions. This programme targets our harder to reach carers, who may work during the week day.

Diploma Training Programme

The Diploma Programme is delivered through a series of 18 workshops. Carers are registered to complete the Health and Social Care Diploma (Children and Young People) Level 3 in cohorts. There is a current cohort of 14 Foster Carers completing their diploma qualification. Where foster carers have required additional learning support to complete the Diploma this has been made available.

Advanced Training Programme

The advanced training programme is open to carers who have completed all core training and the Health and Social Care Diploma (Children and Young People) Level 3. The first part of the programme – Child Psychology, has been completed, and a new group of carers will start a 10 week course Introduction to Counselling Jan 2016.

Family/Friend/Carers Training Programme

All family/friend/carers are welcomed on any part of the training programme. It is recognised that this group of carers have very specific needs in addition to those recognised in main stream carers. The Family/Friend/Carers Training Programme addresses specific issues such as Managing Contact in Kinship Care.

Carers are expected to attend at least 3 training sessions per year. Participation in training is reviewed as part of the carers annual review and is monitored by the fostering panel. In order to promote attendance and to encourage learning, foster carers are supported to develop an individual learning plan either as part of their assessment or through supervision which will assist in identifying any training and development needs that they may have.

Confidence in Care

Neath Port Talbot Fostering is participating in the pilot of the *Confidence in Care* training which is being delivered through Cascade and TACT. The programme forms part of the Fostering Changes Course which was developed by South London and Maudsley Hospital Trust. It is an evidence based training course for foster carers which aims to empower them to better manage the children and young people they are looking after. The programme transforms outcomes for looked after children across Wales and NPT are participating in the evaluation of the course.

Staff training

All members of the Fostering Team complete Individual Learning Plans. The Individual Learning Plans demonstrate a commitment to a tailored response to individual staff development, setting very clear objectives for the training year.

There is a representative from the training department on the Children's Services Management Group who drives forward developments in the service. In addition there is a dedicated training officer for the fostering service. The service has been fortunate to be supported to access specialised courses linked to supporting carers and young people who are looked after.

The fostering service is involved in all of the core training within the Children and Young People Service community teams to ensure that there is a consistency in service in delivery. The fostering team will be included in the Outcomes Focussed training programme which will be implemented across the teams in 2016/17.

The assessing social workers have received specific training on assessing family dynamics which has been invaluable in supporting the validity and robustness of their assessments within the Court arena.

Consultation with Carers and young people

Carer's views are obtained through their annual reviews and through support groups and consultation events.

There is a foster carer representative who is a member of the corporate parenting panel.

Meetings have started to take place with the foster carers association to ensure that there is a direct link between the carers and the management of the service. This has been a positive way of consulting, communicating and developing the service. It is hoped that this progress will continue to develop in 2016/17 with the association being able to act as a voice of the carers.

The Children's participation and engagement officer has been extremely proactive in ensuring that young people are linked to local and National groups and organisations which focus on the voice of the young person.

In the summer of 2015 young people were involved in making a professional video which was used as part of a staff development day. The video showed young people's experiences of becoming looked after, the importance of life story work and the positive impact this can have. The video also included foster carers who spoke about their experiences of caring. The video was also shared with Members, and in 2016/17 it will be animated so that it can be shared with a wider audience as part of induction, training and recruitment whilst protecting the identity of those who participated.

A celebration event was held in March 2016 to acknowledge the achievements of all young people within Neath Port Talbot and a number of looked after children and care leavers participated in this successful event which was hosted by the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Consultation with Staff

Staff within the fostering service are consulted with as part of the annual CSSIW fostering inspection. Staff have the opportunity to participate in an annual staff survey which is undertaken across all of children's services and the business support teams.

The team managers of the fostering service are part of the Children's services management team which meets on a regular basis. Staff from within the service have the opportunity to drive forward practice through participation in the staff practice improvement group and Looked after Children's practice improvement group.

In March 2016 a survey was undertaken across Children's Services which sought to seek the views of the children's services staff on their experiences of the fostering service. The outcome of the survey will be published in 2016/17.

Support

Foster carers are allocated Fostering Social Worker who supports them and offers guidance and practical support in all areas. Through regular supervision, telephone contact and meetings are able to advise with issues on contact, allegations and placement breakdowns.

The Fostering Service has been arranged into 2 teams which work closely together. One team supports the assessment support and review of carers (including family /connected person carers and SGO carers) and the other supports the supervision and support of mainstream carers. Each team is supported by a full time manager.

In 2015 the service benefitted from the appointment of an additional supervising social worker. The post was established from within the existing fostering service budget.

The staffing in the fostering service is stable. There has been a recent change in the management of the supervising team, with the manager taking a change of career. This change was managed without disruption due to the natural progressing of the deputy manager being successfully appointed to team manager and the consultant social worker being appointed to the deputy manager position.

In March 2016 two members of the fostering team were successfully promoted to consultant social workers. In 2016/17 they will join the consultant social workers group and will start to develop their areas of speciality which will assist in promoting the quality of social work practice both within fostering and across children and young people's services.

The fostering service operates an out of hours advice line for foster carers.

Support Workers

The fostering support workers have a focus on providing practical help and support to carers in managing the needs of the children they are looking after. Their role has been revised to focus on strengthening the support to family, friends and carers and has been developed to enable them to have their own caseload in supervising family and friends carers/placements.

Special Guardianship Orders

The fostering service is responsible for the financial review of carers who have been granted a Special Guardianship Order where there are no additional support needs. Work in relation to Special Guardianship Orders is ongoing.

Specialist help and advice

Support Services have been provided to carers through commissioned services. These have included a response service to prevent placement breakdown; supports to rehabilitate children to their families in addition to specialist services from TAIH or SERAF. Where required the Local Authority has spot purchased assessments or therapeutic intervention including clinical supervision of foster placements with clinical psychologists.

In 2016/17 there will be a further focus on securing arrangements for clinical support for young people with complex needs and their carers.

Independent support for allegations against foster carers

All mainstream foster carers have membership of Fostering Network who provide counselling and legal advice via a telephone helpline and legal expenses cover. The provision of independent support is required by regulations. This can also be spot purchased for any carers not covered by this membership.

Independent Review Mechanism

All applicants or existing carers who are either not recommended for approval/re-approval or have their approval status changed have the opportunity to challenge this decision through the Independent Review Mechanism process. One of the fostering team managers has been appointed as a professional member of the IRM panel (excluding any NPT cases that are referred).

Since the last report there have been no referrals to the IRM.

Foster Care Association

The Foster Care Association has held its second AGM. The group have been proactive in trying to engage a wider audience of carers to participate. They meet regularly and have taken the opportunity to make connections with other associations across Wales. The group have organised a number of social and fundraising events and are keen to develop a peer mentoring role.

Recent meetings between the association and the senior managers has resulted in a positive agreement to take forward arrangements for improving communication between the foster carers and managers in order to drive forward service development.

The fostering service continues to provide an annual financial contribution to the Foster Carers Association, and in addition offers some administrative support.

E Care Scheme

The E Care Scheme provides computer equipment and internet access to improve communication and sharing of information between carers, children, the fostering service and social workers.

The project has continued to run over a number of years and has supported the way in which information is communicated to foster carers including; the development of a foster carers section of the NPT website in which carers can access information on policies and procedures, on call rota contact numbers and any consultation events that are happening.

Leisure Facilities

An agreement is in place with Celtic Leisure for foster carers, their own children and the children they look after and care leavers to have free use of Celtic Leisure facilities.

Letter Box Club

Neath Port Talbot Fostering continues to participate in the Letter Box Club, which is funded by Welsh Government in association with Book Trust Cymru. It focusses on improving the educational outlook of Looked After Children aged 7-11, by providing them with a parcel of books, maths activities and stationery items once every month for six months from July to December.

Children and foster carers report extremely positive feedback about the scheme and Foster carers have reported increased engagement in reading from the children/young people who have been part of the scheme.

The LetterBox Club forms part of the NPT Educational attainment Action plan which was implemented in 2014 and aims to improve the learning outcome for young people.

Support Groups

Moving children on support groups have been well attended and it has given our foster carers an opportunity to speak to other carers about the sometimes difficult and emotional side of moving children onto adoption. From the success of this particular group, there is the intention to introduce a group for foster carers own sons and daughters.

There is a successful 'Men who Care' group who meet regularly. The group has guest speakers and considers topics relevant to male foster carers. The group has been proactive in meeting with the Inspectorate and Senior managers.

A group has developed for single carers as it was identified that single carers benefit from the support networks they develop with other carers.

Quarterly newsletters were produced and distributed to carers, covering information from the service, in addition to updates on the Fostering pages on the website.

Sons & Daughters Support

The service understands the role that fostering families play in the lives of Looked After Children and that this includes foster carers own children as well as their extended families. The service consults with foster carers own children to find out what supports they feel they need and includes activity days and events that foster carers children can participate in.

Monitoring

The Fostering service has developed a range of performance management tools which assist in monitoring the quality of the service. These include reminder screens for staff to ensure

that checks, reviews and visits are completed on time, as well as notifications for children's reviews. In addition the service is able to retrieve data on the numbers of approved carers, placements, payments and training.

Under Schedule 7 and Schedule 8 of the Fostering Regulations the local authority is required to report to CSSIW on incidents related to accidents, illnesses of children and young people, medication given, incidents of restraint and any complaints or allegations.

In 2015/16 there were 4 allegations made in relation to foster carers. 2 of these allegations led to the matter being considered within a professional abuse strategy meeting. Of these, one was in relation to an incident within the carers career rather than being in relation to the fostering role. No carers were deregistered as a result of the investigations. All allegations have been concluded, and all carers continue in their fostering role.

There have been 2 complaints received from foster carers in relation to the service they feel they have received, both of which have been resolved.

In 2016/17 work will need to be undertaken to improve the monitoring arrangements for schedule 7 reporting which are currently manually collated.

Conclusion

The Looked After Children's Strategy has been successful in driving forward the Local Authorities plans to safely reduce the number of children who are looked after year by year. The challenge for the fostering service continues to be the need to increase its number of foster carers to ensure that those children who do need to be looked after can remain in their local community with skilled carers.

There has continued to be a decline in the number of people making enquiries to become foster carers and the number of foster carers being approved. This needs to be addressed urgently if changes are to be seen in the continued reduction of teenagers who are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies.

The approval of the Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy and proposed changes to the support and finance available to carers will be key to how the fostering service is able to market and recruit carers in 2016/17.

The fostering service is currently providing a high quality service to children looked after by its foster carers. The service received positive inspection feedback from the December 2016 CSSIW inspection which was based on the quality of care provided. The inspection highlighted the ongoing challenge of ensuring that there is sufficient placement choice, availability and support for children who need to be looked after and in particular children who have more complex needs.

Actions:

- To seek approval of the Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy.
- To seek approval of a revised Foster Carers Finance Policy.

- To fully implement the When I Am ready arrangements.
- To develop a Foster Carer marketing strategy.
- To develop the role of the consultant social worker to support the development of the quality of the service.
- To improve performance management arrangements for fostering.
- To develop arrangements to provide support for young people and their carers who have complex needs including clinical supervision and therapeutic services.

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION CABINET BOARD

28TH APRIL 2016

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES – A. JARRETT

MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT STRATEGY & FINANCE POLICY

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to:

- increase the current foster carers' fees by £50 a week for children aged 11 plus
- to pay a retainer of up to 6 weeks per annum to foster carers who are approved for children aged 11 plus, subject to the terms and conditions that will apply

The increase in weekly payments and the payment of a retainer will support the recruitment and retention of foster carers for teenagers in order to reduce the number of young people placed in independent foster placements. This will promote outcomes for young people and reduce the cost of Independent placements, enabling the Council to make greater savings.

2. Executive Summary

The aim of the Foster Carers Recruitment Strategy is to identify the profile of Looked After Children and foster carers in Neath Port Talbot

and to consider the key issues which need to be addressed to have a positive impact on the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced carers within this Local Authority.

The Fostering Recruitment Strategy identifies the following:

- The number of children who are looked after by NPT has reduced.
- The number of enquires to the fostering service and the number of foster carers being approved has reduced.
- The fostering service has been able to continue to attract applications for carers for children under the age of 10, but of the enquiries for children over the age of 11 is less than half of all enquiries.
- There has been a significant reduction in the number of children placed with Independent Foster Carers, however nearly half of the young people who are placed are over the age of 11.
- The impact of early intervention and prevention services, family support service and improvements in the stability and quality of practice has resulted in the number of young children becoming looked after reducing.
- The number of vacancies for placements for children aged 11 plus is very low resulting in limited placement choice and availability.
- The payments to NPT foster carers for children aged 11 plus is lower than the local market average. An increase in payment is required to ensure that NPT is a viable option for those considering fostering as a career.
- The fostering service cannot provide a reassurance to carers of a retainer to cover any gaps in placement availability making it difficult to attract skilled carers who are choosing fostering as a career.
- Additional support services are required to support young people and their carers who have complex needs in order to prevent placement breakdowns and children moving between placements and to residential care.

3. Background

In January 2015 the Looked After Children's Strategy was approved and implemented. The strategy set out Children and Young People's intention to safely reduce the number of Looked After Children in NPT by ensuring that where possible children are able to achieve permanency

outside of the Looked After Childrens system. It sets out arrangements to ensure that only the children who need to be looked after become accommodated and sets to ensure that when children do become looked after that they are placed in appropriate high quality placements in their local community with skilled carers who can meet their needs.

The Looked After Children's Strategy identifies the need to profile the carers and young people to develop a foster carers recruitment strategy to ensure there is a sufficiency in service provision.

4. Financial Impact

The Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy recommends that there is an increase in foster carer payments in order to ensure that NPT is able to provide a competitive fee to match the local market. Currently, the payments for carers looking after children over the age of 11 is lower than neighbouring Local Authorities and local independent foster carers. This makes it difficult to recruit and attract foster carers for teenagers.

The report recommends that a retainer is paid to foster carers for teenagers in order to support the recruitment and retention of carers. The cost of the increased fee and introducing a retainer is £201,686.

This amount is not required as an up-front payment. It is proposed that the amount is met from within existing budgets. The additional cost will be offset by anticipated savings in external placements arising from bringing Looked After Children currently in external placements back in house.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposals within the Fostering Recruitment Strategy will not have a negative impact on the current foster carers within NPTCBC. Nor will it have an adverse impact on the young people within the foster care

system. The proposals will not alter the type and/or level of foster provision that the foster carers provide and/or the provision that the young person receives.

(Please see Appendix 3 for EIA screening form)

6. Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

7. Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

8. Risk Management

The risk associated with failing to implement the proposed recommendations is that the benefits outlined earlier in this report associated with the introduction of a Fostering Recruitment Strategy will not be realised.

9. Consultation

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

10. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the following:

- to increase the current foster carers' fees by £50 a week for children aged 11 plus
- to pay a retainer of up to 6 weeks per annum to foster carers who are approved for children aged 11 plus, subject to the terms and conditions that will apply

11. Reason for Proposed Decision

The reason for the proposed decision is to support the recruitment and retention of foster carers for teenagers in order to reduce the number of

young people placed in independent foster placements. This will promote outcomes for young people and reduce the cost of Independent placements, enabling the Council to make greater savings.

12. Implementation of Decision

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

13. Appendices

Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy

Appendix 1 Financial implications

Appendix 2 Foster Carer Finance Policy

Appendix 3 EIA Screening Form

14. List of Background Papers

None

15. Officer Contact

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Fostering Recruitment Strategy

Background and Aims

In 2015, The Fostering Network published its report detailing the statistics of children in care.

On any one day there are approximately 63,000 children who are living in foster care and there are almost 52,500 foster families in the UK. The Fostering Network estimates that UK fostering services need to recruit a further 8,370 foster families in the next 12 months. Some children will return home or move to live with a member of their wider family, and approximately 6000 children in the UK are awaiting adoption, but many will live with foster families throughout their childhoods, which is why it is so important to find the right family for these children, and find families who can offer permanence and stability.

In Wales, there are approximately 4,405 children were living in care and approximately 3,650 foster families. It is estimated that a further 550 foster families are needed in Wales in 2016, and that there is a particular shortage of foster carers for older children, sibling groups and children with disabilities.

The aim of this document is to identify the profile of Looked After Children and Foster Carers in Neath Port Talbot and will consider the key issues which need to be addressed to have a positive impact on the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced carers within this Local Authority.

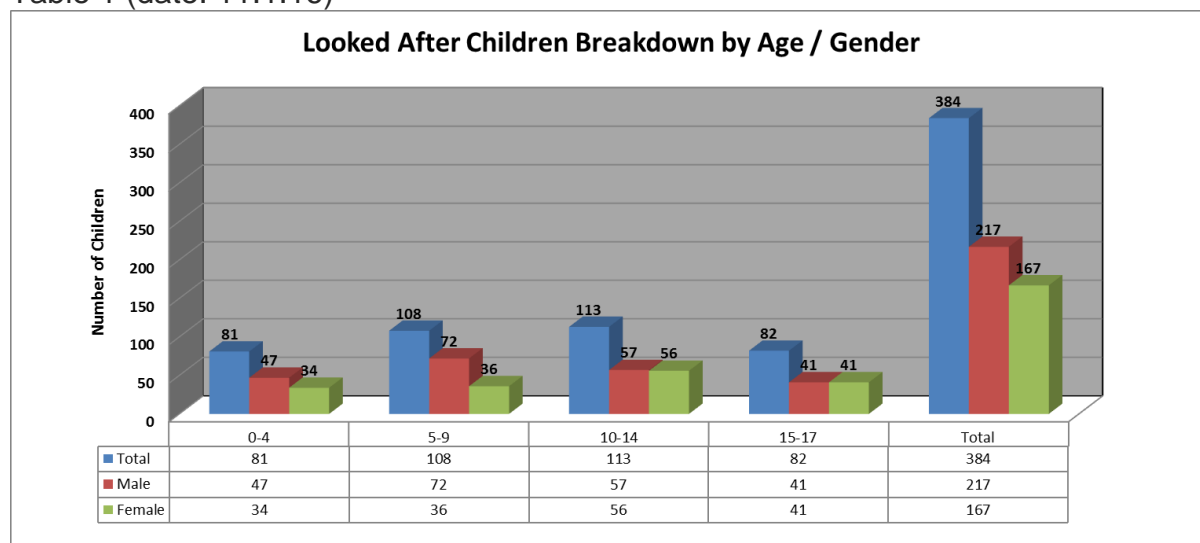
Who are our Looked after Children

For the purpose of this strategy, we have concentrated on children who are living with NPT Foster Carers, Independent Carers and those in residential placements.

The remaining children were living with family members, parents in independent living or in pre adoption placements.

NPT had experienced a significant rise in the number of children becoming looked after looked after between 2010 and 2013. Following significant improvements in practice and workforce stability the numbers of Looked After Children are reducing, however NPT continues to have the highest percentage of Looked After Children per population in Wales.

Table 1 (date: 11.1.16)



KEY ISSUE	The reduction in numbers of children accommodated is moving in the right direction but needs to be maintained and continue in order for NPT to reduce its Looked After Children population.
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Where are our Looked After Children living

Whenever it is considered necessary for a child to become looked after, the first consideration will always be to place that child with a Neath Port Talbot carer. When it is not possible to place a child with NPT foster carers, it is sometimes necessary to commission a placement from an Independent Fostering Agency.

Children are placed with Independent Foster Carers for a variety of reasons. Sometimes an independent placement is needed when no suitable match is available with an NPT foster either due to the child's needs, the needs of other young people already in the foster placement, the skills of the foster carers or the need to keep a sibling group together.

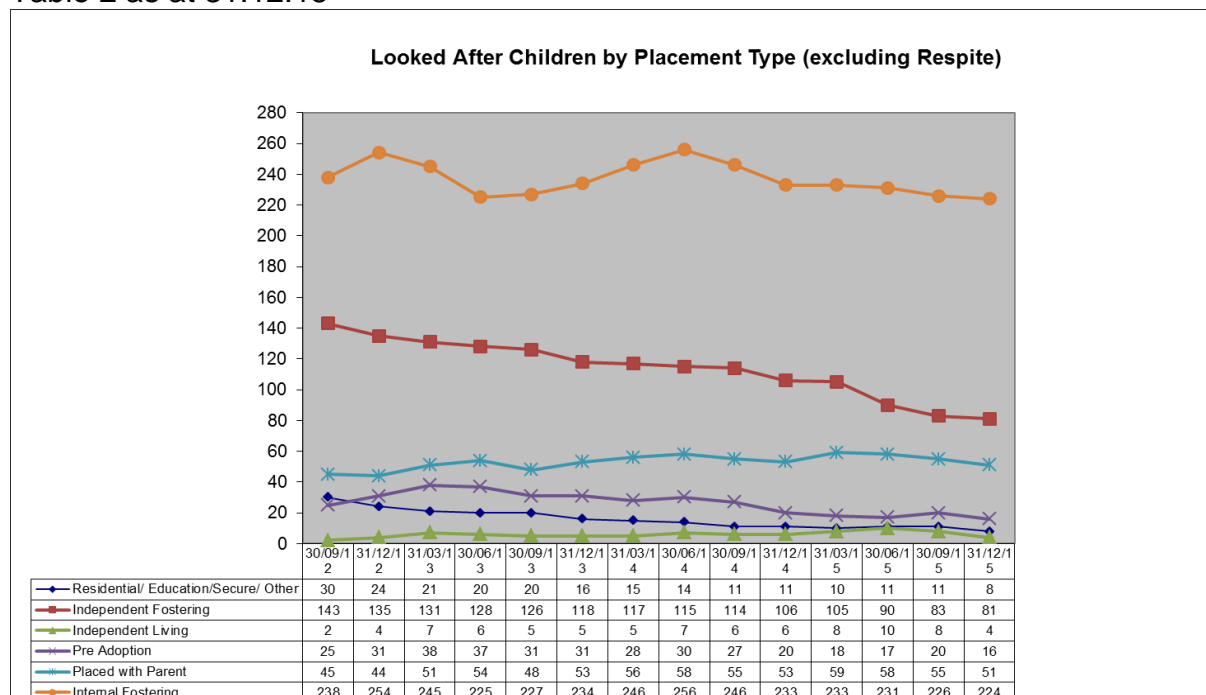
The key areas highlighted for why young people are placed in an independent placement are:

- Children with disabilities
- Sibling groups
- Young people with challenging behaviours
- Children who were identified as needing a long term placement
- Parent and baby placements
- Young people who have experienced placement breakdown/s with in- house carers

There are, and will continue to be a cohort of young people who will need to be placed in Independent placements due to having specialist needs which require carers who have specific skills or training (such as children with complex medical needs/disabilities) or children who need to be placed outside of NPT for their welfare. There are also cohorts of children who have been placed with independent foster carers and are in established placements where they have become integrated into the foster family. Moving these children would not be appropriate as it would not be in their welfare; therefore, they remain with the independent foster carers.

At the 31st December 2015 there were 81 children placed in independent fostering placements and 8 in residential placements.

Table 2 as at 31.12.15



The use of IFA's has a number of consequences: IFA's may not be located within the Local Authority and may be out of County, which means that children may have to move out of the NPT area affecting their access to their local communities that they are familiar with and sometimes their contact with their family and friends. A move out of the area can often also mean a change in education or health providers.

The cost of an IFA placement is double the cost of a placement with an NPT foster carer due largely to the agency costs involved. An average foster placement with an IFA costs £40,000 per year, whereas an average foster placement with an NPT carer costs £20,000 per year.

The table below shows that the number of children under 10 placed in independent placements has reduced significantly in the last 5 years, however while there has

been a slight reduction in the number of children who are over the age of 11 placed in independent placements this number has tended to fluctuate and has not seen a significant fall.

NPT Fostering has been able to continue to accommodate a stable number of children over the age of 11 with its own NPT foster carers, but it has not been able to tilt the balance to increase this number in order to be able to reduce the number of children over the age of 11 in independent placements.

Table 3

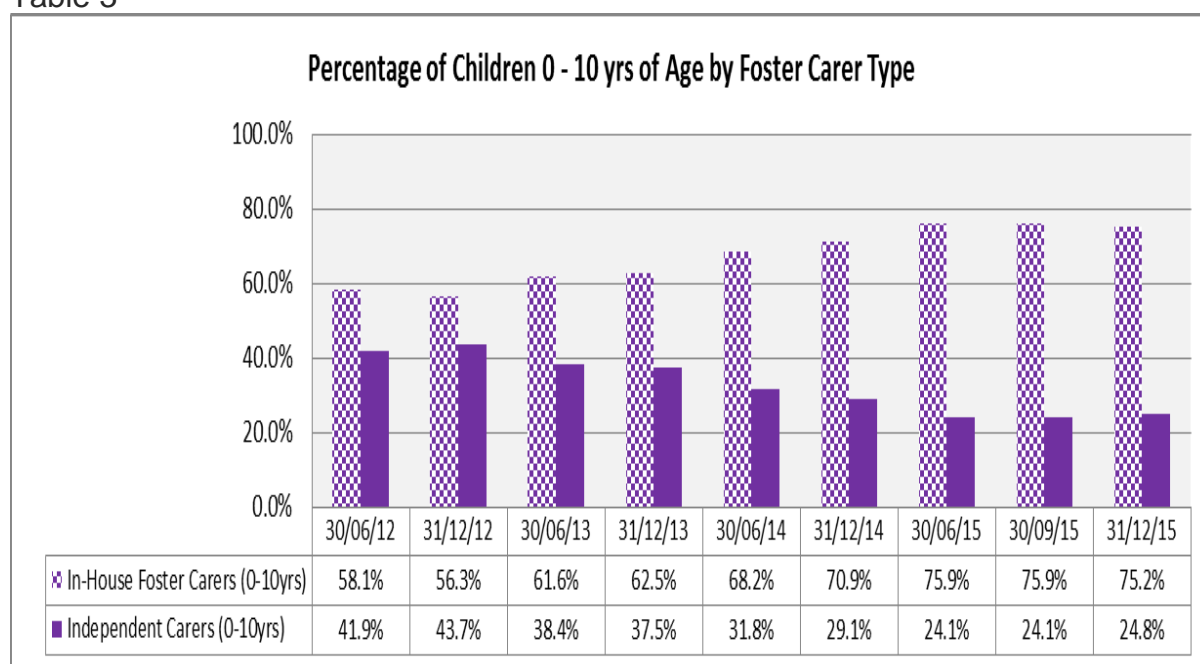
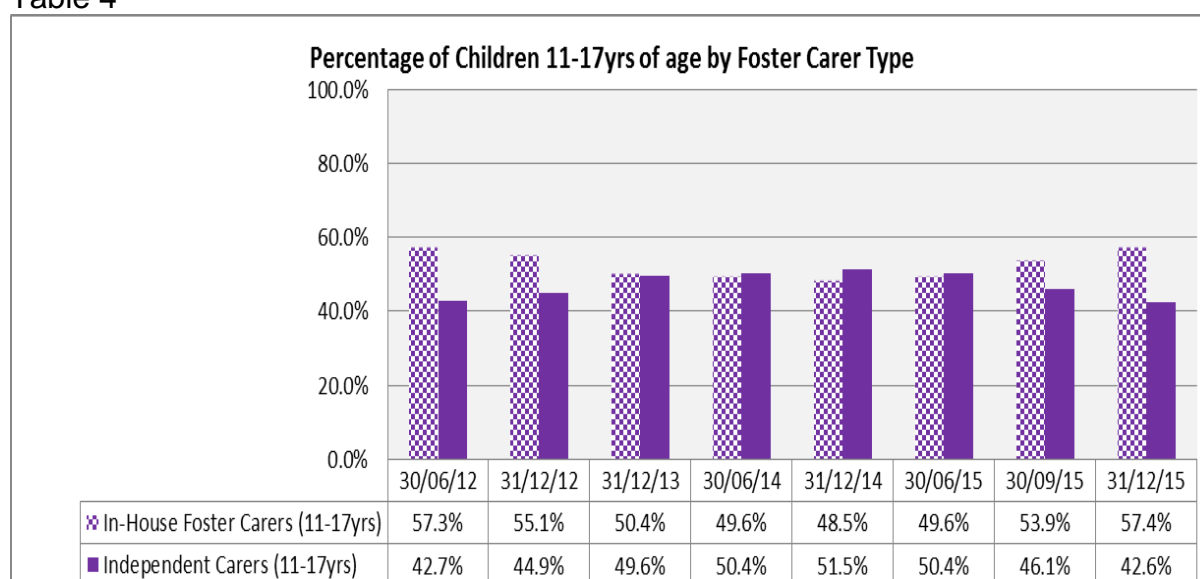


Table 4



KEY ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be a continuation in the reduction of children
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	<p>placed with IFA carers as the overall numbers remain high, particularly for children over the age of 11 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the number of children placed in IFA's is key to reducing expenditure and improving outcomes for young people. More local placements are needed with NPT foster carers. • We need to increase the number of NPT foster carers who can offer a placement for children over the age of 11 years in order to reduce the high number placed with IFA's.
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Stability of placements

In a report published in June 2015, The Fostering Network revealed its findings of a survey of 1600 children in care:

25% of fostered teenagers are living with at least their fourth family in care
 17% of fostered teenagers are living with at least their fifth family in care
 and 5% of fostered teenagers are living with least their 10th family in care

The findings highlight the need to find more people who are willing and able to foster teenagers. There is also a real need for more foster families to offer homes to siblings and disabled children.

The survey also found that almost 1 in 3 (29%) of children aged 5 to 10 are currently living with at least their third family in care, with one in five (18%) living with at least their fourth family in care.

Being moved from home to home can have a hugely detrimental effect on children's education, wellbeing and ability to make and maintain relationships. Not being able to find the right foster carer also means that children too often have to live a long way from family, friends and school and are split up from their brothers and sisters.

The figures relating to placement stability in NPT show that overall children do experience placement stability, but we know that those children who have 3 or more placements are young people who have particularly challenging needs and are more likely to be young people over the age of 11.

Table 5

	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.3.15
Number of children who have had 3 or more placements in a year	44 out of 493	30 out of 467	30 out of 434
Percentage	8.9%	6.4%	6.9%

In 2014/15 the highest number of placement moves experienced were by 2 young people, one of whom had 6 placement moves and the other had 7. Both of these young people displayed challenging and complex behaviours including being at risk

of sexual exploitation, absconding behaviours, self-harm, and mental health problems. These complex behaviours led to a move from in house placement to independent placement to residential care, and demonstrates that being able to provide the right levels of support to out NPT carers is vital in being able to maintain young people in a family environment.

KEY ISSUE	Skilled carers are needed to maintain young people in foster placements with Neath Port Talbot Carers, and support services are needed for those children who have the most challenging behaviours.
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Who are our foster carers

NPT has a stable and committed group of foster carers; however over the past few years the recruitment of new foster carers has not been able to outnumber the number of foster carers who have deregistered. Therefore, the overall number of placements available and the range of placement types has not significantly changed to meet the needs of the service.

Foster carers in NPT leave the service for a number of reasons:

- Natural retirement due to the carers age/stage of life
- A change in personal circumstances
- Following a substantiated allegation in relation to their care of children

The challenge of recruiting foster carers with a range of skills is not unique to NPT and is a reflection of the national deficit. NPT Fostering Service is creative in its recruitment activities.

NPT has a small cohort of foster carers who are paid at an enhanced rate under the Foster Plus Scheme. These carers have been assessed as having the skills to care for young people who present significantly challenging behaviours who would otherwise be placed in residential care, or young people who have returned from residential care back into a foster placement. There are also a small number of carers who are approved as being skilled to support parent and baby placements.

Table 6

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number of enquiries	94	78	64
Number of initial visits	54	77	63
Number attending training	17	28	28
Number of carers approved*	20	25	9
Total number of foster carers	137	148	139
Total number of places available	271	277	257

Number of children placed with NPT carers	169	172	167
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***NB applications made in one year may not be approved until the following year. i.e. if someone attends training in January 2014 their approval is unlikely to take place until 2015/16.**

The table above shows that of the number of foster placements available in 2014/15 with NPT carers, approximately 35% were vacant. Based on figures alone it would appear that the number of vacancies should be able to meet the demand for children needing to be accommodated, and resolve the issue of children being placed with IFA placements. However, the majority of vacancies that are available are for children under the age of 10, and nearly half of these again are for children under the age of 5, the age group where the demand for placements is the lowest.

Number of Vacancies for children under 10 = 31 (of these 31, 15 vacancies are for children aged 0-5)

Number of vacancies for children over 11 = 15 (of these 15, 11 are not available due to matching issues with the other children placed or carers own children)

The journey to approval

The number of applicants enquiring about fostering has dropped over the past 3 years. In 2012/13 there was a high dropout rate from initial enquiry to the initial visit. As a result, changes were made to the way that initial enquiries were dealt with and all potential applicants are now visited at home, rather than the applicants getting an information pack then having to contact the team again to arrange a visit. This has proved successful in improving the number of enquiries that proceed to initial visit.

Only 36% of people making enquiries in 2013/14, and 44% in 2014/15 went on to attend training. The main reported reasons cited for why people drop out after the initial visit are as follows:

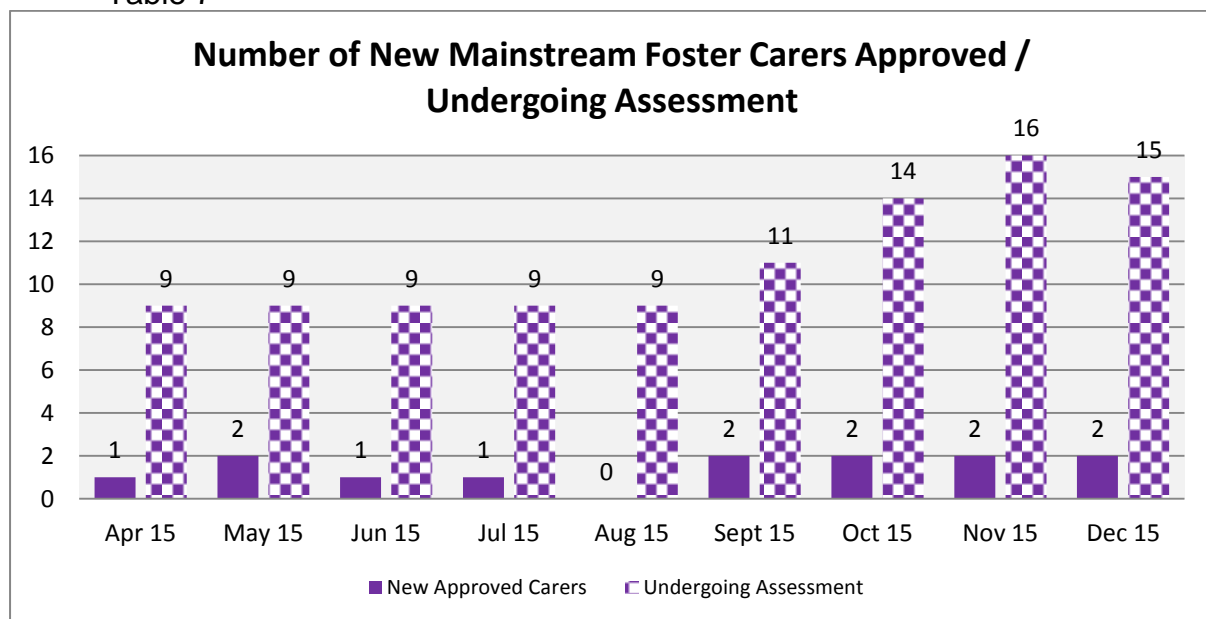
- Concerns about the impact of fostering on their family and children
- Financial issues
- Taking forward the application with another agency
- Taking up full time employment
- Health reasons
- Family commitments
- Criminal convictions which would impact on the application

Following the initial visit applicants are invited to attend pre-approval training. Attendance at training is a requirement for all applicants wishing to be assessed. The average time applicants have to wait to attend training is 2 months. This figure may be influenced by carers choosing to defer to a later session due to their personal commitments.

During the training and assessment stage a further number of applicants are either counselled out or withdraw for the following reasons:

- Financial issues, including the issue that some neighbouring fostering services offer a retainer when a carer has a vacancy
- Concerns about the levels of support the applicants would require
- Concerns with applicants' presentation in the training
- Undisclosed DBS conviction impacting on the assessment
- Couples where one partner was not committed to fostering

Table 7



KEY ISSUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The profile of the existing foster carers needs to change to meet the demand on the service. Fewer placements are needed for children under 10 and there needs to be an increase in the placements available for children aged 11 plus. • Existing foster carers need to be supported to explore whether they have the skills to care for older children. • Although 98% of initial enquiries led to an initial visit only 44% of initial visits led to the applicant attending training. • Changes are needed to the way the financial support offered is marketed to ensure that this is not a factor preventing applicants from approaching the service. The financial support available needs to be able to compete in the Local market. • Payments for carers looking after teenagers in NPT are lower than the payments offered by other Local Authorities and Independent fostering agencies.
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Support needs and access to services

While finance is important and having the right finance package is essential it isn't the sole barrier to recruiting new foster carers.

The key to successful foster placements is having a range of support services for children, young people and foster families. When foster carers are considering becoming foster carers they want to know the support that is available to them and the children they care for.

Training programme

The service provides a comprehensive training programme for newly approved and experienced foster carers. Feedback from carers indicates that they value training courses where they can train alongside Social Workers and that there is a joint approach to working with Looked After Children.

The training programme is reviewed annually and is updated to include new research and development and can be tailored to the individual needs of carers and young people. The Fostering Service is participating in the Confidence In Care training programme for all foster carers which is being delivered through the Fostering Network.

Professional carers/qualification

Carers who wish to further develop their skills can apply to participate in the Diploma in Child Care. Currently the Diploma allows carers to receive an additional payment level, but has no additional attached responsibilities. There is the potential to consider the development of additional opportunities for skilled carers such as mentoring other carers.

The development of skills based approach to fostering will assist in developing the way the service is able to meet the needs of children with more complex needs.

Support Services

Wherever possible we would want children who are looked after to access mainstream services within their own communities. Some Looked After Children who have a specific diagnosis will be able to access support services through CAMHS; however in the main it is difficult to access a service where children are not assessed with a diagnosed mental health disorder and their primary difficulty is considered to be an emotional difficulty often linked to early trauma or attachment difficulties.

What additional services are required

There are occasions where additional support is required to:

- Support a child with their experiences
- Help to maintain a placement

- Support children to return home

It is important that any support required is based on a thorough assessment to ensure that the needs are understood, and the right support is identified. Providing the right support to achieve stability is essential in achieving positive outcomes for children and fostering families.

Managing challenging behaviours is often the key factor in a foster carer being able to accept a placement of a young person or maintain a placement. The carers ability to understand behaviours and cope better with behaviour is often more successful than an approach which deals with behaviour modification.

Having access to the right professionals to assist with behaviour management is important and the ability for the support to not only focus on the needs of the Looked After Child but to consider a family approach to behaviour change. It is recognised that in addition to social work supervision, the impact of clinical supervision for foster placements is an effective method of supporting children and young people.

There is a move across Local Authorities to recognise the importance of clinical supervision of carers, with many fostering services developing a partnership with a psychologist either through collaborative or commissioned arrangements or through developing links with local CAMHS services.

A key feature in recruiting carers who are able to offer a placement for children with complex needs is being able to offer a comprehensive package of support. The fostering team have been trained to support foster carers in managing attachment difficulties, secondary trauma, and supporting fostering families in managing behaviours. The additional support of clinical supervision would have a significant impact on improving outcomes and supporting stability for young people, and preventing placement breakdown, which can often result in young people moving from placement to placement, and to independent provisions.

KEY ISSUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration needs to be given to how support services can be developed either through the existing Family Support Services strategy, or through the development of new collaborative working arrangements in order to provide a clinical supervision to foster placements for children with complex needs • The inability to access support from CAMHS for Looked After Children with unassessed needs or emotional, attachment and behavioural difficulties is a major difficulty in getting the right type of support to maintain placements and achieve positive outcomes. • Consideration to be given to develop a mentoring service for carers using experienced carers and the support of professionals.
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Financial Support

The National Minimum Standards for foster carer payments sets the benchmark for the payments that should be made to foster carers.

While we would not wish financial remuneration to be a key motivator for people considering becoming foster carers, the way in which financial packages are designed can often be a driving factor behind a successful recruitment campaign. For many families, pursuing fostering as a career comes with anxieties around financial stability. One of the identified factors for applicants withdrawing is the issue of finance.

A review of the Fostering Finance Policy is required to ensure that the payments that are made are competitive within the local market, but are also reflective of the tasks required of the carers. This will ensure that the service is in a strong place to attract those carers who are able to meet the needs of children who we currently have difficulty finding placements for.

A comparison has been made with the rates of payments as set by the National Minimum fostering allowances, the NPT rates and the comparative payments as made by neighbouring Local Authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies.

Name of Local Authority or Fostering Agency	Max payment for 11 – 15 year olds per week
Neath Port Talbot	£298.12
Swansea	£339.99
Bridgend	£366.99
Cardiff	£357.64
TACT fostering	£378.00
NFA	£366
Fostering Outcomes	£433

What the data shows is that NPT provides a competitive payment rate for children 0-5, 5-10 and for young people with complex needs and for mother and baby placements.

Where the payments show a marked difference is in the payments that are made to young people aged 11 plus. This forms a contributory factor in NPT's ability to successfully recruit foster carers for teenagers, resulting in them being over represented in our independent foster placements.

The profile of foster carers in NPT has changed with the number of foster carers under the age of 40 increasing. With this change in profile comes two significant features:

- Younger foster carers means that they are more likely to be considering fostering as a career, and applicants will often be considering fostering as their 'employment'. What this means is that there is more of an impact for

foster carers when they do not have a foster child placed with them, as during these times they do not receive a foster carer fee. Some fostering providers now provide a retainer for a time limited period in order to ensure that the foster carers ability to be available is not compromised by their need to seek additional employment at times when they do not have any children placed with them. The use of retainers is an attractive addition to applicants when considering which agency to foster with. NPT currently only provides a retainer to its Foster Plus carers/complex needs carers

KEY ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The payments made to NPT foster carers needs to be able to compete with the local market in order to recruit carers to the service. • The payment needs to reflect the skills of the foster carers and should give consideration to the payment of a retainer for carers who are available to care for children aged 11 plus in order to support the recruitment to this age group, and reduce the use of IFA placements.
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Summary

The Looked After Children’s Strategy was implemented in January 2015.

The number of Looked After Children has decreased over the past 18 months in line with the targets set out in the Looked after Children’s Strategy and the Forward Financial Plan, with the actual number of LAC reducing from 467 on 30th March 2014 to 387 by 21st December 2015. Further work is required to ensure that the targets as set out below continue to be achieved and surpassed.

Table 8

Financial year	Projected Number of LAC	Reduction	Rate of LAC per 10,000 population
2013/14	467 (actual)		168
2014/15	441	-26	158
2015/16	411	-30	148
2016/17	371	-40	133
2017/18	345	-26	124

The Looked After Children’s Strategy set out a number of ways in which the reduction of Looked After Children would be achieved.

By achieving the reduction in the number of LAC within this period the Strategy was able to support achieving the £700,000 saving required of Children and Young People's Services within 2014/15 financial year.

The Family Support Strategy introduced new opportunities for how commissioned services could support Looked After Children. The Rapid Response Service has successfully intervened in placements where young people were facing a placement breakdown, and services provided by Action for Children have been integral to supporting young people to be rehabilitated home to their families. The Family Group Conferencing Service was initially not aimed at children who were looked after, but was able to be responsive to the service need and change its remit to offer support where children were returning from foster carer to their families.

The Accommodation Panel has been successful in ensuring that only children who need to be accommodated enter the Looked After Children's System. This will be further enhanced in January with the introduction of a resource panel, which will consider alternative supports which will further support children remaining within their families.

Permanency Panel continues to track and ensure that children who are in accommodation do not drift within the Care System and have a timely move to a permanent family without the need for statutory intervention whenever possible. In the last 12 months of the cases tracked by permanence panel:

- 12 Special Guardianship orders have been granted, with a further 17 being considered.
- 7 children who were looked after and living with their parents under Placement with Parents Regulations have had Care Orders revoked. There are currently 16 children subject to Care Orders where the plan is to support rehabilitation to parents or to revoke the Care Order.

There has been a reduction in the use of independent foster placements for children who are under 10, however the number of children 11 and over placed with independent carers has on the whole stayed static. It is now essential that this is re-balanced. The average cost of an IFA placement per year is £40,000 with an in house placement averaging £20,000. The more children that can be looked after by NPT foster carers, the greater the savings that can be made and better outcomes can be achieved with children who can remain within their local community.

NPT fostering has a vacancy rate of 35% within its available placements; however with the exception of a small handful of placements where careful matching is required, all of these placements are for children under the age of 10. We now need to increase the number of foster carers for children over the age of 11 to reduce the reliance on IFA placements.

While NPT offers a reasonably competitive financial support package to foster carers, the payments for NPT foster carers looking after children aged 11 – 16 are not comparative to other fostering providers, including neighbouring Local Authorities. NPT carers for this age range are being paid on average £50 less a week per placement. This needs to be addressed in order to attract new carers to look after children in this age range. In order to offset an increase in foster payments there will be a need to decrease the number of children in IFA placements by 9 in the next financial year.

A revised Fostering Marketing Strategy is required in order to support the need to recruit new foster carers into the service. The margin between the number of people expressing an interest in applying to NPT as carers and the numbers approved needs to be reduced. Applicants report that a key factor in deciding whether to foster with NPT or another fostering service is whether a retainer is available for times when they have no placement. This is something that needs to be considered as a means of increasing the number of placements that are available with NPT carers for children over the age of 11.

In addition to the existing supports available for young people and carers consideration is currently being given to exploring the use of clinical supervision, assessment and support for foster carers in order to support and maintain placements for children with challenging or complex needs.

Proposals for addressing the key issues identified within this strategy are addressed through the attached document (Appendix 1).

Appendix 1

Proposals to implement the recommendations from the Fostering Recruitment Strategy

The Fostering Recruitment Strategy and the progress update to the Looked After Children's Strategy highlighted the key issues that are needed to make changes which will increase the number of placements available for children aged 11 plus.

Amongst the key issues highlighted were:

- **The need to increase the number of NPT foster placements for children over the age of 11.**
- **The need to provide placements which can meet the needs of children with complex needs and challenging behaviour and to review the support available to maintain these placements to prevent children moving to Independent Fostering placements or to residential placements out of county.**
- **The need to increase the financial payments for carers of children aged 11 plus in order to offer a competitive and comparative payment rate to recruit new carers.**
- **The need to provide an incentive for new applicants to foster with NPT rather than with another fostering agency or Local Authority**
- **The need to develop support services for foster carers who are looking after young people with complex behaviour and challenging needs.**

In order to address these issues proposals are being made in relation to the finance and support for foster placements.

Context to the financial proposals

Of the children who are looked after 43% of the children who are aged 11 plus are placed with Independent Foster carers (IFA).

The number of children under the age of 10 placed with IFA carers has nearly halved over the past 2 years.

There are currently 46 vacancies in foster placements within NPT foster carers. 31 of these are for under 10's and only 15 are for children over the age of 11. Of these 15, only 4 placements are actually available due to matching constraints of the other vacancies alongside other children already placed.

Nationally it is recognised that there is a shortage of foster placements – significantly for teenagers. While NPT continues to be able to successfully recruit carers for younger children, there are fewer enquiries made for children who are over the age of 11.

NPT fostering payment rates for children who are 0-5, 5-10 and 16 plus are competitive within the local market. NPT fostering service shows a significant margin in the payments for the 11-15 age group. This is a factor which is significantly impacting on the ability to recruit foster carers to this age range.

Comparative Foster carer payments 2015/16

The figures below show the payments made for children aged 11-15 based on information made available to NPT fostering service in December 2015:

Name of Local Authority or Fostering Agency	Max fee paid for 11 – 15 year olds per week
Neath Port Talbot	£298.12
Swansea	£339.99
Bridgend	£366.99
Cardiff	£357.64
TACT fostering *	£378.00
NFA*	£366
Fostering Outcomes *	£433

In addition to these costs that are paid to the carer per child, there is an agency fee payable.

Proposal 1: Increase the Foster Carer payments for the 11+ age range by £50 per week

It is proposed that the financial payments made to carers looking after children ages 11-15 is increased in order to be able to compete in the local market. This would see an increase in their weekly payments of £50, which will raise the total payment from a maximum of £298.12 to a maximum of £348.12. This increase is based on the current local market figures.

As well as encouraging new carers to apply to NPT, it is hoped that this will encourage existing foster carers to consider a change in their approval status and offer placements for older children.

As at 16/11/15 there were 61 looked after children aged 11 plus placed with Neath Port Talbot carers. Based on the current children who are looked after, this figure will rise in 2016-17 and 2017-18 to 70 children in the 11 plus category.

If we choose to increase the foster carer payment by £50 per week for this category this will result in an additional cost of £182,000 per annum (based on 70 children).

Working on the premise that each in-house placement costs the Council approximately £20,000 and an external placement costs £40,000, each Looked After Child in an external placement brought back in house will save the Authority £20,000.

Number of children who return to NPT carers from IFA carers	Approximate saving to the Local Authority
10	£200,000
15	£300,000
20	£400,000

Therefore, we would need to bring the equivalent of 9 looked after children currently in external placements back in house to offset the additional cost of the new foster carer fee.

Proposal	Maximum Additional Cost (per annum)
Increase the foster carer fee for 11 plus age range by £50 per week	£182,000 (Based on 70 lac)

Proposal 2: Introduce a retainer payment for all 11 plus carers

Currently 98% of people who make an enquiry about fostering go on to have an initial visit, however the dropout rate following on from this is high, with only 44% of enquirers going on to undertake training. Those carers who withdraw from the process following their initial enquiry site finance and support as of the key reasons.

New applicants who are choosing to apply to foster will often advise that they require financial security in order to pursue their application and the issue of having a retainer during times when they do not have a child in their care is one of importance when considering whether to foster for NPT or another agency.

It is proposed that a retainer should be offered as this would give NPT fostering a marketing initiative which will attract applicants who may otherwise approach an independent agency or neighbouring Local Authority.

It is proposed that a retainer would be introduced that would only be paid to the 11 plus foster carers for a maximum of 6 weeks during any given financial year. The amount paid would be the equivalent of the weekly fee element of the carer payment and would not include the payments for the child.

The payment would be subject to the following criteria being met:

- Retainers are only applicable for carers who are approved for children over the age of 11.
- It would not be applicable to carers who only provide respite.
- There would be an expectation that in order to receive a retainer carers are able to offer a placement to any child within their matching criteria.
- Unreasonable refusal to accept a placement would result in no payment being made.

- A retainer will only be paid when there is no child in placement. i.e. if a carer is approved for 2 children and they have 1 child in placement they will not be paid for the other vacancy.
- Carers in receipt of a retainer would be required to be available to take placements in an emergency.

As at 01.02.16 there were 136 Approved Foster Carers within NPT. Of these 60 carers were providing a placement for children over the age of 11. Of the 60, 34 carers are providing placements for children aged 11 plus on a long term basis and their plan is for those children to remain with the carers, they would therefore not be expected to have a vacancy.

9 of the 60 carers are only able to provide respite care to young people over the age of 11 so would not be eligible to receive a retainer. The remaining 17 foster carers provide short term placements to young people over the age of 11. There are currently only 3 foster carers who are approved for children over the age of 11 who have no children placed and are available to provide a placement.

Based on the current vacancies the retainer cost would be:

Weekly Rate (calculated on the new payment)	Annual Cost based on 4 carers having no placements
£193	£3,474

Proposal	
Introduce a 6 week retainer for all 11 plus carers at £193 per week	This figure will be subject to variation depending on the vacancy levels, but based on the current vacancy level it would be £3, 474. If all of the short term carers for children over the age of 11 plus were vacant the cost would be £19,686, but this is not a scenario that is feasible.

We would need to bring the equivalent of 1 Looked After Child currently in external placements back in house to offset the additional cost of the new retainer fee.

Funding the proposals

The £201k required to implement the strategy would be funded from within existing budgets.

The reduction of the numbers of Looked after children and associated costs has resulted in a £700,000 reduction in expenditure in 2015/16. In 2016/17 the required saving is nearly £1,000,000.

Further savings can be made by reducing the overall numbers of Looked after Children and importantly by increasing the number of in-house placements and reducing the number of children placed in Independent foster placements.

Working on the premise that each in-house placement costs us £20,000 and an external costs us £40,000 then each LAC in an external placement brought back in house will save the Authority £20,000 per annum.

We would therefore need to bring the equivalent of 10 looked after children currently in external placements back in house to offset the additional costs included in the table below.

Funding the proposals will not require an up-front investment but costs will be incurred over the year.

The proposals will support the ability to recruit foster carers. The fostering service will aim to increase the number of foster placements for children aged 11 plus by 15 by the end of 2016/17. This increase will cover the numbers required to recuperate an invest to save input, as well as start to deliver further savings within the placement budget.

Proposals	Maximum Additional Cost (per annum)
1. Increase the foster carer fee for 11 plus carers by £50 per week	£182,000 (Based on 70 looked after children)
2. Introduce a 6 week retainer for all 11 plus carers at £193 per week	Variable cost. Based on the existing numbers the cost would be £3,474 with a worst case scenario of £19,686
Total	£201,686

Proposal for Support Services

By reconfiguring the current support arrangements, Children and Young People Services propose to develop a service in collaboration with Hillside Secure Unit to enable access to support from a clinical team of psychologists, psychology assistants, play therapists, and speech therapists. This service would support children with disabilities and children who are looked after who are unable to access support through CAMHS, as they do not fit the criteria for the service.

It is proposed that the clinical team would be able to provide an agreed level of:

- Assessments for children (not within Court proceedings)
- Support for children who are on the edge of care
- Play therapy for Looked After Children

- Clinical psychology support for carers of young people with complex needs

Work is currently being undertaken to consider the resources required for this proposal to be progressed and will be presented to Members for consideration along with detailed reports.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Cost
Approval is sought to increase payments by £50 per week for children over the age of 11.	£182,000 Costs to be met from within existing budgets and from the reduction of children in IFA's.
Approval is sought to introduce a retainer for foster carers who are approved for children over the age of 11 for a maximum of 6 weeks in a year where they have no children placed with them.	£19,686 Costs to be met from within existing budgets and from the reduction of children in IFA's.
Establish support from a clinical team for foster carers for children on the edge of care, children with disabilities and children who are looked after who have complex needs.	Cost to be met from the reconfiguration of support services within Children & Young People Services.
Total	£201,686

This policy aims to provide a clear and comprehensive summary of what payments are made to foster carers and to Looked After Children in Neath Port Talbot. A summary of the payments is available in the *Guide to Foster Carers Finance (Appendix A)*

Payments to foster carers

Foster carers in Neath Port Talbot receive a weekly payment for the children that they care for. The payment consists of two parts; the child's allowances and the foster carers fees.

Foster carers Allowances

Some carers will be eligible for a foster carers fee. The fee is related to the assessed skills, experience, and qualifications of the carers. The service has a banding system for foster carer fees:

Band A	Weekly amount				
	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F
	£127.50	£143	£177.50	£193	£260

Band A

Band A carers are not eligible for the foster carers fee but will receive the child based allowances for each child they care for.

Band B

Band B payments are for children under the age of 10 years. The carer will receive a foster carer fee of **£127.50** per week per child in addition to the child's allowances. Band B carers must have been assessed and approved by the agency as being able to provide a foster placement to any young person who may need to be accommodated by the Local Authority. Band B carers are required to complete a minimum of 3 days core training per year.

Band C

Band C payments are for children under the age of 10 years. The carer will receive a foster carer fee of **£143** per week per child, in addition to the child's allowances. In addition to the requirements of Band B, Band C carers will be required to have completed their Diploma in Child Care and are required to complete a minimum of 3 days core training per year.

Band D

Band D payments are for children aged 11 and over. The carer will receive a foster carer fee of **£177.50** per week per child in addition to the child's allowances. Band D carers must have been assessed and approved by the agency as being able to provide a foster placement to any young person who may need to be accommodated by the Local Authority. Band D carers are required to complete a minimum of 3 days core training per year.

Band E

Band E payments are for children aged 11 and over. The carer will receive a foster carer fee of **£193** per week per child in addition to the child's allowances. Band E carers must have been assessed and approved by the agency as being able to provide a foster placement to any young person who may need to be accommodated by the Local Authority. Band E carers will be required to have completed their Diploma in Child Care and are required to complete a minimum of 3 days core training per year.

Band F

Band F carers receive a foster carer fee of **£260** per week in addition to the child's allowances. In addition to the requirements of Band B and C, carers must meet the Requirements of the Foster Plus Scheme.

Carers are encouraged to progress through the bands and to develop their skills and knowledge. An addendum or reassessment may be required in order to progress to Band B and to Band D

Childrens allowances

In 2011, the Welsh Government introduced the National Minimum Allowances for foster carers. This allowance is the basic allowance that foster carers receive to cover all of the associated costs of looking after child and day to day living including activities, educational expenses transport and day to day equipment.

All foster carers are eligible to receive a weekly age related allowance for each child they care for. The allowance includes payments which should be used towards pocket money and clothing for the child. A holiday allowance is paid for each child who is looked after. This is paid as a one off annual payment rather than within the weekly allowances but it forms part of the overall payments.

Age	Basic	Pocket Money	Clothing	Holiday allowance (paid as a lump sum annually and not included in the weekly allowance)	Total Per week (excluding Holiday element)
0-4	£146.79	0.00	£15.33	£3.89	£162.12

5-10	£124.24	£3.85	£18.48	£4.43	£146.57
11-15	£115.45	£9.73	£20.30	£5.52	£145.48
16-17	£139.93	£15.40	£27.86	£7.05	£183.19

The fostering service does not require foster carers to keep receipts for the money that they spend, but will monitor that allowances are being used appropriately.

Foster Carer Holiday Grant

The Foster Carer Holiday Grant is made in lieu of paid respite payment breaks to Band B, C, D, E, and F carers. We always encourage foster carers to involve the children they care for in their family holidays where appropriate. It is important that children and young people looked after by the department continue to experience holiday opportunities.

In recognition of foster carers' commitment and to enable their family and looked after children to take part in family holidays, a payment of £400 will be paid to eligible carer households. Holiday payments are made retrospectively for the previous year and will be subject to the following criteria:

- Foster Carers approved for one year or more and available for placements on 1st July by Neath Port Talbot CBC and who have successfully completed their first Annual Review.
- Foster Carers who have looked after children or young people on a full time basis for an aggregated 6 month period from 1st July to 30th June in any one year.

Primary carers will only be paid for respite in exceptional circumstances based on the assessed needs of the child and with the prior approval of Senior Management.

Retainers

A retainer to the amount of the foster carers' fees are only payable in the following circumstances:

Following an allegation To all carers for a period of 4 weeks following an allegation being made when the decision is made that placements cease during an investigation.

Band D & E Carers For a period of up to 6 weeks in a 12 month period subject to the foster carer having no children in placement, and subject to them being available to undertake placements at the request of the Local Authority.

To Band F carers

When there are no children in placement (subject to the criteria in the Foster Plus Policy).

Carer Absence

There will be rare occasions where foster carers are unable to look after the children they care for due to unforeseen emergency circumstances, i.e. hospitalisation, illness, family emergency. In these cases and at the discretion of the Fostering Team Manager, provision will be considered to pay the foster carer household, the basic carer allowance, where eligible, for up to seven nights in any one financial year in respect of each child.

Unauthorised Child Absence

For periods of unauthorised child absence, e.g. abscondsions from the primary carer, the basic allowance plus carer allowance, if eligible, will be paid for the first seven nights for the child concerned. Thereafter, payments will be reduced to half of the basic allowance plus half of the carer allowance, if eligible, for a further seven nights for the child concerned. Any further periods of unauthorised absences will be at the discretion and authorisation of the Fostering Team Manager, consideration will be given to paying half the carer allowance in respect of each child per week for any further periods of unauthorised absences. This arrangement will be reviewed fortnightly.

Day Care

Carers identified and agreed support networks should be used for babysitting arrangements when possible in order for Looked After Children to feel fully included in the foster carers family.

Day care will be arranged and paid for when a carer attends training, meetings or appointments when their own support networks are not available.

It is expected that foster carers will pay for childcare in crèches, nurseries, play schemes from their allowances unless there are exceptional circumstances and substantial additional support is required based on the child's assessed needs.

Foster carers may identify support from other foster carers and can pay each other at a pro rata rate. Any arrangements between carers must be agreed in advance with NPT Fostering Service and must be appropriate for the child concerned.

Respite Care/Support Break Arrangements

Foster Carers who provide respite care to primary foster carers and parents.

Requests for respite/support break care can be as a result of the following:

- a) Families experiencing crisis.
- b) Incapacity of parents due to illness, disability, mental illness or inability to control the child's behaviour.
- c) Maintaining children and young people who present challenging behaviour within placement with their primary carers.
- d) Primary carers requiring a support break.

Foster Carers providing respite play a vital role in keeping children within their families and maintaining children within their primary placement. Foster Carers providing support breaks will receive 1/7th of the child basic allowance and carer allowance according to the number of nights. In cases where carers do not receive the pocket money allowance for the child, consideration will be given by the Fostering Team Manager, to provide a discretionary "leisure allowance" of £5.00 per night per child up to a maximum of 3 nights. This allowance is to assist support break carers to provide leisure and social activities to Looked After Children whilst in their care.

For primary foster carers requiring respite - deductions will be calculated at 1/7th of the basic and carer allowance according to the number of nights that respite/break are required. Primary foster carers will continue to receive pocket money and clothing allowances for the child.

Foster carers who require respite/support break provision to help maintain a primary placement *may* continue to receive full allowances. All requests for the main carer to continue to receive payment during respite periods must be made in advance and be authorised by the Principal Officer for the Fostering Service. Such requests will only be considered in exceptional circumstances only.

Shared Care Arrangements

Foster carers provide shared care in cases where children and young people receive ongoing care between their parents and a foster carer. Shared care enables children and young people to maintain family and community life and eases the pressures on families who may be experiencing difficulties.

In shared care arrangements where the child returns home no more than 3 nights a week and the foster carer is expected to be available at all times in the event of a breakdown whilst at home, the carer will receive full child and carer allowances including pocket money and clothing.

Any other shared care arrangements between foster carers and parents where foster carers are looking after children and young people for less than 3 nights a week will be classed as a respite care arrangement. Foster carers will receive 1/7th of the Child Basic Allowance and Carer Allowance according to the number of nights.

In exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the Child Care Plan, consideration will be given to provide a discretionary payment for shared care arrangements between foster carers and residential establishments and foster carers providing a mother and baby placement. These payments are at the discretion of the Fostering Team Manager, following an assessment of the placement requirements.

Equipment

It is the responsibility of the foster carer to ensure that the basic home environment is suitable for a child to live in and has the basic equipment available such as a bed, bedding and basic storage.

We recognise that some children will require additional equipment, and approved foster carers will be able to request to loan equipment.

Items that can be provided on loan include:

- Cots.
- Cot/moses basket mattresses.
- Car seats.
- Buggy's.
- Initial baby equipment.

Items that are not included and should be provided as part of the household furnishing include:

- Beds.
- Bedding.
- Wardrobes/storage.
- Replacement of basic baby items such as bottles, sterilisers.
- Toys.

All requests from foster carers for the loan of equipment should be made through the carer's respective Fostering Social Worker who will undertake an assessment of requirements. All equipment should be kept in good working order.

NPT Fostering Team will be responsible for ordering and buying all equipment. Authorisation of the purchase of equipment will be at the discretion of the Fostering Team Manager. The fostering service will be unable to reimburse payments made by carers for items purchased by the carer unless there are exceptional circumstances and that this is agreed in advance.

Annual Service Recognition Award (see appendix b for criteria)

In recognition of the value the authority places on its foster carers an annual service recognition award event will be held where foster carers will be awarded for their length of service. The event aims to publicise the rewards and challenges of fostering as well as providing an opportunity to congratulate and show our appreciation to our existing foster care families.

E Care

Approved mainstream Foster Carers who are providing full time placements to children and young people will be eligible to receive a PC, printer and basic software for use by themselves, their own children and any children and young people who are looked after. Provision of the equipment is subject to a loan agreement and remains the property of the Local Authority and will need to be returned should a carer be unavailable for placements for a long period of time or upon deregistration. The Local Authority can set up and fund Internet access via a designated ISP and provide technical and training support to foster carer families. Use of the equipment is regularly monitored by the Council and inappropriate use may lead to the removal of the equipment.

Foster carers who have E Care equipment in their home are expected to adhere to the on line safety policy.

Travel Expenses

Foster carers will be able to claim reasonable travel expenses for the children that they are looking after. Expenses must relate to journeys undertaken with the Looked After Child or on business relating to the that child and should not include journeys which would routinely form part of the activities of the household or meetings that are not related to the child.

Carers will be reimbursed reasonable travel costs to attend training, and to attend the foster carers support groups (including the monthly meeting of the foster carers association).

Travel claims should be submitted within three months of the journey being undertaken and will be payable at the current rate set by the Local Authority. Travel claims are subject to approval by management and will be routinely checked for accuracy.

Use of Taxi's

The provision of taxi's for foster children will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and will require advance approval by the Fostering Team Manager and Principal Officer.

Wherever possible NPT fostering will aim to recruit foster carers who are able to drive and have access to a car/or provide a means of transport to the children in their care.

Clothing Allowance

A weekly clothing allowance, in accordance with the child's age, will be paid after the fourth week of placement.

This clothing allowance is intended to cover all expenditure including school uniform and sports kits. The only exception which will be considered is where children are placed and require an immediate change of school. Such payments should be agreed with the Fostering Team Manager in advance.

Emergency Clothing Grant

An initial clothing grant, up to the equivalent of 4 weeks clothing allowance may be claimed if the child's own clothing is inadequate when they are initially placed in foster care. This will need to be agreed by the Fostering Team Manager at the point of placement. Receipts for clothing purchased should be processed for payment by the Fostering Social Worker.

The emergency clothing grant is only payable for new placements and not for changes of placement.

Annual Holiday Payment

The holiday allowance is paid annually in accordance with the child's age. Payments will be made to carer households on 1st July. Carers must ensure that children in foster care are afforded the opportunity to take part in school trips although it is recognised that this does not include carers funding expensive school trips abroad.

Foster carers will be expected to pay for school trips up to the amount of £50. For trips over this amount the Local Authority will consider on an individual basis a contribution towards the cost of educational trips which are required as part of the school/college curriculum for study purposes (such as geography field trips). The Local Authority is unable to fund the cost of other 'leisure' holidays arranged through the school/college.

The Guidance for National Minimum Payments notes that the payments to carers are intended to cover some aspects of holidays, travel and accommodation costs, whether home or abroad. Within Neath Port Talbot the holiday element of the payments have been broken down as follows:

	Weekly holiday payment
0-4	£3.89

5-10	£4.43
11-15	£5.52
16-17	£7.05

Following feedback from foster carers the decision was made in Neath Port Talbot that the weekly payments would be accrued and paid as a one off annual lump payment. In 2016/17 there will be further consultation with carers to review the current payment arrangements to ensure that all carers receive allowances that fall in line with the National Minimum Allowances.

Clubs and Activities

It is important that children are supported to participate in safe social and leisure activities in their communities. This should be encouraged by foster carers. It is expected that the cost of activities should be covered by the child's allowances.

Crèche and Play Schemes

It is expected that foster carers will pay for childcare in crèches, nurseries and play schemes from their allowances unless there are exceptional circumstances and substantial additional support is required based on the child's assessed needs. Approval should be sought prior to any arrangements being set up.

Christmas or other Special Religious Festival Allowances

A Christmas Allowance or other Special Religious Festival Allowances, in accordance with the child's age, will be automatically paid with the allowances approximately four weeks before the festival. For new admissions into care, payment will be made where it is anticipated that the placement will extend over the festival period (see Table 2).

It is expected that the full amount of the allowance be allocated to the purchase of gifts and associated costs of the festival for each child.

Birthday Allowances

A Birthday Allowance, will be automatically paid with the weekly allowances which precede the child's birthday. For new admissions into care, payment will be made where it is anticipated that the placement will continue to the child's birthday. It is expected that the full amount of the birthday allowance be allocated to the purchase of gifts and associated costs of the birthday for each child. Any amount not spent should be placed in the child's bank account.

Pocket Money

A weekly allowance is provided for each child over the age of 4. This allowance should be used at the carers discretion for younger children but it is expected that as

the child reaches sufficient age and understanding that they are at first given an element of the pocket money rising to all of it (in line with age) to assist them to develop financial and budgeting skills. Pocket money should be spent on items of the child/young persons choice and should only be used for toiletries where the young person wishes to spend over and above what has been provided by the foster carer. Children should be encouraged to save part of their pocket money.

Bank Accounts

All children and young people in foster care should have a bank account and they should be encouraged to save at least small amounts from their pocket money.

Foster Carers should assist children to open bank accounts and help them to access them. Where pocket money/Christmas/birthday allowances have not been fully spent Foster Carers should assist children to deposit the money in the child's bank account. For older children the bank account could be used to deposit the clothing allowance until it is required. Access to the bank account should be dependent on the age and understanding of the child and should be agreed with the child's Social Worker.

Discretionary Payments

It is the expectation that the allowances described in this policy will meet the needs of children placed with foster carers. It is recognised however, that there may be exceptional circumstances where Foster Carers will need to incur expenditure on behalf of children that is not accounted for by the allowances described above. In this event, Foster Carers must seek advice from their Fostering Social Worker **before** incurring such expenditure. Only if it has been confirmed that approval has been given for a discretionary payment can Foster Carers be reimbursed for this expenditure.

Examples of discretionary payments may be the replacement of large items if damaged by a child (where the carers insurance will not cover the replacement cost). Discretionary payments should not be used to meet the cost of activities that the child is involved in such as sports clothes/prom clothes. Young people should be encouraged to save for such items from their clothing and pocket money allowances.

Over Payments

Any over payments made to carers will be reclaimed. Carers will be notified when payments will be reclaimed. When a child or young person moves placement, any allowances that need to transfer between carers (such as unspent holiday payments) will transfer to the new carer.

Payments During Allegations

On rare occasions when an allegation is made it may be necessary to suspend foster placements while an investigation takes place. In such circumstances, the carer fee will be paid for a period of 4 weeks.

Foster Carer Finance Summary

Appendix A

Foster carer finance consists of:

Fostering allowances for the child

Allowances for the child are paid for each child. The amount paid depends on the child's age and is based on the National Minimum Allowances for Foster Carers that is recommended by Welsh Government.

Foster carer fees (for carers who are Band A and above)

The foster carers fee is paid to carers for each child that is placed with them. The fee acknowledges the skills required and any training that has been undertaken.

Allowances for the child	
Age	Weekly amount
0-4	£162.12
5-10	£146.57
11-15	£145.48
16-17	£183.19

Carers fees

Band A	Weekly amount				
	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F
	£127.50	£143	£177.50	£193	£260

* see finance policy for the definition of each band

How are payments made

The fostering allowances and fees are paid weekly, one week in arrears. Generally, payments are made on a Friday (but there may be some changes during bank holidays). Payments are made by BACS – a direct payment is made into a bank account.

How are allowances broken down

Allowances for the child should cover the everyday and regular expenses associated with caring for a foster child.

Age	Basic	Pocket Money	Clothing	Total Per week
0-4	£146.79	0.00	£15.33	£162.12
5-10	£124.24	£3.85	£18.48	£146.57
11-15	£115.45	£9.73	£20.30	£145.48
16-17	£139.93	£15.40	£27.86	£183.19

The basic allowance covers:

Food Including eating at home and eating out. It includes the cost of school and food provided for contact. For children aged 0-4 it also covers the cost of nappies, wipes etc.

Clothing The clothing allowance covers the cost of all clothing including school uniform and kit for activities and clothes for special events such as proms.

Transport Foster Carers will be reimbursed for reasonable travel expense which relate to the child or relate to training. All travel claim forms are monitored and need to be completed within 3 months of the journey. Taxi's will only be provided in exceptional circumstances with prior approval.

Activities The allowance covers all personal needs including savings, and activities such as parent and toddler groups, after school activities, swimming lessons, sports clubs and musical lessons etc. The allowance should also cover school trips and activities. It includes general equipment needed for school or clubs.

Savings We encourage all foster carers to open saving accounts for children in their care.

Household Payment towards the cost of utility and energy costs, general wear and tear and repair of furniture, insurances and other costs associated with the home.

Additional Payments

Age	Holiday *	Christmas/religious festival	Birthday
0-4	£202.44	£201.22	£101.22
5-10	£230.58	£215.29	£115.29
11-15	£287.14	£243.57	£143.57
16-17	£366.38	£283.19	£183.19

*the holiday payment is made up of a weekly amount based on the age of the child. it is payable in a lump sum annually. See Finance Policy for weekly amount.

Discretionary payments	Details	Amount	Who can agree
Emergency clothing grant	Payable when carers accept a placement in an emergency situation and the child has little or no belongings	Carers will be able to be reimbursed up to an equivalent amount of 4 weeks clothing allowance based on the age of the child. This amount will be agreed with the fostering manager at the point of placement.	Fostering service manager
School holidays/trips	Foster carers are required to pay for trips up to the value of £50. Consideration will be given to the Local Authority contributing to trips over this amount where the trip is linked to the school curriculum. Ordinarily payment of trips should be saved from out of the child allowances	Discretionary consideration in circumstances when the trip is educational and linked to the school curriculum	Fostering service manager or Childrens community team manager in advance of trips being booked
Travel	Travel expenses will be paid for journeys that are made in relation to looked after children.	45p per mile	Fostering service manager
Equipment	We will order and pay for some equipment that is required for children *see policy for details	Variable	Fostering service manager in advance of equipment being ordered
Passports	Payments for first passport applications and birth certificates (where needed) will be funded	Passports and agreements to travel should be obtained prior to a holiday being booked. Requests should not	Fostering or Childrens community team manager

		be made for late applications	
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Appendix B

Eligibility Criteria for Foster Carers Annual Award

- The award is applicable to eligible Foster Carers who are approved by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.
- The award takes the form of a financial gift presented either by cheque or vouchers for the following number of years approved.

1 year	£100
5 years	£250
10 years	£500
15 years	£750
20 years	£1000
25 years	£1500

- The awards will be presented on an annual basis.
- In order to recognise and encourage the professional development of Foster Carers the award will depend not only on the length of time carers have been approved, but also on the training they have undertaken and on achieving performance targets as agreed in their Personal and Professional Development Plan.
- In order to qualify for an award, carers will have been approved for the above period of time on or at 30th June.
- Foster Carers who have looked after children or young people on a full time basis for an aggregated 6 month period from 1st July to 30th June in any one year.
- Where carers have been approved, de registered then re-approved, the number of years approval will run from the most recent approval.
- The award will be given per carer household and will be based on the number of years the longest serving carer within the household has been approved.
- Carers will continue to receive an individual certificate acknowledging the number of year's service they have achieved. Carers who reach 10, 15, or 20 years approval will in addition be presented with a gift.
- Approved carers who have not been available to offer placements for a considerable period of time (not including short breaks, or periods of absence through illness or special circumstances) shall receive the award backdated to the end of their most recent placement.
- Where there are issues over the approval and de-registration status of carers, the award will not be presented until these issues are resolved.

Any queries over the date of approval or eligibility should in the first instance be addressed with the allocated Fostering Officer. Where issues cannot be resolved the matter will be dealt with by the Principal Officer or Head of Service.

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Appendix 3

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

Please ensure that you refer to the Draft Screening Form Guidance while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact Corporate Strategy or your directorate Heads of Service Equality Group Champion.

Section 1

What service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Children & Young People Services

Directorate: Social Services, Health and Housing

Q1 (a) What are you screening for relevance?

Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan	Proposal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) Please name and describe below

The proposal is to seek Cabinet approval for a NPTCBC Fostering Recruitment Strategy. The strategy details the current foster provision within NPTCBC and the requirements needed to have a positive impact on the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced foster carers going forward. The strategy identifies how the council proposes to overcome the following identified barriers to recruiting and retaining skilled foster carers in NPT including:

- Support services; it has been identified that support and training is required to help foster carers to manage attachment difficulties, secondary trauma and behaviour management. The strategy proposes to introduce clinical supervision, assessment and support for foster carers in order to help them to support and maintain placements for young people with complex and challenging needs.

This service will also be open to the young people in placement and will benefit those that fall outside of the current Cahms criteria and who would not ordinarily be given access to such services.

- Financial remuneration; the current rate of pay to internal foster providers working with young people aged 11+ in NPTCBC is not in line with other Local Authorities and independent foster providers. The proposed increase in payments to foster carers of £50 per week for children over the age of 11 will ensure equality of payment for our providers in the open market. The average cost of an external foster placement is 40k per annum in comparison to an in house placement cost of 20k. If the council can attract and recruit more in house providers with a more attractive financial package and extra support it will make greater saving sin the future.

Q2 (a) What does Q1a relate to?

Direct front line service delivery

(H)

Indirect front line service delivery

(M)

Indirect back room service delivery

(L)

(b) Do your customers/clients access this service...?

Because they need to

(H)

Because they want to

(M)

Because it is automatically provided to everyone in NPT

(M)

On an internal basis i.e. Staff

(L)

Q3 What is the potential impact on the following protected characteristics?

	High Impact (H)	Medium Impact (M)	Low Impact (L)	Don't know (H)
Age	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Disability	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4(a) How visible is this service/function/policy/procedure/ project/strategy to the general public?

High visibility to general public

(H)

Medium visibility to general public

(M)

Low visibility to general public

(L)

(b) What is the potential risk to the council's reputation? (Consider the following impacts – legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk to reputation

(H)

Medium risk to reputation

(M)

Low risk to reputation

(L)

Q5 How did you score?
Please tick the relevant box

MOSTLY H and/or M → HIGH PRIORITY → EIA to be completed

Please go to Section 2

MOSTLY L → LOW PRIORITY / → Do not complete EIA

NOT RELEVANT

**Please go to Q6
followed by Section
2**

Q6 If after completing the EIA screening process you determine that this service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EIA you must provide adequate explanation below (Please use additional pages if necessary).

The proposal to offer extra financial remuneration for foster carers looking after young people aged 11+ will have a positive effect on our current foster carers, which will help us to retain their skills. It will further benefit our recruitment process helping us to attract new carers in an already competitive market and bring us in line with other Local Authority and Independent Provider costs.

The inclusion of extra psychological support services will bolster the current training that foster carers receive. This service will underpin the needs of foster carers and young people and provide support in order to maintain the placement. This will enhance the packages of care offered to our young people, particularly those with challenging and complex needs, as well as offering extra professional support to the Foster Carers and young people.

The proposals within the Fostering recruitment Strategy will not have a negative impact on the current foster carers within NPTCBC. Nor will it have an adverse impact on the young people within the foster care system. The proposals will not alter the type and/or level of foster provision that the foster carer providers and/or the provision that the young person receives.

Section 2

Screeener- This to be completed by the person responsible for completing this screening
Name: Delyth Berni
Location: Neath Civic Centre, Neath SA11 3QZ
Telephone Number: 01639 763319

Date: 19 th April 2016
Approval by Head of Service
Name: Angela Thomas
Position: Head of Commissioning & Support Services
Date: 19 th April 2016

Please ensure this completed form is filed appropriately within your directorate because it may be required as evidence should a legal challenge be made regarding compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET BOARD

28th April 2016

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES, HYWEL JENKINS, AND HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION, ANDREW THOMAS

MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED – ALL WARDS

FINANCING OF SCHOOLS SCHEME

Purpose of Report

1. To obtain Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board determination of the Financing of Schools Scheme to be implemented as of 2016/17 financial year.

Executive Summary

2. The Council has a statutory obligation to publish a Scheme relating to the funding of its maintained schools. The Scheme is to set out the financial relationship between the Council and its maintained schools
3. A Scheme for Member determination is attached to this report. It has been the subject of consultation and has been approved by the NPT Schools Forum.
4. The current Scheme needs updating to reflect changes in statute and to ensure the continued efficient and effective management of public money.

5. Governing bodies are accountable to the Council for the security, custody and deployment of all resources for which they have been delegated responsibility.
6. The proposed Financing of Schools Scheme applies operational controls to the management of school delegated budgets.
7. It is the officer recommendation that Members determine the proposed Scheme attached to this report.
8. The proposed Scheme conforms to the legislative requirements of the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.

Background

9. The Council has a statutory obligation under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) to prepare and publish a Scheme relating to the financing of the schools it maintains.
10. The Council financially supports its schools by allocating money in the form of schools' budget shares. Governing bodies are responsible managing these delegated monies.
11. The financial controls within which delegation works are set out in the proposed Financing of Schools Scheme attached to this report (appendix A). The Scheme is determined by the Council in accordance with section 48 of the Act and needs to be approved by NPT Schools Forum. The content of the proposed Scheme is in accordance with the requirements of the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.
12. Subject to the provisions of the Scheme, governing bodies of schools may spend their budget shares for the purpose of their school or for any additional purposes that may be prescribed in regulations. As such, the Scheme provides the basis of the financial relationship between the Council and its maintained schools and sets out the financial management arrangements to which both the Council and school governing bodies are required to adhere.
13. In this regard, all schools must comply with the Council's accounting policies and financial regulations, ensuring that proper accounting records are maintained and kept up to date.
- 14.

Proposed Financing of Schools Scheme for determination

15. The Council has responsibility for setting the policy framework for the Education Service and for managing that part of the resources for education which it will retain centrally in accordance with regulations made under section 46 of the Act.
16. Governing bodies have their own statutory duties and powers. A governing body has a general responsibility for ensuring that their school is run effectively and efficiently within the framework set by legislation and policies of the Council.
17. It is the responsibility of each school's governing body to manage its budget share for implementation of the School Development Plan.
18. The intention of the proposed Financing of Schools Scheme is to allow governors and head teachers as much discretion in the management of delegated resources as is consistent with the Council being able to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.
19. The Scheme has been the subject of consultation and has been approved by the NPT Schools Forum.
20. If approved, the Scheme will be effective as of 2016/17 financial year.

Consultation

21. The Council has consulted on its proposed Scheme which was distributed for comment to all head teachers and governing bodies of maintained schools in NPT. The period for submitting responses ran from 21st of October 2015 to 20th November 2015. Two responses were received.
22. In addition, the following have been also been consulted:
 - The primary schools consultative group, LLAN: 6th October 2015
 - The secondary schools consultative group, NAASH: 23rd October 2015
 - NPT Schools Forum: 15th October 2015 & 26th November 2015

The formula which the Council uses to determine schools' budget shares is the subject of a separate consultation process the outcome of which will be reported to Members at a later date.

Consideration of responses to the proposal

23. The responses to the consultation are attached as appendix B. As these are in agreement with the proposed Scheme, no officer commentary is provided.
24. Having considered the responses to consultation, including the approval of the Schools Forum (26th November 2015), it is the opinion of officers that the arrangements are fit for purpose and, as such, Member determination is recommended.

Financial Impact

25. Implementation of the Scheme supports the efficient and effective management of public finances within the Council and across the schools it maintains.
26. Administration of the Scheme falls within the Council's staffing cost envelope and the budget share allocation to schools.

Equality Impact Assessment

31. An equality impact assessment screening has been carried out and it has been determined that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Workforce Impact

32. Management and administration of the Scheme will fall to both the Council and to schools. It is envisaged that there will be a neutral workforce impact consequent upon the implementation of the Scheme as the general staffing complement associated with the delivery of this financial function will need to be maintained.

Legal Impacts

33. Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 states each Local Authority shall prepare a Scheme dealing with such matters connected with the financing of the schools maintained by the Authority.
34. Section 26 and Schedule 4 of the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 lists the required contents of a finance scheme.

35. The proposed Scheme conforms to both these legal requirements.

Risk Management

36. The Council is required to have in place a Scheme for the financial management of the schools it maintains. The current Scheme needs updating to reflect changes in statute and to ensure the continued efficient and effective management of public money.
37. All schools must comply with the Council's accounting policies/instructions and financial regulations together with the accounting codes of practice issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).
38. Schools will be required to provide the Council with details of anticipated (budgeted) and actual expenditure and income.
39. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is responsible for the preparation of the Council's statement of accounts which includes expenditure incurred by schools. Corporate finance will issue a closing timetable and specific guidance to schools outlining the procedures to be followed. Schools must comply with the year-end closure timetable.
40. Governing bodies are accountable to the Council for the security, custody and deployment of all resources for which they have been delegated responsibility.
41. The Council's Internal Auditor may review and appraise any school's financial policies, plans, procedures and records and must be given unlimited access to the school's records, assets and personnel.

Recommendations

42. It is recommended that, in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010, Members determine the Financing of Schools Scheme for maintained schools within the County Borough.
43. The Scheme to take effect as of 2016/17 financial year.

Reasons for the Proposed Decision

44. The existing Scheme needs to be updated to reflect changes in statute.

Implementation of Decision

45. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendix

Appendix A: Proposed Financing of Schools Scheme

Appendix B: Consultation Responses

List of Background Papers

- a. School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- b. Education Act 2002
- c. School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010
- d. Local Government Act 1972

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Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Financing of Schools Scheme

Effective as of 2016/17 financial year

**Under Section 48 of the
School Standards & Framework Act 1998,
as amended by the Education Act 2002**

DRAFT

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 The funding framework

The funding framework which replaced local management of schools is set out in the legislative provisions in sections 45-53 of the Schools Standard and Framework Act 1998 (the Act).

Under this legislation the Council determines the size of the Local Schools Budget (LSB). Included within the LSB is all expenditure, direct and indirect, on an Council's maintained schools. Councils may retain funding for purposes defined in regulations made by the Welsh Ministers under section 46 of the Act. The amounts to be retained centrally are decided by the Council, subject to any limits or conditions prescribed by the Welsh Ministers. The balance remaining is termed Individual Schools Budget (ISB).

The Council must distribute amounts from the ISB amongst the maintained schools according to a formula which accords with regulations made by the Welsh Ministers, and enables the calculation of a budget share for each maintained school. This budget share is then delegated to the governing body of the school concerned, unless the school is a new school which has not yet received a delegated budget, or the right to a delegated budget has been suspended in accordance with section 51 of the Act.

The financial controls within which delegation works are set out in this scheme made by the Council in accordance with section 48 of the Act and approved by the Welsh Ministers. All revisions to the scheme must be approved by Neath Port Talbot schools budget forum.

The distribution of the ISB amongst maintained schools will be by formula in accordance with regulations made under section 47 of the Act and published annually. This formula will enable the calculation of a budget share for each maintained school. This budget share is then delegated to the governing body of the school concerned.

The Council is obliged to publish each year a statement setting out the details of its planned schools budgets and other expenditure on children's services, showing the amounts to be centrally retained and funding delegated to schools.

After each financial year the Council must publish a statement showing the actual out-turn expenditure at both central level and for each school, together with the balances held in respect of each school.

Subject to the provisions of the Scheme, governing bodies of schools may spend budget shares for the purpose of their school or for any additional purposes that may be prescribed in regulations made under section 50(3) of the Act.

A new school shall have a delegated budget as from the school opening date unless determined otherwise within the provision of section 49(3) of the Act.

If the provisions of the scheme are substantially or persistently breached, a budget share has not been satisfactorily managed or intervention is exercised in accordance with sections 14 and 17 of the Act, then delegation may be suspended subject to a right of appeal to the Welsh Government except where supervision is exercised under section 17 of the Act.

1.2 Purpose of the scheme

The Scheme sets out the financial relationship between the Council and its maintained schools.

The Scheme details the financial management arrangements that the Council and its maintained schools are required to adhere to, based on the provisions of sections 45-53 of the Act.

1.3 Application of the scheme to maintained schools

The Scheme applies to all maintained schools within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. The names of the schools, as at 1st September 2015, to which this Scheme applies, are listed in Appendix 1.

Governing bodies are required to observe the Financing of Schools Scheme and to bring them to the attention of all staff within the school

1.4 Publication of the scheme

A copy of the Scheme will be supplied to the head teacher and to the governing body of each school covered by the scheme. The Scheme is also available on the Council's internet site at www.npt.gov.uk/ (to be updated at point of publishing).

1.5 Revision of the scheme

Neath and Port Talbot's Education Department is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Scheme, taking into account any feedback received from schools. The Department is also responsible for revising the Scheme in light of any new legislation and regulations.

Proposed revisions to the Scheme will be the subject of consultation with school governing bodies and head teachers of every school maintained by the Council before they are submitted to the schools forum for their approval.

All proposed revisions must be submitted to the Schools Forum for approval by members of the Forum representing maintained schools. Where the Schools Forum does not approve them or approves them subject to modifications which are not acceptable to the Council, the Council may apply to the Welsh Ministers for approval.

Scheme revisions will be subject to approval by the Neath Port Talbot Schools Forum. The Forum may:

- (a) approve any such proposals;
- (b) approve any such proposals subject to modifications; or
- (c) refuse to approve any such proposals.

Where the Forum approves any revisions to the Scheme, they may specify the date upon which any revised Scheme is to come into force.

Where the Forum refuse to approve proposals submitted under paragraph 2A of Schedule 14 to the 1998 Act, or approve any such proposals subject to modifications which are not acceptable to the Council, the Council may apply to the Welsh Ministers for approval of such proposals.

The Welsh Ministers may:

- (a) approve any such proposals;
- (b) approve any such proposals subject to modifications; or
- (c) refuse to approve any such proposals.

Where the Welsh Ministers approve any such revisions to the Scheme, they may specify the date upon which any revised Scheme is to come into force.

Following revision the updated Scheme will be published on the Council website prior to the date that the revisions come into force.

1.6 The role of the Council and school governing bodies

The Council has responsibility for setting the policy framework for the Education Service and for managing that part of the resources for education which it will retain centrally in accordance with regulations made under section 46 of the Act.

Governing bodies are incorporated and have their own statutory duties and powers. The governing body has a general responsibility for ensuring that the school is run effectively and efficiently within the framework set by legislation and policies of the Council.

It is the responsibility of each school's governing body to manage its budget share for implementation of the School Development Plan.

The intention of the Scheme is to allow governors and head teachers as much discretion in the management of delegated resources as is consistent with the Council being able to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

1.7 Delegation of powers to the head teacher

The governing body is required to consider the extent to which it wishes to delegate its financial powers to the head teacher and to record its decision (and any revisions) in the minutes of the governing body. Any such decision will be subject to any regulations made under section 38 of the Act.

1.8 Maintenance of schools

The Council is responsible for maintaining the schools covered by the scheme, and this includes the duty of defraying all the expenses of maintaining them (except in the case of voluntary aided schools where some of the expenses are, by statute, payable by the governing body). Part of the way a Council maintains its schools is through the funding system put in place under sections 45 to 53 of the Act.

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Section 2: Financial controls

2.1 Application of financial controls to schools

All schools must comply with the Council's accounting policies/instructions and financial regulations and with the accounting codes of practice issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

The Council's accounting policies/instructions and financial regulations can be found at on www.npt.gov.uk.

2.2 Schools provision of financial information and reports to the Council

Schools will be required to provide the Council with details of anticipated (budgeted) and actual expenditure and income. Submission of details will not be required more than once every three months except for those connected with tax or banking reconciliation, unless the Council has notified the school in writing that in its view the school's financial position requires more frequent submission or the school is in its first year of operation.

2.3 Payment of salaries; payment of bills

Schools should refer to the Council's Accounting Instructions Number 2 and 5 on payroll and payment of creditors at all times.

Schools should note the Late Payment by creditors of Commercial Debt (Interest) Act 1998 whereby charges can be made upon individual schools where appropriate. If incurred, such costs will have to be met from the school's delegated budget.

2.4 Control of assets

Each school is required to compile and maintain an inventory of its moveable non-capital assets, in accordance with the Council's financial regulations (Accounting Instruction Number 9 – Inventories, stocks, stores and general security including cash).

Schools are free to determine their own arrangement for keeping a register of assets worth less than £1,000. A register of some form must be kept to satisfy insurance arrangements.

2.5 Accounting policies (Including year-end procedures)

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is responsible for the preparation of the Council's statement of accounts, which includes expenditure incurred by schools.

The accounts must present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the end of the financial year.

In order to achieve this, schools must comply with the Council's accounting policies and financial regulations, ensuring that proper accounting records are maintained and kept up to date.

Corporate finance will issue a closing timetable and specific guidance to schools outlining the procedures to be followed. Schools must comply with the year-end closure timetable.

2.6 Writing off of debts

The governing body is not authorised to write off any debts which remain outstanding and appear irrecoverable. Appropriate authorisation must be obtained from the Council for permission to write off any outstanding debts, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

2.7 Submission of budget plans

Each school is required to submit budget plans showing its intentions for expenditure in the current financial year and the assumptions underpinning the budget plan. The first formal budget plan of each financial year must be approved by the governing body. Schools must submit their formal budget plan showing intended expenditure in the current financial year by no later than 31st May. However in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning an additional period for submission can be granted.

However, in order to comply with best practice and external audit requirements, where a school has not provided its budget information by the 31st May, the Council will incorporate into its budget records the budget share total provided to that school.

The Council will supply all income and expenditure data held that is necessary for efficient planning by schools and a statement showing when this information will be provided throughout the year.

All schools should take full account of estimated deficits/surpluses at the previous 31st March in their budget plan.

2.8 Budget Virement

Governing bodies and head teachers can vire funds between budget heads within their delegated budgets.

Where the governing body is in receipt of specific grants they must comply with the grant conditions relevant to each grant. All such grant virements should be approved by the governing body, committee or head teacher with delegated powers prior to the

commitment of any expenditure. Under the grant conditions schools cannot vire monies to or from delegated budgets with specific grants.

2.9 Central and earmarked funding

In addition to the fund delegated to schools through the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), the Council may make additional allocations available to schools from central funds which are additional to and separate from the schools budget shares.

The additional funds are usually, but not exclusively, in the form of specific grants or for specific expenditure and can only be used for that specific purpose.

These allocations should only be spent on the purposes for which they were given and schools should be able to demonstrate that this requirement has been complied with.

On **NO ACCOUNT** should any funds provided to the school by the Council, or other bodies, be paid into any private funds held by the school, even if the intention is to transfer it in at a later date.

The Council and each school will need to show that funds allocated for specific purpose(s) have been spent only on the purpose(s) for which the funding was given. Failure to satisfy the funding body or auditor will result in the school having to repay such funding.

2.10 Best value

Schools must seek to achieve efficiencies and value for money to optimise the use of their resources and to invest in teaching and learning, taking into account the Council's purchasing, tendering and contracting requirements.

2.11 Audit: general

The governing body is accountable to the Council for the security, custody and deployment of all resources for which it has been delegated responsibility. The governing body is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the school and, hence, for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The scope of the Council's Internal Audit work extends to the entire control environment of the Council, and includes schools. The Internal Auditor may review and appraise any school's financial policies, plans, procedures and records and must be given unlimited access to the school's records, assets and personnel such as he/she may consider relevant to carry out his/her duties outlined under the Local Government Act 1972 (Section 151) and the latest Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The Audit Manager has direct access to, and freedom to, report in his/her own name and without fear or favour to the governing body, head teacher, Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Service and the Council's Audit Committee.

Staff of the Internal Audit Section have authority to:

- Enter at all reasonable times any Council premises or land, to include schools, subject to child protection regulations,
- Have access to all records, documents and correspondence relating to any financial and other transactions of the school,
- Require and receive such explanations as are necessary concerning any matter under examination,
- Require any employee of the school to produce cash, stores or any other Council/school property under his/her control, and
- Have access to records belonging to third parties, such as contractors or partnership agencies, according to the relevant contractual terms.

Each governing body and head teacher is expected to meet any request for information or access to records from both internal and external auditors.

2.12 Separate external audits

Governing bodies may employ their own external auditors to audit their accounts if they wish. The Council will not, however, make any additional funds available for this purpose. Such arrangements will not preclude the Director of Finance and Corporate Services or the Council's internal or external auditor from carrying out any internal or external audit checks he/she feels necessary.

2.13 Audit of voluntary and private funds

Every governing body must ensure the safe and proper custody of any voluntary or private funds, or funds relating to trading organisations entrusted to it, and that all funds are approved firstly by the governing body and thereafter properly accounted for.

A report should be presented to the governing body annually, stating the use made of such funds, the balances held and that each account has been independently audited. The governing body should ensure that the funds are used for the benefit of the pupils or the school. Upon request from the Council's auditors they will be provided with details of such accounts and completed audit certificates.

The school should produce system and procedural notes for the control, management, and operation of the private fund, as outlined in the Financial Regulations and Accounting Instruction 11 (Unofficial Funds). A copy of these should be given to each member of staff that is given responsibility for managing a private fund.

On **NO ACCOUNT** should Council income be paid into the private fund bank account initially and later transferred to the Council account – school private funds and Council funds should not be mixed.

Where any private, voluntary or unofficial fund is administered by the school, it must be recognised that there is a responsibility to protect the interests of the donors and beneficiaries.

2.14 Spending for the purposes of the school

Section.50 (3) of the Act allows governing bodies to spend budget shares for the purposes of the school; this is subject to any provisions of this Scheme.

2.15 Register of business interests

The governing body of each school shall establish a register which lists for each member of the governing body and the head teacher:

- Any business interests they, or any member of their immediate family, may have.
- Details of any other educational establishments that they govern
- Any relationship between school staff and members of the governing body.
- Maintaining an up to date register including notification of all changes
- making necessary enquiries of every governor, head teacher and members of staff at least annually

Members of the governing body may not participate in any decision in which he or she may have a pecuniary interest. Where there is a suggestion of improper influence being exercised the Council may consider the withdrawal of delegation or other appropriate sanctions.

The placing of contracts with e.g. family or friends for improper motives would be likely to be an example of acting in bad faith, which would result in governors forfeiting the protection against personal liability granted by the Act.

The register should be made available for inspection by governors, staff, parents and the Council.

2.16 Purchasing, tendering and contracting requirements

Schools must abide by the latest version of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. They must also abide by the Financial Regulations for purchasing, tendering and contracting matters. Schools should also assess in advance, where relevant, the health and safety competence of contractors taking account of the Council's policies and procedures.

Schools are expected to make use of the Procurement Service contracts where appropriate to ensure that value for money is achieved.

2.17 Application of contracts to schools

Governing bodies are empowered under paragraph 3 of schedule 1 to the Education Act 2002 to enter into contracts, in most cases they do so on behalf of the Council as maintainer of the school and the owner of funds in the budget share.

Other contracts may be made solely on behalf of the governing body, when the governing body has clear statutory obligations-for example, contracts made by aided schools for the employment of staff.

2.18 Capital spending from budget shares

Governing bodies are allowed to use their budget shares to meet the cost of capital expenditure on the school premises, vehicles and equipment. However, should the anticipated capital expenditure by a governing body of a school exceed £15,000 in any one year, the governing body is required to notify the Council and take into account any advice from the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning.

2.19 Notice of concern

The Council sees effective stewardship of the resources available to schools as underpinning the delivery of the curriculum. However, there are occasions when a school is not demonstrating appropriate control and management of its finances and local authority intervention is required. The Council may issue a notice of concern to the governing body of any school it maintains where, in the opinion of the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning:

- the school has failed to comply with any provisions of this Scheme; or
- there are concerns about the standard of financial management; or
- action needs to be taken to safeguard the financial position of the Council or the school; or
- the financial conduct of the school threatens the standard of educational attainment.

Such a notice will set out the reasons and evidence for its being issued and may place on the governing body restrictions, limitations or prohibitions (see also para 4.6) in relation to the management of funds delegated to it. The notice may require the governing body to produce an action plan to address the concerns of the Council.

The notice will clearly state the nature of these requirements and the way in which, and the time by which, such requirements must be complied with in order for the notice to be withdrawn. It will also identify a named officer/advisor who will provide support in scrutinising the school's finance, curriculum and staffing to help in

producing a viable recovery plan. It will also state the actions that the Council may take where the governing body does not comply with the notice.

The Council will not use the notice of concern provision where the situation in respect of a school's standard of management makes withdrawal of delegation appropriate.

2.20 Suspension of delegation

Schedule 15 of the Act, as applied by section 51, provides that suspension of delegation may take place if a school's governing body has persistently or substantially breached a requirement or restriction relating to its delegated budget; or has not managed its budget share satisfactorily.

The Council must send a copy of the notice to the governing body, head teacher and Welsh Government. If such suspension takes place, there is a right of appeal to Welsh Government and the Council is required to review the suspension within a certain period (or may do so earlier if they wish). There is a further right of appeal against refusal to restore the right to a delegated budget.

The principal effect of suspension of the right to a delegated budget is that the governing body loses the right to decide on how the budget should be spent (except to a limited extent, if the Council so decides) and loses the majority of decisions on staffing numbers and allocation.

2.21 Fraud

Please refer to the Anti- fraud, corruption & malpractice policy for schools that is available on www.npt.gov.uk.

The governing body and head teacher must inform all staff of this policy.

Section 3: Instalments of budget share; banking arrangements

3.1 Code of Practice for Treasury Management

The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management which deals with the management of local authorities' cash flows, its borrowings and its investments, the management of associated risks, and the pursuit of the optimum performance or return consistent with those risks.

3.2 Frequency of budget share instalments

For schools using the Council bank account, budget shares will be made available from the start of the financial year. This applies to the schools in the Primary and Special School Sectors.

For schools operating separate bank accounts (Secondary Schools), advances will be available in three instalments across the financial year as follows:

- 1st April
- 1st August
- 1st December.

If these dates fall on a weekend, advance budget share payments will be paid on the Friday before.

3.3 Proportion of budget share payable in each instalment

Each payment will be one third of the total budget share.

3.4 Interest clawback

The Council will clawback interest on cash advances as this leads to a disadvantage to the Council's cash flow position. Schools will be advised of the interest clawback which is then deducted from the termly cash advance. Interest clawback is based on the projected Bank of England's base rate for the period in question. If the actual Bank of England rate differs from the rate used in the projection, this will be adjusted for in the following termly advance.

3.5 Interest on late budget share payments

The Council is required to add interest to late payments of budget share instalments, where such late payment is the result of Council error. The interest rate used will be the Bank of England's base rate.

3.6 Bank and building society accounts

Where schools have external bank accounts they are allowed to retain all interest payable on the account.

When a school opens an external bank account the Council will transfer to the account an amount agreed by both school and Council as the cash balance held by the Council in respect of the school's budget share.

3.7 Restrictions on accounts

The Council remains the owner of the funds in a school bank account until spent (section 49 of the Act).

Schools will only be able to choose a bank approved by the Council. The accounts will be in the name of the Council but 'personalised' with the name of the school.

However, schools may be able to have accounts for budget share purposes in the name of the school rather than the Council.

Council employees and school employees can be signatories for bank accounts. The governing body and head teacher are responsible for ensuring proper governance of bank accounts.

Use of a purchase card or debit card linked to the school bank account will be permitted on the grounds that this is considered a standard method of business payment without extended credit.

3.8 Borrowing by schools

Schools will not be able to make arrangements for overdrafts, loans or any other form of credit including finance leases without prior approval by the Welsh Ministers. Permission would only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Section 4: The treatment of surpluses and deficit balances arising in relation to budget shares

4.1 The right to carry forward surplus balances

Schools can carry forward any surplus balance in year plus/minus any balance brought forward from the previous year.

School surplus balances will be published in the relevant year end statements.

4.2 Reporting on the intended use of surplus balances

Schools are required to produce a statement as to the use that a governing body proposes to make of a surplus school balance which exceeds 5% of the school budget share or £10,000, whichever is the greater. (School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010)

The School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 provides Councils with new powers to direct the governing body as to how to spend a surplus in the school balance for a funding period, if:

- (i) in the case of a primary school the surplus is £50,000 or more; and
- (ii) in the case of a secondary or special school the surplus is £100,000 or more.

The Council may, if the governing body do not comply with such a direction, require the governing body to pay all or part of that surplus to the Council. This will have to be paid from the current year's delegated budget with a corresponding reduction in the school reserve.

4.3 Interest on surplus balances

Surplus balances invested by the Council on behalf of the schools will attract interest. The interest receivable will be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$(a-b) \times c$$

Where

a = Opening balance as at 1ST April

b = Any reduction in balances since 1st April, where applicable

c = Bank of England base rate

Interest will be calculated and paid quarterly.

4.4 Obligation to carry forward deficit balances

Should a school's financial year-end balance be in deficit then that deficit will be carried forward into the following financial year.

School deficit balances will be published in the relevant year end statements.

4.5 Charging of interest on deficit balances

Deficit balances held by the Council on behalf of the schools will attract interest charges. The interest chargeable will be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$(a-b) \times c$$

Where

a = Opening balance as at 1ST April

b = Any reduction in balances since 1st April, where applicable

c = Bank of England base rate

Interest will be calculated and paid quarterly.

4.6 Writing off of deficit balances

Under section 48 of the Schools Standard & Framework Act 1998, the Council is prohibited from writing off the deficit balance of any school.

4.7 Balances of closing and replacement schools

When a school closes, any balance held by the school - whether surplus or deficit - will revert to the Council. Any such balance cannot be transferred to any other school, even where the school is a successor to the closing school.

4.8 Planning for deficit balances

A governing body has no legal right to set a deficit budget without the consent of the Council and should not presume that such consent will be granted.

4.9 Recovery plans

Should the Council give consent for a planned budget deficit, a recovery plan must be submitted to the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning identifying how the deficit will be repaid.

Key features of a recovery plan agreement include:

- the maximum length of time over which a school may repay a deficit is 3 years (i.e. to reach at least a zero balance). Only in exceptional circumstances may a longer period – not exceeding 5 years – be agreed by the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
- a clear and agreed purpose and plan for the deficit arrangement – to be reviewed on an annual basis
- detailed terms and conditions agreed between the governors, head teacher and Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
- a deficit balance cannot be carried for more than 3 years (in exceptional circumstances 5 years). Failure to comply with this provision could result in suspension of delegated powers (see section 2.20 – Suspension of delegation).

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Section 5: Income

5.1 Income from lettings

Schools shall retain income from lettings except when joint use or Private Finance Initiative/Public Private Partnerships (PFI)/(PPP) agreements require otherwise. Income from lettings must not be credited to voluntary or private funds.

Schools can also cross-subsidise lettings for community and voluntary use with income from other lettings, providing that there is no net cost to the budget share.

5.2 Income from fees and charges

Schools may retain income from fees and charges except where a service has been or is provided by the Council from centrally retained funds.

Income arising from fees and charges should be recognised as school income. It should not be paid into voluntary or private funds held by a school.

Schools should pay attention to the Council's policy on fees and charges.

5.3 Income from the sale of assets

Proceeds from the disposal of assets maybe retained by the school where such assets were originally purchased from the delegated budget.

Proceeds from the disposal of assets acquired from non-delegated funds or from the disposal of land or buildings forming part of the school premises and in the ownership of the Council will be retained by the Council.

5.4 Income from fund-raising activities

Schools are allowed to retain income from fund raising activities.

5.5 Administration procedures for the collection of income

Schools must comply with the procedures laid down in the Council's accounting instruction number 8: "The collection and deposit of monies".

Section 6: Charging against school budget shares

6.1 Circumstances in which charges may be made

The following the circumstances dictate when the Council may charge a school's budget without the consent of the governing body, subject to appropriate consultation and notification procedures:

- Premature retirement costs incurred without the prior written agreement of the Council to bear such costs (the amount chargeable being the excess over any amount agreed by the Council).
- Expenditure incurred to secure resignations where the school has not followed Council advice.
- Awards by courts and industrial tribunals against the Council or out of court settlements arising from action or inaction by the governing body contrary to Council advice.
- Health and safety work or capital expenditure for which the Council is liable resulting from a failure of the governing body to undertake required work where sufficient annual funds have been delegated for such work.
- Making good defects in building work funded by capital spending from budget shares without the knowledge or permission of the Council where the Council owns the school premises.
- Recovery of monies due from a school for services provided to the school, where disputes procedure has determined in favour of the Council.
- Recovery of penalties imposed by regulatory authorities, e.g. HMRC, as a result of school negligence.
- The correction of errors in calculating Council charges to school budget shares.
- The cost of educating pupils who are permanently excluded will be fully re-charged from the Education budget in the forthcoming financial year to the point where statutory education ceases.
- Additional transport costs arising from decisions by the governing body on the length of the school day and a failure to notify the Council of non-pupil days.
- Legal costs incurred due to the failure of the governing body to accept the advice of the Council.
- The cost of necessary health and safety training for staff employed by the Council where sufficient funding for such training has been delegated but not carried out.

- Compensation paid to a lender where a school enters into a contract for borrowing beyond its legal powers and the contract is of no effect, or without the prior approval of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services.
- Cost of work done in respect of teacher and LGPS pension remittance and records for schools using non-Council payroll contractors, the charge to be the minimum needed to meet the cost of the Council's compliance with its statutory obligations.
- Costs incurred by the Council in securing provision specified in a Statement of SEN where the governing body of a school fails to secure such provision despite the delegation of funds in respect of that Statement.
- Costs incurred by the Council due to the submission by the school of incorrect data.
- Recovery of amounts spent from specific grants on ineligible purposes.
- Costs incurred by the Council as a result of the governing body being in breach of the terms of a contract.
- Interest due on the late payment of creditor invoices where the delay is caused by the school (Late Payment of Commercial Debt (Interest) Act 1998).
- Costs incurred by the Council or another school as a result of a school withdrawing from a cluster arrangement.

6.2 Charging of salaries at actual cost

The Council must charge salaries of school based staff to school budget shares at actual cost.

Section 7 Taxation

7.1 Value Added Tax

HM Revenue and Customs have agreed that VAT incurred by schools when making any payments via the school's delegated budget is reclaimable by the Council. The exceptions to this rule are:

- a) The school's delegated budget must not be used to purchase items that should be paid via the school fund, in an attempt to save having to pay the VAT;
- b) For **Voluntary Aided schools** the school's delegated budget should not be used to reclaim VAT on invoices which relate to work that is the responsibility of the governing body. If the delegated budget is used to pay such invoices, the VAT is not recoverable by the Council. The gross cost, including the VAT, should be coded to the appropriate financial code.

A full VAT manual can be found online at www.npt.gov.uk.

7.2 Construction Industry Taxation Scheme (CIS)

All payments to contractors undertaking construction based works at school establishments must be paid in accordance with the construction industry to properly account to the HMRC. As the Council manages most of the sub-contractor payments falling under this scheme the Council is required to be compliant with the CIS scheme.

A CIS process document is available on the Council's website at www.npt.gov.uk.

At present school governing bodies are provided with an exemption from compliance with this scheme for payments that they make directly to contractors, but should a change in treatment be announced by HMRC schools will need to comply with such requirements.

Section 8: The provision of services and facilities by the Council

8.1 Provision of services from centrally retained budgets

The Council will determine on what basis services from centrally retained funds will be provided to schools, including premature retirement costs and redundancy payments

The Council will not discriminate in its provision of services on the basis of categories of schools except where:

- Funding has been delegated to some schools only; or
- Such discrimination is justified by differences in statutory duties.

8.2 Provision of services bought back from the Council using delegated budgets

The term of any arrangement with a school to buy services or facilities is limited to a maximum of 5 years from the date of agreement.

When a service is provided for which expenditure cannot be retained centrally by the Council, it is offered at prices which are intended to generate income which is no less than the cost of providing these services. The total cost of the service must be met by the total income, even if schools are charged differentially.

8.3 Packaging

Where the Council is providing services on a buy-back basis for which funding has been delegated, these will be offered in a way which does not unreasonably restrict schools' freedom of choice amongst the services available and, where practicable, this will include provision on a service-by-service basis as well as in a package of services, following consultation with schools.

The Council may wish to consider the possibility of offering a wider package of services to schools at a discount (not less than cost) but would also offer the same services on an individual basis if possible.

8.4 Service level agreements (SLA)

If services or facilities are provided under a SLA - whether free or on a buy back basis - the terms of any such agreement starting on or after the inception of the scheme will be reviewed at least every three years.

Services offered by the Council will be available on a basis which is not related to an extended agreement, as well as on the basis of such agreements.

Where services are provided on an 'ad hoc' basis they may be charged for at a different rate than if provided on the basis of an extended agreement.

8.5 Teachers and local government pension schemes

Teachers Pension's administration is provided by the Teachers Pension's agency. The Council pays over to the agency all employee and employers pension contributions in line with the relevant regulations. Compliance with data protection and other legislative requirements are also adhered to. Regular returns in relation to pensionable earnings and service is shared with this agency.

A similar service with the City and County of Swansea local government pension scheme is provided for non-teaching staff employed by schools.

Should schools contract external payroll providers to the Council, schools will be responsible for ensuring the administration arrangements and payments are made to the relevant pensions body.

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Section 9: Private Finance Initiative (PFI)/Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

There are no PFI/PPP schemes in NPT. Should such a scheme be implemented it will be following consultation with the Director of Finance & Corporate Services.

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Section 10: Insurance cover

Funds for insurance will be retained by the Council and insurance cover purchased on behalf of the schools.

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Section 11: Miscellaneous

11.1 Right of access to information

Governing bodies will be required to supply all financial and other information which might reasonably be required to enable the Council to satisfy itself as to the school's management of its delegated budget share.

11.2 Liability of governors

In regard to section 50(7) of the 1998 Act, individual governors will not incur any personal liability in the exercise of their power to spend the delegated budget share provided they act in good faith.

11.3 Governors' expenses

Under section 50(5) of the Act, only allowances in respect of purposes specified in regulations made under section 19 of the Education Act 2002 may be paid to governors from a school's delegated budget share. All other payments are forbidden.

Schools may not duplicate payments paid by the Welsh Ministers to additional governors appointed by him/her to schools under special measures.

The Council may delegate to the governing body of a school yet to receive a delegated budget, funds to meet governors' expenses.

11.4 Responsibility for legal costs

Legal costs incurred by the governing body (although the responsibility of the Council as part of the cost monitoring of the school unless they relate to the statutory responsibility of voluntary aided school governors for buildings), may be charged to the school's budget unless the governing body act in accordance with the advice of the Council.

In the case of any conflict of interest between a school and the Council, the governing body may use their delegated budget to seek independent legal advice.

11.5 Health and safety

Governing bodies should have due regard to duties placed on the Council in relation to Health and Safety, and the Council's policy on health and safety matters in the management of the budget share.

11.6 Right of attendance for Chief Finance Officer

Governing bodies are required to permit the Chief Finance Officer of the Council, or any officer of the Council nominated by the Chief Finance Officer, to attend meetings of the governing body at which any agenda items are relevant to the exercise of his/her responsibilities.

The Chief Finance Officer's attendance should normally be limited to items which relate to issues of probity or overall financial management; such attendance should not be regarded as routine. The Council should give prior notice of such attendance unless this is impracticable.

11.7 Special educational needs

Schools are required to use their best endeavours in spending the budget share to secure SEN. This is a statutory requirement and it is possible to suspend delegation where a situation is serious enough to warrant it.

11.8 Whistleblowing

Complaints from persons working at a school or from school governors regarding financial management or financial propriety at the school should follow the Council's policy on whistleblowing (available at www.npt.gov).

11.9 Child protection

Schools must be required to release staff to attend child protection case conferences and related events.

11.10 School meals

The Council has a school meals arrears policy with which schools must be in compliance.

Section 12

12.1 Responsibility for repairs and maintenance

Appendix 2 shows what categories of work for which the governing body and the Council will be responsible.

All funding for repair and maintenance was delegated to schools with effect from 1 April 2000, except for funding in respect of capital expenditure, which is retained centrally.

The definition of capital is that used by the Council for financial accounting purposes in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on local authority accounting.

Where in line with the Code of Practice, the Council use a de minimis limit for defining what expenditure is treated as capital and what is treated as revenue, the same limits will be used in defining what is delegated.

For voluntary aided schools, liability for repairs and maintenance (albeit met by delegation of funds through the budget share) is the same as for other maintained schools.

Voluntary aided school governors may continue to be eligible for grants from the Welsh Government in respect of their statutory duties for buildings and premises. In addition, they will have responsibility for their repairs and maintenance items on the same basis as other categories of schools. See section on VAT in relation to voluntary aided schools.

List of Maintained Schools to which the Scheme Applies

School number	School name	Notes	AN (2016/17 & 2017/18)
	Primary schools		
2239	Abbey Primary		53
3313	Alderman Davies CiW Primary		59
2100	Alltwen Primary		34
2235	Awel y Môr Primary		42
2119	Baglan Primary		38
2191	Blaenbaglan Primary		40
2101	Blaendulais Primary		23
2106	Blaengwrach Primary		20
2110	Blaenhonddan Primary		32
3311	Bryncoch CiW Primary		31
2113	Brynhyfryd Primary		23
2150	Catwg Primary		29
2238	Central Primary		55
2230	Cilffriw Primary		30
2232	Coed Hirwaun Primary		22
2233	Coedffranc Primary		62
2129	Creunant Primary		19
2173	Croeserw Primary		25
2134	Crymlyn Primary		8
2236	Crynallt Primary		68
2237	Cwmafan Primary		51
2137	Cwmnedd Primary		30
2138	Cymer Afan Primary		12
2142	Eastern Primary		26
2148	Glyncorwg Primary		19
2144	Gnoll Primary		48
2140	Godre'rgraig Primary		23
2204	Groes Primary		27
2178	Llangiwig Primary		19
2152	Llansawel Primary		19
2155	Maesmarchog Primary		16
2228	Melin Infant	Until Sept 2016	n/a
2160	Melin Junior	Until Sept 2016	n/a
2240	Melin Primary	From Sept 2016	34
2234	Pen Afan Primary		19
2200	Rhos Primary		25
2203	Rhydyfro Primary		24
2161	Sandfields Primary		53

School number	School name		
3310	St Joseph's RC Infant		34
3316	St Joseph's RC Junior		39
3309	St Joseph's RC Primary		29
3314	St Therese's RC Primary		28
2206	Tairgwaith Primary		21
2181	Tonnau Primary		30
2182	Traethmelyn Primary	Until Sept 2016	n/a
2175	Tywyn Primary		52
2221	Wauceirch Primary		30
2213	YGG Y Wern	Until Sept 2017	37
2202	YGG Blaendulais		17
2168	YGG Castell-nedd		48
2205	YGG Cwm Nedd		26
2149	YGG Gwaun Cae Gurwen		25
2218	YGG Pontardawe		51
2158	YGG Rhosafan		45
2231	YGG Tyle'r Ynn		33
2128	YGG Cwmllynfell		13
2208	YGG Trebannws		18
2187	Ynysfach Primary		25
2193	Ynysmaerdy Primary		31
5500	Ysgol Bae Baglan		36
	Ysgol Gymunedol Gymraeg	From Sept 2017	26
	Secondary schools		
4064	Cefn Saeson		184
4065	Cwmtawe		256
4068	Cwrt Sart	Until Sept 2016	n/a
4047	Cymer Afan		128
4067	Dwr-y-Felin		220
4059	Dyffryn		211
4052	Glanafan	Until Sept 2016	n/a
4066	Llangatwg		233
4056	Sandfields	Until Sept 2016	n/a
4601	St Joseph's (inc. 6 th Form)		130 (129)
4060	Ystalyfera (inc. 6 th Form)	Until Sept 2017	206 (127)
5500	Ysgol Bae Baglan	From Sept 2016	220
	Ysgol Gymunedol Gymraeg (inc. 6 th Form)	From Sept 2017	240 (130)
	Special schools		
7008	Ysgol Hendrefelin		n/a
7006	Ysgol Maes Y Coed		n/a

Responsibility for Repairs and Maintenance

Property Management

Responsibilities of governing bodies

Governors are responsible:

- For all those works which are specified in Table 1 as being the responsibility of the governors;
- For liaising with the Council over the planning of any programmed maintenance work to ensure abortive work does not occur;
- For complying with their obligations under Health and Safety legislation and the Council's Electrical Safety Policy. (Documents which will be made available to governors);
- For not using the building in a manner which is prejudicial, by default, omission or otherwise, nor which will adversely affect the insurance cover of the building; nor will it impose additional obligations upon the Council in its capacity as owner;
- For providing the Council with copies of all applications, notices, consents, approvals or licences that relate to the building made or received by the governors; and
- For responding promptly to any requirement for emergency work.

Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is liable:

- For all works for which it is responsible as defined in Table 1
- For liaising with the governors with regard to any planned capital work
- For making good any consequential damage caused by the Council's failure to meet its obligations under the terms of this agreement, which affect the maintenance obligations of the governors.

Limits on governors' action

The governors shall not create any tenancy or licence without the written consent of the Council except that this shall not prevent the use of the school for temporary hiring or licensing in accordance with arrangements agreed with the Council.

The governors shall not adapt, change, extend or demolish any part of the premises without the Council's written consent.

Energy and Water

The governors shall be responsible for payment of the costs incurred in consuming fuel used for heating, lighting or process purposes and the cost of water consumption whether metered or otherwise. Where consumption relates to the provision of services to any part not forming part of the school, the costs shall be fairly apportioned between the school and the other user.

The governors shall be responsible for implementation of the Council's Energy Efficiency Policy (to be made available to schools).

The governors shall be responsible for the operation of all plant and equipment in accordance with the Council's or manufacturer's appropriate standards and shall ensure that it is adequately serviced and maintained in so far as they are liable, in accordance with the operating instructions.

The governors shall be responsible for adequately maintaining and servicing the plant and equipment for which it is responsible under Table 1.

Miscellaneous

The Council will make available to governors documents and manuals that relate to the obligations each will accept under the arrangements set out in this agreement in respect of Health and Safety Policy, Electrical Safety Policy, Energy Management, Codes of Practice for the carrying out of contracting work, including emergency arrangements, Asbestos Code of Practice, Codes for the use of pesticides for ground maintenance and manufacturer or supplier's instructions in the operation of plant and equipment.

Governors should ensure that appropriate training is made available to those staff that may have responsibility for actions involving such policies, procedures or guidance.

Capital/Revenue split – illustrative examples in line with CIPFA Code Of Practice on local authority accounting

The following guidance sets out some illustrative examples of the division of responsibility for building related works between the Council and individual schools. This is not intended to be an absolute definitive document, but a form of guidance on the basis that schools have responsibility for all repairs & maintenance revenue expenditure whilst the Council Authority retains responsibility for expenditure of a capital nature. Further more detailed guidance is available in the document "Responsibility for Repairs and Maintenance in County Schools".

Where there are differences between the Scheme and "Responsibility for Repairs and Maintenance in County Schools", the information in the Scheme takes precedence.

Where specific guidance is needed on the classification of expenditure, then further advice should be sought from the Council's Corporate Accountancy team. The Council's decision on the classification of expenditure as either revenue or capital, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on local authority accounting, shall be final.

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Table 1

Element	Capital: As CIPFA Code of Practice	Revenue: Repairs & Maintenance	VA School Governors' Responsibilities (Full Details in DfES Document 'Determination of Financial Liability')
Roofs <u>Flat</u>	Structure. New (not replacement) structure	Repair/replacement of small parts of an existing structure.	New structure and repair/replacement of structure
	Structure. Replacement of all or substantial part of an existing structure.	Replace small areas of rotten or defective timber; make good minor area of spalling concrete where reinforcing bars exposed.	Replacement of structure.
	Screed/insulation in a new building/extension	Repair/replacement of screed/insulation where defective.	New screed/insulation and repairs
	Finish on new build. Replacement of all/substantially all on existing roof.	Recoating/Patching areas of roof finish on existing building.	Finish on new build. Replacement of roof finish on existing buildings. Recoating.
	Edge trim/fascia on new build.	Repairs/replacement of individual sections. Repainting.	Edge trim/fascia on new build and repairs/replacement/repainting.
	Edge trim/fascia, replacement of all/substantially all on existing roof.	Repairs/replacement of individual sections. Repainting.	Replacement of edge trim/fascia on existing building
	Drainage on new build	Clearing out gutters and downpipes. Replacement/repair/repainting of individual gutters/pipes.	Drainage on new building and repairs/replacement/repainting (NOT cleaning gutters/downpipes).
	Other, e.g. Flashings and roof lights on new build. Replacement of all/substantially all on existing roof.	Repair/replacement/cleaning of individual items.	Flashings/roof lights on new building and repair/replacement (NOT cleaning).
<u>Pitched</u>	Structure. New (not replacement) structure.	Repair/replacement of small parts of an existing structure.	Structure of new roofs and all repairs EXCEPT trusses (i.e. internal repairs).

Element	Capital: As CIPFA Code of Practice	Revenue: Repairs & Maintenance	VA School Governors' Responsibilities (Full Details in DfES Document 'Determination of Financial Liability')
	Structure. Replacement of all of substantial part of an existing structure.	Replace/repair small areas of rotten/defective joists, rafters, purlins, etc.	Replacement of internal structure EXCEPT trusses (i.e. internal repairs).
	Insulation in a new building extension.	Repair/replacement/increasing thickness of insulation in individual sections of existing roof.	Insulation in new building and repair replacement.
	Insulation. Replacement/enhancement of substantially all. Improve insulation to current standards.		Repair/replacement of improve insulation.
	Roof finish in a new building/extension replacement of all/substantially all on existing roof.	Replace missing/damaged.	Finish in new building/extension and repair replacement in existing building.
	Bargeboards/fascia in a new building extension, replacement of all/substantially all on existing roof.	Repairs/replacement/re-painting	Bargeboards/fascias in new building/extension and repairs/replacement/re-painting in existing building.
	Drainage in a new building/extension.	Clearing out gutters and downpipes. Replacement/repairs of individual pipes and gutters.	Drainage in new building/extension and repair/replacement (NOT cleaning guttering or downpipes).
	Drainage replacement of all/substantially all on existing roof.		Drainage replacement in existing roof.
	Other, e.g. flashings and roof window in new building/extension, replacement of all on existing roof	Repair/replacement/cleaning	Flashings, roof window in new building/extension and repair/replacement (NOT cleaning in existing roof).

Element	Capital: As CIPFA Code of Practice	Revenue: Repairs & Maintenance	VA School Governors' Responsibilities (Full Details in DfES Document 'Determination of Financial Liability')
<u>Other</u>	Provide new covered link etc. between existing buildings.	Minor repairs, maintenance to existing covered link.	Provide new covered link and repairs to existing (NOT cleaning). Rebuild or repair structure of existing covered link.
	Rebuild or substantially improve structure or existing covered link		Rebuild or improve structure of existing covered link.
	Add porch etc. to existing building.	Minor repairs, maintenance to existing.	Add new porch and minor repairs to existing.
	Rebuild or substantially improve structure or existing porch		Rebuild or repair existing porch.
Floors <u>Ground Floor</u>	Structure and dpc in new building	Repair/replacement of small parts of an existing structure	Structure and dpc of new building and replacement of existing structure.
	Structure and dpc – replacement of all or substantial part of an existing structure.	Replacement and repair of screed and finishes/replacement of mats/matwells. Maintenance, e.g. re-varnishing wooden floors.	Provide screed and finish in new buildings (NOT repairs to finishes, matwells, etc).
<u>Upper Floor</u>	Structure – as ground floor.	As ground floor.	Structure of new buildings and replacement of existing structure.
	Screed and finish – as ground floor	Repairs of finishes/replacement – as ground floor.	As ground floor.
Ceilings <u>Top/Only storey</u>	Suspension	Repair/replacement including from water damage and necessary decoration.	Provision (NOT repair or replacement).
	Membrane		Provision (NOT repair of replacement).
	Fixed	Repair/replacement including from water damage	Provision (NOT repair or replacement).
	Access panels	Repair/replacement	Provision (NOT repair or replacement).

Element	Capital: As CIPFA Code of Practice	Revenue: Repairs & Maintenance	VA School Governors' Responsibilities (Full Details in DfES Document 'Determination of Financial Liability')
<u>Lower Storey</u>	Suspension	Repair/replacement	Provision (NOT repair or replacement)
	Membrane		Provision (NOT repair or replacement)
	Fixed	Repair/replacement	Provision (NOT repair or replacement)
<u>All</u>	Specialist removal/replacement of damaged/disturbed asbestos based materials, planned or emergency	Inspection/air testing. Applying sealant coats to asbestos surfaces for protection.	Removal/replacement of damaged/disturbed asbestos EXCEPT where part of repair project
External Walls <u>Masonry/Cladding</u>	Structure underpinning/ propping for new build	Repairs. Preventative measures, e.g. tree removal	Structure underpinning/propping of new building and repairs (NOT tree removal unless part of clearing new site).
	External finish on new build.	Repair/replacement of small parts of an existing structure –, e.g. repointing/recladding a proportion of a wall where failure has occurred	External finish on new building and repairs/ replacement of existing structure including repointing/recladding
	External finish on existing build where substantial part of the building needs enhancing.	Minor repointing on individual sections of the building.	Substantial improvements to external finish on existing building.
<u>Windows and Doors</u>	Framing – new build	Repair/replacement of individual frames. Repainting frames.	New window frames and doors in new building and repairs/replacement (NOT replacement/repair/repainting of internal doors or windows).
	Framing – structural replacement programme where replacement is an enhancement of the previous framing.	Repair/replacement of individual windows. Repairing frames.	New windows in replacement programme.

Element	Capital: As CIPFA Code of Practice	Revenue: Repairs & Maintenance	VA School Governors' Responsibilities (Full Details in DfES Document 'Determination of Financial Liability')
	Glazing – new build.	Replacing broken glass.	Glazing new building and replace broken glass.
	Glazing – upgrading existing glazing.	Replacing broken glass.	Upgrading existing glazing.
		Repair/replacement upgrading locks, etc.	
	Internal and external decoration to new build.	Internal and external decoration to include cleaning down and preparation.	Internal and external decoration of new provision, external re-decoration (NOT internal re-decoration).
<u>Masonry Chimneys</u>	Substantial enhancement of existing structure	Repair/repointing	Substantial enhancement of existing structure and repair/repointing.
<u>Internal Walls Solid</u>	Complete including various internal finishes, linings and decoration	Repair and redecoration to internal plaster/linings tiles, pin boards, etc.	New walls and finishes (NOT repair/replacement).
	Substantial refurbishment and alterations	Minor alterations	
<u>Partitions</u>	Complete structure including linings, framing, glazing, decoration etc.	Repairs and re-decoration	New partitions (NOT repair/replacement)
	Substantial refurbishment and alterations	Minor alterations	
<u>Doors and screens</u>	Framing/screens/doors to new buildings including glazing, ironmongery, jointing and internal decoration	Internal maintenance and redecoration. Repair/replacement of defective doors and screens	Provision of new (NOT repair/replacement)
<u>Sanitary Services</u>	In new buildings provision of all toilet fittings, waste plumbing and internal drainage.	Repair/replacement of damaged sanitary ware, fittings, waste plumbing, etc.	Provision (NOT repair/replacement of damaged sanitary ware).

Element	Capital: As CIPFA Code of Practice	Revenue: Repairs & Maintenance	VA School Governors' Responsibilities (Full Details in DfES Document 'Determination of Financial Liability')
	Large scale toilet refurbishment	Small areas of refurbishment	Provision/refurbishment (NOT replacement of damaged sanitary ware).
	Provision of disabled facilities and specialist facilities related to pupils with statements	Repair/replacement of damaged fittings, waste plumbing etc.	Provision (NOT repair/replacement of damaged fittings, etc.).
<u>Kitchens</u>	Kitchens in new buildings, complete with fittings, equipment, waste plumbing and internal drainage. Internal finishes and decorations	Maintain kitchen to requirements of LA. Cleaning out drainage systems. Re-decoration.	
	General substantial refurbishment	Repairs	
	Large and costly items of equipment	Repairs/replacement parts	
Mechanical Services <u>Heating/</u> <u>Hot</u> <u>Water</u>	Complete heating and hot water systems to new projects; including fuel, storage, controls, distribution, flues, etc.	General maintenance of all boiler house plant including replacement of defective parts, regular servicing and regular cleaning.	Provision of complete system (NOT repair/replacement or maintenance).
	Safe removal of old/damaged asbestos boiler and pipework insulation, where risk to Health and Safety	Monitoring systems. Health and Safety issues.	
	Planned replacement of old boiler/control systems past the end of the useful life.	Replacement of defective parts.	
	Emergency replacement of boiler plant/systems		

Element	Capital: As CIPFA Code of Practice	Revenue: Repairs & Maintenance	VA School Governors' Responsibilities (Full Details in DfES Document 'Determination of Financial Liability')
<u>Cold Water</u>	Provision of cold water services, storage tanks, distribution, boosters, hose reels, etc. in major projects.	Maintenance and repair/replacement of defective parts such as servicing pipes. Annual servicing of cold water tanks.	Provision of complete system (NOT repair/replacement or maintenance).
<u>Gas</u>	Distribution of new and major refurbishment, terminal units	Repairs, maintenance and gas safety. All servicing.	
<u>Ventilation</u>	Mechanical ventilation/air conditioning to major projects.	Provision of local ventilation. Repair/replacement of defective systems and units.	Provision (NOT repair/replacement).
<u>Other</u>	Swimming pool plant and its complete installation, including heat recovery systems	Repair/replacement of parts to plant, pumps and controls. Water treatment equipment and all distribution pipework. Simple heat recovery systems. Solar heating plant and equipment.	If governors provided.
Electrical Services General	Main switchgear and distribution in major projects	Testing/replacement of distribution boards. The repair and maintenance of all switchgear and interconnecting cables including that in temporary buildings.	Provision (NOT repair/replacement or maintenance).
	Replacement of obsolete and dangerous wiring systems, including distribution boards.	All testing, earthing and bonding to meet Health and Safety. All servicing.	
<u>Power</u>	Control gear, distribution, fixed equipment, protection etc.	All testing, repair and replacement of small items of equipment.	Provision (NOT repair/replacement).
<u>Lighting</u>	Provision of luminaires and emergency.	Replacement of luminaires, all testing, adjustments and improvements to emergency.	Provision (NOT repair/replacement).

Element	Capital: As CIPFA Code of Practice	Revenue: Repairs & Maintenance	VA School Governors' Responsibilities (Full Details in DfES Document 'Determination of Financial Liability')
<u>Other</u>	Lighting protection in new build	Repair/replacement	Provision and repair
	Alarm systems, CCTV, lifts, hoists, etc.	Repair and maintenance	Provision (NOT repair or maintenance).
	New installation of communication systems, radio/TV, call, telephone, data transmission, IT etc. and provision in new build	Repair/replacement/maintenance including all door access systems.	
External Works <u>Pavings</u>	Provision of new roads, car parks, paths, court terraces, play pitches, steps and handrails, as part of major project including disabled access.	Maintenance and repair car park and playground markings	Provision if part of statutory proposal project (NOT repair or maintenance). Provision and repair of ramps and steps.
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	Provision of walls, fencing, gates and ancillary buildings as part of major project.	Maintenance and repair of all perimeter/boundary/retaining walls, fencing and gates.	
<u>Drainage</u>	Drains, soakaways, inspection chambers and sewage plant as part of new projects.	Maintenance and repair of drains, gullies, grease traps and manholes between buildings and main sewers. Cleaning of the above and unblocking as necessary.	Foul drainage plus external gutters and drainpipes (NOT maintenance).
<u>Open Air Pools</u>	Structure, hygiene/safety in new build	Hygiene, cleaning, maintenance and repairs, including replacement parts. Simple energy savings	If governors provided.

Consultation response

Please provide your comments on the proposals for reviewing the Financing of Schools Scheme.

Indicate below which of the following reflects your views on the proposals:

	Please tick
a. Agree with the proposed revision of the financing of schools scheme	✓
b. Disagree with the proposed revision of the financing of schools scheme	

If you have ticked that you disagree with any of the above proposals, please give your reasons in the box below/overleaf and/or on a separate sheet, if required.

Signature: S L Sharp Print name: S L SHARP
 Address: Blaengwrach Position/ Headteacher
Primary, Organisation _____
Cwmwrach
 Date: 22/10/15

Please detach this form and return to:
 Aled Evans, Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
 Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ

Marked for the attention of:
 Nicole Blackmore, Group Accountant at the above address
 or e-mail n.l.blackmore@npt.gov.uk

All comments must be received by no later than: Friday, 20.11.15

Appendix B1

Consultation response

Please provide your comments on the proposals for reviewing the Financing of Schools Scheme.

Indicate below which of the following reflects your views on the proposals:

	Please tick
a. Agree with the proposed revision of the financing of schools scheme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Disagree with the proposed revision of the financing of schools scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have ticked that you disagree with any of the above proposals, please give your reasons in the box below/overleaf and/or on a separate sheet, if required.

Signature: *P. R. Nedin* Print name: P. R. NEDIN
Address: 2/0 Tynysmaerdy Position/ Chair
C.P.S. Organisation Tynysmaerdy C.P.S.
Neath Road, Governing Body
Briton Ferry.
Date: 20-11-15

Please detach this form and return to:

Aled Evans, Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ

Marked for the attention of:

Nicole Blackmore, Group Accountant at the above address
or e-mail n.i.blackmore@npt.gov.uk

All comments must be received by no later than: Friday, 20.11.15

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children, Young People & Education Cabinet Board

28th April 2016

Report of the Head of Participation – Chris Millis

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Play Sufficiency Assessment & Play Strategy

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Member approval for the implementation of an action plan and supporting Play Strategy developed from the Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Play Sufficiency Assessment.

Executive Summary

2. Local authorities in Wales have a duty to assess for and secure opportunities for children's play, and to submit their assessment and action plan to Welsh Government on a three year cycle. This report seeks Member's approval for the action plan drawn from the Play Sufficiency Assessment to be implemented.

The report also seeks approval for a revised Play Strategy for NPT, which provides a local context to the requirements of the duty and highlights key issues raised through local consultation.

Background

3. The Children & Families (Wales) Measure places a new duty on local authorities in Wales to assess for and secure sufficient play opportunities for children and young people in their area.

As part of this, authorities are required to conduct a Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) on a three year cycle, to be submitted to Welsh Government (WG). Annual action plans and monitoring reports are required to be sent to WG between Assessments.

An independent consultant was appointed to undertake the assessment, in accordance with the Statutory Guidance and Regulations, and to develop an action plan in conjunction with the Play Strategy Implementation Group.

The assessment considers a number of matters affecting children's play, as identified in the Statutory Guidance, Regulations and supporting Toolkit, namely:

- Matter A Population
- Matter B Providing for diverse needs
- Matter C Space available for children to play
- Matter D Supervised provision
- Matter E Charges for play provision
- Matter F Access to space/provision
- Matter G Securing and developing the play workforce
- Matter H Community engagement and participation
- Matter I Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

The action plan developed for NPT has a focus on improving the quality of the play provision on offer – that of existing provision and of future developments – and on encouraging children, young people and families to utilise what is available to them. No additional funding has been made available from Welsh Government for this delivery, therefore, it is important that we make best use of the existing resources.

Successful implementation of the action plan will require support and co-operation from all directorates. The implementation will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Play Strategy Implementation Group, which currently has representation from key Directorates and from Third Sector partners. A review of the membership is planned as part of the action plan to ensure that appropriate representation is made at the group throughout the ongoing work.

Financial Impact

4. The action plan identifies whether recommendations can be achieved within existing resources or whether new finances would need to be in place in order to progress these. Actions requiring new finance would not be progressed without additional funding sources being in place.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the initial screening assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impacts

5. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

6. There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

7. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation

8. This item has been subject to external consultation, which is required by WG as part of the assessment process. As part of this the following consultation was undertaken:

Stakeholder Workshop - To communicate with available existing and potential stakeholders the overall process and aims of the Play Sufficiency Assessment, raising awareness of the process among stakeholders and clarifying suitable levels of future involvement in the undertaking of the assessment and the development and delivering of the action plan.

Focus Groups - To obtain qualitative data, a number of focus groups were convened with children and young people (including looked after children, traveller children and children with disabilities), and also with playworkers.

Questionnaires - Online questionnaires aimed at children and young people, parent, carers and residents to collect quantitative data.

Play Shapers Drop in Session - Targeting groups engaging in initiatives that enhance play opportunities - youth groups, school councils, school governing bodies, etc.

The consultation helped to form the responses within the toolkit document and also the recommendations within the action plan. Further details of the responses are contained within the PSA Summary Report (Appendix 4).

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Play Sufficiency Assessment action plan and Play Strategy be approved to provide priorities for the delivery and development of play in Neath Port Talbot.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

9. Undertaking a Play Sufficiency Assessment and developing an accompanying action plan is a statutory duty for all local authorities in Wales.

The action plan has been developed to help ensure that we maximise the available resources for play to improve the quality of the provision offered across the county.

Implementation of Decision

10. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

11. Appendix 1 - Action Plan
12. Appendix 2 - link to Play Strategy
<http://www.playworksnppt.co.uk/pdf/Play%20Strategy%202016.pdf> (a copy will be available in the Members' room)
13. Appendix 3 - link to Play Sufficiency Assessment
http://www.playworksnppt.co.uk/pdf/Neath%20Port%20Talbot%20County%20Borough%20Council_Play%20Sufficiency%20Assessment.pdf (a copy will be available in the Members' room)
14. Appendix 4 - link to Play Sufficiency Assessment Summary Report
http://www.playworksnppt.co.uk/pdf/Play%20Sufficiency%20Assessment%20Summary%20Report_LR.pdf (a copy will be available in the Members' room)

List of Background Papers

15. Equality Impact Assessment Screening Tool.

Officer Contact

Chris Millis Head of Participation, Telephone 01639 763226 e-mail c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk

Neil Thomas Participation Co-Ordinator, Telephone 01639 686376 e-mail n.g.thomas@npt.gov.uk

Allison Harris, Play Manager, Telephone 01639 873002, email a.t.harris@npt.gov.uk

Actions to be taken to address the issues / shortcomings recorded in the Play Sufficiency Assessment

Proposed actions for the period of 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017

(Funding source: funding from existing Local Authority budgets and to be included in the Single Integrated Plan).

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
Statutory Guidance-policy framework	N/A	To have a clear standard for 'sufficiency' in order to identify and prioritise areas requiring improvement.	Develop and agree a standard for the sufficiency of play provision in Neath Port Talbot – both of quality and quantity.	Identify standards from other authorities – February 2016 Agree at Play Strategy Implementation	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
				Group (PSIG) – April 2016 Approval by Members – May 2016		
			Support and enable existing provision, including schools, childcare providers and community councils, to respond to identified gaps in provision.	Identify gaps in line with 'standard' – June 2016 Contact local providers to discuss – July 2016	Officer time	Existing
		Improve project/service	Obtain a clear understanding of funding	Annual risk register and	Officer time - PSIG	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		sustainability and reduce reliance on the same grant funding across a wide range of project and initiatives.	streams and potential 'end' dates. Understand risks to funding loss.	assessment of funding – Initial assessment April 2016, then annually in January.		
		Continued partnership working and sharing of information with third sector organisations.	Use the Play Strategy Implementation Group as a forum for sharing information. Reach out to organisations not represented on the Group.	Review of PSIG membership to ensure third sector rep – April 2016 Invite as appropriate to fill identified gaps - May 2016	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		Use the Single Integrated Plan as a tool for advocacy and getting play on the wider Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council agenda.	Play Strategy Implementation Group to develop an outline communication strategy focused on raising awareness of the benefits of play within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.	Identify mechanism for feeding into SIP	Officer time	Existing
		Widen the participation of decision makers in the Play Strategy Implementation	Play Strategy Implementation Group to identify decision makers to invite onto the group. Find a way of highlighting	Review of PSIG membership to ensure third sector rep – April 2016 Invite as	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		Group.	the benefits of membership and play to that individual / Council team.	appropriate to fill identified gaps - May 2016		
Matter A: Population	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5	Use population and demographic data to support the strategic development and enhancement of play provision.	Maintain and update demographic data mapping systems.	Update in line with PSA renewal - 2019	Officer time	Existing
			Work in partnership with Council's data unit to update and review data	Identify gaps in data available – April 2016 Contact data unit and Corporate Strategy to address - 2016	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			Seek to build links with organisations that work with children and families from other cultural organisations to build a better understanding of these populations.			
	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5	Ensure that the quantity of play provision is sufficient for changing populations	Respond to planning application consultations to advise of the potential impact on play and to secure additional funds, where appropriate.	Respond with information from PSA – as required	Officer time	Existing
Matter B: Providing	B1-4,B8-	To understand the play needs of children	Ensure consultation and engagement takes place	Agree the 'type' of decisions to be	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
for diverse needs	10	and young people with diverse needs are understood and provided for:	with children, young people and families with diverse needs, in decisions relating to play.	included. Agree a mechanism for consultation and feedback	Potential additional resource required	New
		Rural area Welsh language Cultural backgrounds Disabilities Young Carers Gypsy & Travellers LGBT	Work in partnership with existing organisations that engage with specific groups such as Crossroads and Swansea Bay LGBT Forum. Promote existing provision in rural areas.	Ensure Equality Impact Assessments are properly completed and considered, where required. Outline existing provision (FIS) Work with		

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
				organisations in rural areas to promote to families	Officer time	Existing
			Work with gypsy traveller communities to support the development of play provision on site.	Identify potential funding to develop Work with Gypsy Traveller Forum/Liaison Officer to consult	Time	New
			Liaise with Children with Disabilities Group to share information relating to play for disabled children.	Contact group for response	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			Ensure resources, information and promotion is available bi-lingually	Undertake an assessment of existing resources, considering language and life cycle of that publication identify if it should be translated or withdrawn.	Time and finances for translation and production.	New
	B6. B7.	Understand and remove barriers to accessibility at all play provision	Improve provision and accessibility of outdoor play for disabled children.	Develop an accessibility checker to ensure that consideration is given to the play needs of disabled children as part of	Officer time Potentially will require additional/	Existing New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
				<p>new/refurbished playgrounds.</p> <p>Develop a criteria for accessible outdoor play for children with disabilities</p>	more expensive equipment	
			<p>Develop a self-assessment system for supervised play settings to undertake access audits on an annual basis. (Inclusion audit)</p>	<p>Develop tool – Feb 2016</p> <p>Launch online – April 2016</p> <p>Address shortfalls – 2016/17</p>	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Financial to address issues</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>New</p>

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
	B2.	Support the sustainability of existing Welsh language and bilingual provision.	<p>Help Welsh language and bilingual provision to find potential markets and customers.</p> <p>Promote Welsh language and bilingual provision.</p> <p>Work in partnership with Welsh Language schools and other organisations.</p>	<p>Clarify if Welsh/bilingual provision is clearly identifiable on FIS.</p> <p>Promote FIS through Welsh schools and organisations etc.</p>	Officer time	Existing
	B5	Play projects and providers have access to a range of resources which	Work with Childcare & Early Years to encourage childcare providers to participate in inclusion	<p>Inclusion training in approp. prog.</p> <p>Attendance</p>	Trainer	New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		support inclusion.	training.			
			Ensure resources – information leaflets, online support, Play Takeaway – promote inclusion. B5	'Audit' of current position – develop tool Action plan to address issues	Officer time	Existing
	B6.	Consider the possibility of developing an agreed mechanism to identify the need for separate provision for disable children.	Think Families Partnership Children and Disabilities Group to consider, discuss and if deemed appropriate develop an approach in year 2.	Contact group to understand how the group learn about the needs of these children and clarify whether this include play.	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
	B7.	Launch of the self-assessment tool for supervised play provision access audits.	<p>Finalise the self-assessment tool.</p> <p>Promote and encourage providers to complete by highlighting the benefits of participation.</p> <p>Put in place a framework for reviewing the assessments and identifying key areas of focus for the future.</p>	<p>Finalise tool – March 2016</p> <p>Launch online – April 2016</p> <p>Address shortfalls – 2016/17</p>	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Financial to address issues</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>New</p>
Matter C: Space available for	Matter C	Encourage children and young people to use safe open space, as well as defined	Help children, young people, families and community's to understand children can play in places	Campaign to promote Playful Community messages – in line	<p>Promotional materials</p> <p>Officer time</p>	New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
children to play		play spaces, to play.	other defined play areas.	with Playday 2016		
			Raise awareness of existing provision among children, young people and families – strategy to promote and raise awareness.	Annual update of GIS map of provision.		
	C7. C8. C9.	Improve the quality and value of outdoor play spaces.	Continue to undertake audits of designated play spaces (value).	Annual audits – March	Officer time for visits and write up	New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			<p>Undertake access audits for play as part of inspections at Council play sites.</p>	<p>Agree content for audit Pilot audit Agree schedule with Parks Dept. Roll out with agreed feedback mechanism</p>	<p>Write up Training for inspectors Finances where improvements need to be made.</p>	<p>Existing in order to complete New to make changes</p>
			<p>Engage with children through Play Heroes to develop a criterion for a quality unequipped open space. Use this assessment tool to</p>			<p>Existing in order to complete</p>

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			identify areas which meet this criterion – consider signposting children and young people to these sites.			New to make changes
			Identify priority play areas for improvement. Work in partnership with Community Councils and NPT Homes to respond to identify gaps in provision.	Identification of sites (from value scores/Ward profile?) Meet potential partners to discuss improvements	Officer time Financial in order to make changes	Existing New to make changes
Matter D:	D7. D3.	Provision of high	Contribute to discussions	Continue to	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
Supervised provision		quality supervised play opportunities.	and developments nationally around the development of a quality assurance scheme for play.	monitor and feed into discussions at national level		
			Consider developing a specific quality standard for play provision in Neath Port Talbot.	Identify other examples of quality standard. Work with settings to develop an appropriate standard for NPT Pilot standard Launch and roll out	Officer time New resources	Existing New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			Support providers and the workforce to participate in appropriate play training and CPD to ensure quality.	<p>Promote existing training opportunities widely.</p> <p>Understand needs of the workforce and provide training as required.</p>	<p>Officer time</p> <p>New training courses/quals</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>New</p>
			Youth Services to provide opportunities for young people to access play.	<p>Include youth provision in quality standard</p> <p>Promote training opportunities to</p>	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Time/cover</p>	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
				youth workers	costs	
	D6.	Ensure provision meets regulatory requirements and CSSIW minimum standards	Support providers to prepare for the forthcoming changes in minimum standards / CSSIW registration.	Information sharing with providers – workshops etc. – in line with new developments	Officer time	Existing
Matter E: Charges for Play Provision	E5. E7.	Protect free and low cost provision.	Continue promote free and low cost play provision through the Family Information Service and partners.	Promote FIS to providers to ensure service details are represented.	Officer time	Existing
			Use Family Information Service, Play Works, Social	Agree link details	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			Media and other communications forums to sign post providers and organisations to Wales CVS searchable online funding database.	with CVS. Add to relevant websites etc.		
Matter F: Access to Space / Provision	Statutory Requirements. F2.	Widen the participation of decision makers in the Play Strategy Implementation Group.	Invite Transport and Highways to join the Play Strategy Implementation Group.	Invite to HOS for Transport and Highways to identify appropriate representative. – May 2016 Add to distribution list and TOR – May 2016	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			Work with key council departments to help them understand their impact on play and how they can support play in the future.	Identify key council departments and the benefits to them and to children in supporting play. Meet to discuss.	Officer time	Existing
	F6. F7.	Ensure provision/opportunities are easily accessible for children, young people and families	Identify priority sites for access improvements using GIS mapping and demographic data tools.	Analyse access audit findings and scores from play space assessments to identify sites. Prioritise sites and cost up required	Officer time Financial for required	Existing New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
				work	work	
			<p>Promote safe routes to provision.</p> <p>Work with Road Safety to understand the use of Safe Routes in Communities funding and its impact on children's play.</p>	Road Safety and Environmental Change (walking routes) to be invited to PSIG to provide info on this.	Officer time	Existing
	F13.	Develop a strategy to promote play opportunities to parents.	Seek routes to parents, children and young people by working in partnerships with schools, childcare providers, sports teams and	Understand what promotion is currently undertaken and for	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			other groups.	what. Identify gaps and plan to address these.	Additional time/ Promotional materials	New
Matter G: Securing and developing the workforce	G1.	Understand the scope, skills and needs of the play workforce	Audit of the play workforce Undertake an online survey of the play workforce to identify training needs.	Update and complete previous scope of play workforce Develop and distribute survey tool	Officer time Time and resource	Existing Potentially new
	G6.	Provide a range of play training and	Increase participation and awareness of training	Distribute info on training	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		qualifications to meet the needs of the local play workforce	opportunities.	opportunities widely. Create circulation list for central distribution		
			Secure funding for future play training and work force development.	Work with local training providers to identify and secure funding to meet needs	Officer time	
			Support and enable an inclusive approach to play through training and engagement.	Ensure training programmes include appropriate	Officer time Cost of trainer	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
				inclusion training Ensure training opportunities are inclusive		
	G2.	Ensure the workforce is prepared for the forthcoming WAG Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce in Wales Strategy.	Monitor developments and raise awareness of implications for workforce.	Clarify how updates are to be received. Feedback to be raised at PSIG.	Officer time	Existing
			Support providers to plan and prepare for changes.	Information sharing with providers – events etc.	Officer time	Potentially new

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
	G8. G9. G10. G11.	Learning from best practice, seek to find ways to replicate and / or improve access to projects and initiatives that are working.	Find relevant examples and go and see them at work, to understand their approach. Develop a method for capturing and sharing this experience and information.			
Matter H: Community engagement and participation	H2.	Promote community engagement in positive attitudes towards play.	Challenge perceptions of play and provision. Work with local communities to raise awareness of the benefits of play and support access to provision and the	Campaign to promote Playful Community messages – in line with Playday 2016	Promotional materials Officer time	New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			delivery of events.			
	H1.	Continue to seek routes for meaningful participation and consultation with schools in order to enhance play at school.	<p>Liaise with education department.</p> <p>Talk to schools engaged with Play Hero initiative to find out what schools require.</p> <p>Develop an approach for implementation in year 2.</p>	<p>Identify appropriate rep from Education and discuss possible options.</p> <p>Discuss with Play Hero schools</p> <p>Develop plan based on feedback</p>	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Resources to support plan delivery</p>	<p>Existing</p> <p>New</p>
	H2.	Work with local communities to raise	Work with the Youth Council and Play Heroes to			

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		awareness of the benefits of play and support access to provision and the delivery of events.	<p>find in routes to key communities.</p> <p>Talk to community based organisations about how to work with specific groups.</p> <p>Develop an approach for implementation in year 2.</p>			
	H2.	Promote the importance and benefits of meaningful engagement and participation across all decision making which impact on play.	<p>Promote training opportunities about the importance of play.</p> <p>Provide training to support effective participation and engagement.</p>		Officer time Trainer	Existing New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas	12. 13. 16.	Ensure quality play opportunities are provided and promoted through education and schools.	Promote training opportunities to schools – teaching and non-teaching staff.	Understand best method of circulation Circulate training programme	Officer time Costs to staff attending	Existing New
			Support schools to share examples of best practise and the benefits of play.	Identify good practice examples Agree how to best share these – link to guidance development	Officer time Possible cost of resources	Existing New
			Develop, in conjunction with Education/schools,	Identification of appropriate reps	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			play guidance to support quality play.	from Education Draft guidance Roll out	Possible cost of resources	New
	17.	Understand the impact of planning policy and new developments on children's play.	Continue partnership working and information sharing with planning.	Continued representation at PSIG	Officer time	Existing
			Strengthen process of feedback following planning consultations in order to understand impact.	Play, Parks and Planning to meet to discuss and agree process.	Officer time	Existing
			Work in partnership with Planning in the development of SPG for	Update on proposed timescale for this	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
			open space.	required from Planning		
	18. 19.	Improve Transport and Highways' understanding of the impact of transport and access on children's play.	Invite Transport and Highways to join the Play Strategy Implementation Group.	Invite to HOS for Transport and Highways to identify appropriate representative. – May 2016 Add to distribution list and TOR – May 2016	Officer time	Existing
	110. 111. 112. 113.	Connect play to key policies and strategies now and in	Explore opportunities to promote and deliver play through the health and well-	Continue to support play as part of the Healthy	Officer time	Existing

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		the future.	being agenda.	& Sustainable Pre-School Scheme.		
			Ascertain if the Council is planning to prepare a Child Poverty Strategy.	Contact the LA Corporate Strategy Unit to clarify.	Officer time	Existing
			Continued representation of Early Years /Childcare on the Play Strategy Implementation Group.	Continue attendance at Early Years meeting.	Officer time	Existing
	I14	Family support initiatives support and encourage parents to provide quality play	Promotion of Family Play Team to appropriate families/agencies.	Understand who currently refers Further promote service to other	Officer time Possible	Existing New

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		for their children.		agencies	promotional items	
			Provide information and training opportunities to other family support initiatives, including those commissioned through the Think Family Partnership/Families First.	Offer training as part of existing training programmes aimed at family support workers.	Officer time Training resources Venue etc.	New
			Ensure play is considered as part of future commissioning of family support initiatives.	Feedback from Think Family Partnership regarding funding changes. Ensure		

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
				representation can be made for continued commitment to plat		
	I16. I17.	Intergenerational play is supported and encouraged.	<p>Seek opportunities to work with organisations such as Age to share their experiences of play.</p> <p>Encourage and support people of all ages to play together, including children of different ages.</p>	Use play events as a means to encourage participation by people of all ages.		
	I22	Health and Safety	Work with health and safety	Consultation and	Play	

Matter	Action Plan Ref / Criteria	Priorities	Targets	Milestones	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
		policies provide a clear and consistent message for council run play services/provision	and relevant departments to develop a corporate statement around risk in play.	engagement with Health & Safety Team. Invite Health & Safety to join Play Strategy Implementation Group.	Strategy Implementation Group Officer Time	

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board

28th April 2016

Report of the Head of Participation Chris Millis

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Year Three Action Plan 2016 / 2017

Purpose of the Report

To seek Member approval to implement the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment action plan for 2016 / 2017 in Neath Port Talbot.

Executive Summary

The Report highlights the key actions that will be implemented in delivering the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment action plan during 2016 / 2017 in the context of the overarching three year plan.

Background

A key part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is the three year action plan. This seeks to ensure that by the time of the next assessment in 2017

positive changes have been made which respond to the needs of parents / carers, providers and children and improve the childcare market in Neath Port Talbot.

The action plan for 16/17 should be read in the context of the whole three year plan and for that reason the whole three year plan is contained in Appendix 1 with the plan for 16/17 from page 16 onwards. The plan is based on the findings and recommendations of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. It also takes into account the ideas, options and proposals put forward by stakeholders at the action plan workshop held in January 2014.

The actions have been derived in support of the 12 priorities identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. It should be noted that actions may have a positive impact in relation to more than one priority but have been placed in the priority for which they are most likely to deliver meaningful change.

Priorities

The action plan seeks to address the following priorities identified during the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Process.

- Affordability
- Times when provision is available
- Out of School Care
- Sustaining Existing Provision
- Supporting families where parents who are studying and / or looking for work
- Working with employers
- Work with Partners
- Awareness
- Benefits
- Meeting Specific Needs

- Ensuring quality provision
- Use of Resources

Financial Impact

The Child Care and Early Years Unit is funded from Grant Aid and also from Core. These sources of funding include the Childcare Strategy Grant, Out of School Childcare Grant, Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme and the O Gam i Gam Referral Scheme through families First.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the initial screening assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce implications.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal implications.

Risk Management

This Report seeks to minimise the risk to the Council by addressing the issues contained within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Consultation

The three year action plan (Appendix 1) is based on the findings and recommendations of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. It also takes into account the ideas, options and proposals put forward by stakeholders at the action plan workshop held in January 2014.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members agree to the implementation of the of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment action plan 2016 / 2017 in Neath Port Talbot.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

The report will enable the Council to deliver elements of The Childcare Act 2006 and the recommendations of Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Implementation of Decision

It is proposed for the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Childcare Sufficiency Assessment delivery plan.

Officer Contact

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Introduction

A key part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is the three year action plan which seeks to ensure that by the time of the next assessment positive changes have been made which respond to the needs of parents/carers, providers and children and improve the childcare market in Neath Port Talbot. This action plan is based on the findings and recommendations of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. It also takes into account the ideas, options and proposals put forward by stakeholders at the action plan workshop held in January 2014.

The actions have been derived in support of the 12 priorities identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, please note actions may have a positive impact in relation to more than one priority but have been placed in the priority for which they are most likely to deliver meaningful change.

Priorities

The action plan seeks to address the following priorities identified during the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Process.

Affordability

Across all groups affordability has been identified as the biggest barrier to accessing childcare. The action planning process needs to consider potential financial assistance for parents and working with providers to evaluate fees. Alongside this it needs to explore option for raising awareness of all childcare options and the ways in which parents can evaluate costs of provision. In conjunction with this there needs to be support to enable parents to understand their financial entitlement and how to access it, this is a particular issue in relation to tax credits

Times when provision is available

The evidence suggests childcare provision is not changing to reflect changes in working hours and practices and this is a barrier to parents who are and are not accessing childcare. Consultation with providers suggests a reluctance to offer additional hours, but the action plan should explore opportunities for increasing available hours and the length of the childcare day.

Out of School Care

The action plan should seek to put in places strategies to enable childcare, school and the working day to work better together, so that childcare works for parents, children and their employers and does not become an inconvenience, whilst also seeking to ensure that provision reflects and meets the needs of the child.

Sustaining Existing Provision

Consultation with parents and carers, suggest there isn't an unmet demand for places in the area, the key issue identified is need to sustain existing provision across the County Borough.

Supporting families where parents who are studying and / or looking for work

These are the groups that appear to experience the most barriers when accessing childcare. This is in part about providing increased flexibility within the market to provision but also about signposting parents to advice, support and guidance.

Working with employers

Very few employers are willing to seek out information on childcare for their workers, but they are willing to issue information if they are provided with it. The action plan should consider methods for taking the information to employers to aid dissemination.

Work with Partners

Work with partners including Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau and schools to effectively communicate options and information to parents and carers. Work better together to deliver meaningful changes in childcare.

Awareness

All the parents who attending the focus groups sessions were not aware that they could contact the Council for advice and support in relation to childcare. The Family Information Service is a great tool but if only if parents are aware it is there for them, the action plan should consider means of raising awareness of all aspect of childcare provision and available support. It is also important to remember that this should be cross media and accessible to all.

Benefits

A significant proportion of parents consider childcare to be something they need if they work, with only a third of survey respondents acknowledging social and learning benefits. The action plan needs to look at how we can illustrate the benefits of childcare to parents in a meaningful way.

Meeting Specific Needs

Explore options for providing increased choice for families with specific needs. Provide support and encouragement to enable families to try and experience childcare.

Ensuring quality provision

Parents and carers tend to base their decisions on childcare on recommendations from their family, but they do express a desire to better understand what quality is and what factors they should be looking for when making childcare decisions. There is also an identified need to work with providers to help them increase the quality of their provision for the benefit of the children and young people of the County Borough.

Use of Resources

The action plan should focus consideration to the best use of available resources to benefit parents, carers, children and providers across the County Borough.

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Year One: 2014 / 15							RAG STATUS
Affordability	63% of parents believe childcare is too expensive, help parents / carers to understand the reasons for the cost of childcare by providing information. Develop a "where does my pound go tool" as a way of showing parents where their money goes when using childcare. Disseminate the information to parents through providers, schools, groups and partners as consultation shows that parents are unlikely to seek the information out.	Commence Spring 2014 – on-going. Time distribution of information in accordance with children's return to school. Review impact after pilot and consider repetition in years 2 and 3.	FIS team. Childcare Providers Funding for leaflets and promotional materials. Liaison with potential partners.	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) Early Years and Childcare Team Job Centre Plus Communities First Parent and Toddler Groups Schools	Add measure for recording perception of affordability on parent enquiries. Consultation with parents. Consultation with providers. Target a 10% reduction in the number of parents who think childcare is unaffordable in Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2017 results.	Compare parent perception recorded using enquiries form, compare against CSA baseline. Future CSA results.	Where does my pound go tool developed and widely distributed via e-newsletter. Leaflets printed promoting the benefits of childcare as well as signposting for info on financial support for childcare costs. Leaflet also gives contact details of FIS and guidance for when parents/carers choose childcare GREEN
Affordability	Help parents to understand if they are entitled to tax credits. Work with Welfare Rights to develop an information pack including the HMRC leaflet explaining tax credit entitlement with a covering letter with information to parents on further information sources. Ask providers to issue to all new clients. Work with Tax Office and Job Centre to undertake 4N ^o tax clinics (north, south, east and west) at a relevant location or event such as parent and toddler groups, schools, town centres and family events. Liaise with Citizens Advice Bureau to promote them as a resource for information about childcare and tax credits.	Summer 2014 obtain information from HMRC and draft letter to parents. Consult with providers. Autumn 2014 distribute to providers. Autumn / winter 2014 programme of clinics. Autumn / winter liaison with Citizens Advice Bureau.	Early Years and Childcare / FIS Team. Childcare providers. Budget for distribution of information. Staff time to plan and attend clinic sessions	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) Early Years and Childcare Team FIS Team Job Centre Plus Communities First Parent and Toddler Groups Schools	Increase in number of parents taking up tax credits to support childcare, assess using The Child and Working Tax Credits 2011 – 2012 Geographical Analysis.	The Child and Working Tax Credits 2011 – 2012 Geographical Analysis	Information has been sent to all childcare providers, and Parent and Toddler Groups to display on parent notice boards and also to be added to Welcome Packs that they issue to new parents. Meetings are taking place with Communities First and the sharing of information is improving. FIS website is being used as a hub for partners to share information with the public and other professionals. GREEN
Affordability	Explain to parents why Flying Start is not available to all families and provide them with other low cost childcare options. Expand Flying Start area on FIS website to provide more information with link to other low cost options. Also provide information at clinics outlined in above action.	Summer 2014 update FIS website. Autumn / winter 2014 programme of clinics.	Flying Start FIS Team. Staff time to plan and attend clinic sessions.	NPTCBC Flying Start Team Family Information Service (FIS) Team	Reduction in Flying Start enquiries from ineligible families. Increase in number of hits on Flying Start section of the FIS website. Feedback from parents.	CSA Refresh consultation with providers and parents.	Hits on nptfamily .com have increased significantly for Flying Start. Better approach to signposting parents to other sources of financial support if not eligible for Flying Start. Flying Start H.V. working closely with FIS to share information and also to promote parent support groups or stay and play groups. GREEN

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Affordability	During focus groups parents requested more tools / information to help them ask providers the right questions. Provide information on the FIS website. Develop a programme of "clinics" to take information to parents. Promote clinics through local and social media and schools.	Summer 2014 clinic programme including promotional strategy. Autumn / winter programme of clinics.	Early Years and Childcare / FIS Team. Staff time to plan and attend clinic sessions.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Family Information Service (FIS) Team Job Centre Plus Citizen's Advice Bureau	Feedback at clinics. Nº of people attending clinics.	Childcare sufficiency assessment questionnaire / survey, reduction in percentage of parents who believe childcare is unaffordable from 2014 results.	Leaflet developed and signposted to Choosing Childcare Leaflet from WG. Link directly from nptfamily.com to the providers CSSIW inspection reports for parents to make an informed choice. GREEN
Affordability	The results of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment suggest that providers are intending to increase prices and this is understandable as to be sustainable they need to cover their costs. There is very little pressure from the market to encourage providers to change their approach to fees so the Local Authority should explore methods for illustrating the benefits of offering affordable childcare to providers.	Spring / Summer 2014 share results of Childcare Sufficiency Assessment with providers. January 2015 review current childcare prices. Spring 2015 engagement with providers.	Early Years and Childcare / FIS Team.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit	More affordable childcare provision.	Childcare sufficiency assessment questionnaire / survey, reduction in percentage of parents who believe childcare is unaffordable from 2014 results.	Findings shared during a childcare providers networking event during spring 2014. Information also available on nptfamily.com and providers urged to visit the site at every opportunity. New holiday clubs have been set up which forces other settings to look at what service they are offering during school holidays and this has proved positive in raising the quality and lowering prices without being too detrimental to existing providers. GREEN
Times when provision is available.	Share the findings of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment with existing providers to highlight the demand for provision at other times. Develop a summary report highlighting the findings of the CSA, with a different targeted version for each provider group. Issue a copy of the relevant report to providers and signpost to additional support online and via the Family Information Service.	Summer 2014	Early Years and Childcare Team	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit FIS Team	Percentage of providers reached.	Monitor changes in provision via a 6 monthly review of the FIS database	All providers are encouraged to visit nptfamily to view the CSA full report and to read the summary report. Ongoing discussions with providers to promote the benefits of unsocial hours however the market doesn't force any changes currently.
Times when provision is available. Affordability.	Share the findings of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment with potential providers via the Childcare as a Business event. The event will seek to encourage attendees to use the results of the CSA to give them a competitive advantage and	May 2014: Childcare as a Business Event	Existing event.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit FIS Team	Event attendance.	Number of attendees who develop a childcare option.	Interest from individuals wanting to set up as self employed as childminders and also a small number (2) who are now progressing to setting up full day care. GREEN

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Times when provision is available.	Work with pre-school and play groups to explore options for extending / changing opening hours in relation to requests from parents. Explore options for parent and toddler groups at other times of day such as evenings. Remind providers of the opportunities that are available to them to attract new customers. Present a cost based model to show clearly the increased cost of additional hours and the potential benefits.	Spring 2014 – on-going	Early Years and Childcare Team Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	More parents satisfied with opening hours of provision in Neath Port Talbot.	Use the 2014 CSA as a benchmark to review provision opening hours against on a 6 monthly basis. Compare parent satisfaction at next CSA.	Letters sent to all providers to encourage to look at extending opening times but with poor response – look at incentives to encourage a discussion to take place with providers especially childminders because they can easily be more flexible. Offer support to amend Statement of Purpose to ensure compliance with The Childminding and Daycare Regulations. AMBER
Times when provision is available.	Raise awareness of the flexibility of opening hours / longer opening hours offered by childminders, to encourage parents looking for this to use existing providers.	Spring 2014 – on-going	Early Years and Childcare Team Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	More parents satisfied with opening hours of provision in Neath Port Talbot.	Use the 2014 CSA as a benchmark to review provision opening hours against on a 6 monthly basis. Compare parent satisfaction at next CSA.	Consultation currently being prepared to ascertain the willingness and ability to extend opening hours for childminders. This has been done previously and again there was a lack of commitment at that time. AMBER
Times when provision is available.	Work with providers to help them develop their own staff bank, database of trained childcare staff who are happy available to work evenings / weekends to support providers to find staff provision for additional hours.	Spring 2015 feasibility study. Autumn 2015 staff bank launch.	Early Years and Childcare / FIS Team.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Providers Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	More parents satisfied with opening hours of provision in Neath Port Talbot.	Use the 2014 CSA as a benchmark to review provision opening hours against on a 6 monthly basis. Compare parent satisfaction at next CSA.	Difficulty in trying to envisage who would manage a bank of relief staff and staff who would consider longer working hours. This has been discussed in a FDC network meetings and providers envisage this to be problematic. However, there is a willingness to look at the issues and put in place a way of working together to develop a mechanism for using staff from other settings if needed. CSSIW would also be consulted to ensure that Regulations AMBER
Out of School Care	Work with schools to support the sustainability and enhancement of existing out of school provision. Support the development of new provision in schools and the local community.	On-going	Early Years and Childcare Team. Local Education Authority Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	10% increase in the number of breakfast clubs and after school club places.	Occupancy and places surveys. FIS database – amend database to record required information at next scheduled update.	Developments are ongoing within school in the county borough. 5 new holiday clubs were developed in 14-15 and support given to existing settings within schools. GREEN

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Out of School Care	Encourage and support existing out of school provision to consider opening earlier and closing later. Provider a feasibility tool kit including survey templates and a cost based model to help them understand if the extension of provision is sustainable for their setting.	Share findings of Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Spring 2014. Providing guidance / check list to help providers decide if they should open for longer Summer 2014.	Early Years and Childcare Team. Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Checklist creation and distribution. Feasibility study toolkit creation and distribution.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	Number of available places and occupancy	Occupancy and places surveys. FIS database – amend database to record required information at next scheduled update.	Initial survey with some providers indicate that parents are happy with current opening hours. Survey to be undertaken on an annual basis and with all new developments in the feasibility studies. GREEN
Out of School Care	Raise awareness of existing Holiday Play Scheme provision as an initial response to parents / carers request for increased provision.	On-going.	FIS and supporting promotional opportunities outlined throughout the action plan.	Family Information Service Team	15% increase in satisfaction with school holiday provision from parents at next CSA.	Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's satisfaction	Out of School Childcare Grant used to fund the development of 5 new holiday clubs in various locations throughout the county borough. GREEN
Out of School Care	Support more providers to offer drop off / pick up services to parents. Use case studies and parent testimonials to illustrate the benefits. Provide simple and clear guidance setting up. Ensure that parents are aware of and consider the additional costs of pick-ups. Enable parents / carers to search the Family Information Service for provision that offers picks up.	Winter 2014 develop scheme and guidance and launch spring 2015.	Early Years and Childcare Team.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	Increase in number of providers offering picks – add a monitoring system for this to the FIS database. Usage of pick-ups.	Use the 2014 CSA as a benchmark to review pick availability against on a 6 monthly basis.	Research shows that the majority of schools are serviced either by on site after school clubs or are working in partnership with a childcare provider in the locality. FIS will monitor evaluation forms to see if parents are unsatisfied with the childcare they searched for, and to monitor the availability of childcare from each school. GREEN
Sustaining existing provision	Encourage, support and enable provider networks by highlight the benefits of this approach. NPTCBC role will be to start up the networks, and then providers will be encouraged and enable to take them forward.	Launch at March 2014 provider event On-going provide advice and support for networks.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team / Think Family Partnership / Providers	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Wales PPA Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Providers	Nº of providers participating in networks. Nº of provider network events.	Provide networks with a message and monitor participation and feedback to NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit.	Networks have been set up for daycare providers, childminders and also parent and toddler groups. Attendance at the network meetings is increasing and the E.Y.C.U. also orgnaise a childcare providers network event at least once a year for all types of childcare providers GREEN
Supporting families where parents who are studying and / or looking for work	A quarter of parents view childcare as a barrier to employment and training. Form strong partnerships with Colleges, training providers, Citizens Advice Bureau and Job Centre Plus to ensure they have the information required to advise parents. Invite new partners to attend the Early Years and Childcare Group meetings which take place each half term.	Partnerships in place and information provided by Winter 2014.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team / FIS team. Relevant promotional material. Training for partners agencies.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit FIS Team Partners Early Years and Childcare Group	Partnerships in places with specific milestones and measures agreed.	Consultation with partners. Enquiry numbers. Partnership review. Consultation with parents / carers.	Links are being strengthened to ensure best practice is shared and that any identified barriers accessing childcare can be overcome. Membership of the Early Years Group has been widened to encompass areas where childcare may have been a barrier for their service users. GREEN

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Supporting families where parents who are studying and / or looking for work	Attend local job fairs, college open days and employment /training related events to provide information on childcare provision and tax credits. Work to ensure a geographical spread and take a targeted approach to each event to highlight provision in the local area.	September 2014 onward.	Promotional and marketing material for events.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit FIS team Colleges Chamber of Commerce NPTCBC Economic Development Unit Employment Fairs.	Attendance at event. Follow up enquires from parents. 5% reduction in proportion of parents in training / looking for work who see childcare as a barrier to employment in 2017 CSA.	Resulting enquires. Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark to measure parents / carers perception and satisfaction	NPT College Group have agreed for E.Y.C.U./FIS to have an information board in the college campuses and FIS have attended enrolment days at the college. Currently monitoring enquiries from parents in education. Leaflets distributed to student services for learners to raise awareness of the FIS. GREEN
Working with employers	Provider employers with copies of Family Information Service promotional material for inclusion in new employee induction packs.	Winter 2014 onwards.	Use existing FIS promotional materials.	FIS Team	Website visits. Nº of copies of information pack printed and issued. Reduction in number of employers who think childcare impacts on recruitment and retention.	Website visits. Consultation with employers via feedback form including in pack. Review employers perceptions against 2014 CSA benchmark.	Currently identifying employers to work with and to pilot a partnership. Will initially use the list who engaged with the CSA process but this is ongoing. AMBER
Working with partners	Improve partnership working with schools and Local Education Authority, to aid improvements to quality and sustainability of existing school based provision and development of new provision.	Year 1 on-going.	Time allocation for Council Officers and umbrella organisations to meet with relevant parents.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin	Monitoring of school based provision – existing and developed.	6 monthly partnership reviews.	This is ongoing and an annual report is submitted to the Children and Young Peoples Education Scrutiny Board to inform elected members of any new developments on school sites. There is a formula in place with regards to charging childcare settings a contribution towards services charges so that the school is not subsidising the cost of the childcare provision. GREEN
Working with partners	Improved partnership working with Citizens Advice Bureau, Job Centre Plus and other agencies to aid dissemination of information to parents.	On-going	Early Years and Childcare Team	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Citizen's Advice Job Centre Plus	Participation and attendance at meetings.	6 monthly partnership reviews.	Stronger links are being forged with these organisations in order to disseminate information and promote the FIS. Partnership working occurs however it is recognised that this needs to be strengthened. AMBER

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Working with partners	Raise awareness of Early Years and Childcare and FIS Teams within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and move childcare up the agenda by highlighting its benefits.	Spring / summer 2014 share findings of CSA with key decision makers within NPTCBC. Use intranet and "the loop" to raise awareness across all Council employees. On-going programme of targeted liaison.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin	Participation and attendance at meetings. Expand childcare working group	6 monthly partnership reviews.	An article about FIS was included in 'The Loop' about the service it provides, however it is recognised that more work needs to be undertaken to raise awareness of both FIS and the Early Years and Childcare Unit within the authority. The Childcare Working Group has ceased however the membership of the Early Years Group has been extended and will pick up on the work of the Childcare Working Group. AMBER
Working with partners	Building on initial discussions with NPT Homes to develop a meaningful and sustainable partnership including the provision of information for tenant support teams.	Spring / summer 2014 share findings of CSA. On-going programme of targeted liaison.	Early Years and Childcare Team Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin	Participation and attendance at meetings.	6 monthly partnership reviews	NPT Homes Regeneration Officer attends the Early Years Group meetings and discussions have taken place about how best to provide information to tenants however this now needs to be actioned AMBER
Awareness	Highlight and reinforce the value of the Family Information Service to all providers and encourage them to participate by highlighting the benefits to them.	On-going	Early Years and Childcare Team Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin	20% increase in the number of providers completing and submit the entire FIS form by 2017.	FIS database.	Links are improving with all types of childcare providers and there has been a significant increase in the number of providers now listed on the website. We do however need to ensure all providers are listed so that parents can make an informed choice about the childcare provider they choose and have a full list to do so. AMBER

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Awareness	<p>Consultation with parents has shown that only a limited proportion of them will seek information out. Therefore the Local Authority needs to be proactive and take information to the parents by forming communication partnership with organisations and agencies parents are engaging with including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent and Toddler Groups • Childcare Providers • Schools & Colleges • Job Centre Plus <p>Also provide training and support to make the most of Council Officers / employees who regularly engage with parents including Health Visitors, The Flying Start Team and Play Works Team.</p>	Strategy in place for forming partnerships from Summer 2014. Delivery on-going.	<p>Budget for information pack Family Information Service NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Communities First</p>	<p>Family Information Service NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Communities First</p>	A minimum of 300 parents reached during 2014 – 2017. 10% reduction in the number of parents who don't know where to find out information about childcare at next CSA.	<p>6 monthly partnership reviews. Recording attendance / participation. Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's awareness.</p>	<p>Marketing and promotion plan in place for FIS to ensure maximum coverage of access to the service. Hits to the website have increased and currently NPTFamily facebook is no.1 in Wales out of all 22 FISs.</p> <p>GREEN</p>
Awareness Page 203	Develop and implement an effective and tailor made marketing strategy for promoting Childcare and the FIS in partnership with organisations to ensure meaningful contact with parents.	Marketing strategy developed by Autumn 2014 and launched Autumn 2014.	<p>Early Years and Childcare Team / FIS / Think Family Partnership / NPTCBC Marketing Team Budget for implementation to be agreed</p>	<p>Family Information Service NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Communities First</p>	<p>Development and implementation of marketing plan. 10% reduction in the number of parents who don't know where to find out information about childcare at next CSA.</p>	<p>FIS website visits. FIS enquiries. Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's awareness</p>	<p>OOSC Grant funding used to continue with the marketing campaign that was started previously for FIS and the Early Years and Childcare Unit. Advertising has included: Radio Leaflets Facebook advertising Attending various events and school activities and professional events. Further plans include till roll receipt advertising, Tesco billboard adverts, adverts on buses, taking the trailer to hard to reach communities</p> <p>GREEN</p>
Awareness	Develop a programme of promotional events and activities to raise awareness of Childcare and the FIS. Seek opportunities to be part of existing events to guarantee footfall.	On-going.	<p>Early Years and Childcare Team / FIS / Think Family Partnership / NPTCBC Marketing Team / Umbrella Organisations. Budget for implementation to be agreed</p>	<p>Family Information Service NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Communities First</p>	<p>Development and implementation of marketing plan. 10% reduction in the number of parents who don't know where to find out information about childcare at next CSA.</p>	<p>FIS website visits. FIS enquiries. Percentage of parents / carers using childcare. 10% reduction in the number of parents who don't know where to find out information about childcare at next CSA.</p>	<p>A FIS Family Fun Day was held and over 3,000 people attended the event. There were over 50 information stands from services who are listed on the data base for the website. Plans are in place to make this an annual event on different sites to ensure maximum coverage of the county borough. FIS and/or the Early Years and Childcare Unit also attends other events</p>

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
							organised by different services and organisations. GREEN
Awareness	Work with NPT Homes to develop childcare information / welcome pack for distribution to all families with a child less than 14 years of age who move into an NPT Home.	Spring / summer 2014 share findings of CSA. On-going programme of targeted liaison.	Early Years and Childcare Team / FIS Team NPT Homes Budget.	Family Information Service NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team NPT Homes	Distribution of packs. 10% reduction in the number of parents who don't know where to find out information about childcare at next CSA.	Resulting enquiries – develop system for recording if enquires result from pack. Include feedback form in pack. 10% reduction in the number of parents who don't know where to find out information about childcare at next CSA.	A representative of NPTHomes Regeneration Team now sits on the Early Years Group and discussions have started on how to ensure maximum support to tenants wishing to operate a childminding service from their home and also on how to share information with all tenants of NPT Homes AMBER
Use of resources	Comprehensive review of existing grant programme, with focus on outcomes delivered against terms of grant and identified need. Use information to develop criteria and monitoring for future grant provision.	Winter 2014 review of grant provision. New criteria in place and agreed for April 2013.	Early Years & Childcare Team / FIS Team / Umbrella organisations.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit	Grant review. Revised grant criteria.	Grant monitoring system in place.	Grant forms reviewed and amended. Criteria for funding made clearer and grant forms made more accessible and more user friendly. Strategic allocation of grants to ensure funding allocated meets the needs of both the provider and the Local Authority in meeting its statutory duties GREEN
Use of resources	In light of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment review umbrella organisation support against targets for the period between this and the previous assessment. Consider outcomes against expenditure and review targets for the future.	Summer 2014 review.	Early Years & Childcare Team / FIS Team / Umbrella organisations.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit	Results and outcomes review. Revised targets.	Develop specific system to monitoring results against targets.	The decision was taken not to engage with the childcare umbrella organisations from April 2015 due to budget restrictions. The Early Years and Childcare Unit will monitor the impact this may have on the sector. Strategies have been put in place to ensure the continuity of support to the sector via the Early Years and Childcare Unit and FIS. Social Media support is being developed to share information. GREEN

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Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Year Two: 2015 / 16							
Times when provision is available. Awareness	Provide a search function on the Family Information Service (FIS) to enable parents / carers to search for provision by opening times and cost. Work with providers to highlight the value of actively participated with the FIS and the importance of providing all the data requested.	Winter 2014 / Spring 2015	FIS team and support from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council IT team.	NPTCBC Family Information Service Team	Website search function set up in the timeframe outlined. Reduction in % of parents who are dissatisfied with provision opening times at next CSA.	Usage of website search function. Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's satisfaction.	This service has always been available, and is being used by the public. Monitoring of searches GREEN
Times when provision is available.	Further consultation with employers to understand shift patterns and working hours in Neath Port Talbot.	Autumn / Winter 2015	Early Years and Childcare Team. If required additional support from outside consultant.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit	Working hours data.	Application of working hours data.	Work is ongoing to strengthen the links with employers through the Regeneration and Economic Development team in the Local Authority AMBER
Times when provision is available. Awareness.	Promote / raise awareness of alternative childcare options that will provide flexibility of hours such as childminders and nanny share. Use local and social media, FIS and events within the County. Work with partner organisation including providers and umbrella organisations. Undertake a three year programme to visit the 9N ² spatial areas within Neath Port Talbot to hold targeted information clinics focused on provision that is available within that area.	January 2015	Early Years and Childcare / FIS Team. Budget for events and consultation materials	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit FIS Flying Start Workways Job Centre Plus Umbrella Organisations	Increase in % of parents who know where to find information about childcare. Reduction in % of parents who are dissatisfied with provision opening times at next CSA.	Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's satisfaction.	FIS and Early Years and Childcare Unit social media is used regularly to inform and share information with the public including information on the different types of childcare available. Childcare clinics have been arranged but it is recognised that the clinics will take time and perseverance to be beneficial to the public. GREEN
Out of School Care	Work with providers to increase the provision of affordable holiday schemes. Using the findings of the CSA to define affordable provision. Use the CSA to ensure the new provision compliments rather than competes with existing provision, as the target of the action is to increase provision. Promote new schemes to parents and provide discounts / subsidies to support attendance.	Spring 2015 feasibility study and detailed costing. Launch summer 2013.	Early Years and Childcare Team. Grant funding programme. Resources for providers.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Menter Iaith	15% increase in satisfaction with school holiday provision from parents at next CSA.	Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's satisfaction	4 holiday clubs piloted during the summer of 2015 which has resulted in the Early Years and Childcare Unit working with individuals to look at the possibility of setting up and registering 2 holiday clubs AMBER

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Sustaining Existing Provision	In light of the CSA, review the current grants programme and put in place criteria to ensure that funding is going to providers most in need.	April 2015 grant review.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team / Think Family Partnership.		Change to grant criteria.	Impact of grant/s on provider sustainability.	Grant programme being reviewed currently AMBER
Sustaining Existing Provision	Provide business planning training opportunities for development officers and providers and work with them to find ways to encourage them to participate. Signpost providers to existing business planning tools including the NPTCBC Business Toolkit and Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Ready, Steady Go.	2015 training programme onward.	Training budget. NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Menter Iaith	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs Wales PPA Menter Iaith	50% of providers to attend business planning training during period 2015 – 2017.	Attendance at training.	Training provided in training programme along with individual business support to settings. Signposting settings to Umbrella Organisations for support. GREEN
Working with employers Page 206	Highlight and provide information for employers on the Family Information Service website with useful tips and information. Promote in partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce and NPT business team. Support with regular promotion to local business such as newsletters and Chamber of Commerce events.	Launch and promotion Autumn 2013. On-going promotion.	FIS team. IT Support.	Family Information Service	Website visits. Reduction in number of employers who think childcare impacts on recruitment and retention.	Website visits. Consultation with employers via Chamber of Commerce e newsletter. Review employers perceptions against 2014 CSA benchmark.	In the process of updating information for the /childcare area of the website and then the aim is to work with FIS to discuss what and how to we promote the website to employers. Early Years and Childcare Unit responsible for collating information to add to the website. AMBER
Working with employers	Develop information pack for employers to provide parents / carers. Pack can be developed and provided in PDF format in employers section of FIS website. Also offer printed copies on request.	Develop and pilot with NPTCBC Human Resources team Autumn 2013. On-going promotion.	FIS team. IT Support. Budget for printing.	Family Information Service NPTCBC Human Resources	Website visits. Nº of copies printed and issues. Reduction in number of employers who think childcare impacts on recruitment and retention.	Website visits. Consultation with employers via feedback form including in pack. Review employers perceptions against 2014 CSA benchmark.	Currently looking to gather information that can be provided to employers for their employees and also in which format. RED
Working with employers	Attend local business networking events to raise awareness of support available to employers.	Year 2 / 3	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team / FIS Team.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Family Information Service	Website visits. Nº of copies of information pack printed and issued. Reduction in number of employers who think childcare impacts on recruitment and retention.	Website visits. Consultation with employers via feedback form including in pack. Review employers perceptions against 2014 CSA benchmark.	Links have been made with Regeneration and Economic Development within the authority and these links will improve with time and understanding. AMBER

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Raising awareness	Provider marketing workshop – working in partnership with Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) to create tailor-made marketing training. Encourage attendance by providers and development officers.	April 2015	Early Years and Childcare Team / FIS / Think Family Partnership / Local branch of CIM Budget	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Family Information Service Umbrella Organisations NPT CVS	33% of providers to attend marketing training during period 2015 – 2017.	Attendance at training.	Individual support and advice given to settings and signposting to umbrella organisations continuously. Group training and advice during networking events and also included in the training programme. Photocopying service available to providers for fliers and posters. GREEN
Benefits	45% of parents / carers prefer to use family and friends, with focus groups showing that parents are most likely to respond to other parents. Develop a means of capturing and sharing parents / carers positive childcare testimonials with parents / carers who are considering childcare. Work with providers and partners to share testimonials with parents / carers. This programme should also seek to target grandparents who are having an impact on the childcare decision making process.	Spring / Summer 2015	FIS Team Budget allocation.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Family information Service Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	Programme in place. Testimonials captured. Promotion to parents and carers. 15% increase in proportion of parents who use childcare for social / learning benefits at 2017 CSA.	FIS website visits. FIS enquiries. Percentage of parents / carers using childcare Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's awareness of childcare benefits.	In the process of creating a leaflet using parent and child testimonials to promote childcare. These will be distributed widely and also circulated via social media, e-newsletter and website. Videos have been created to promote the benefits of childcare and also promoting careers in childcare. AMBER
Benefits	Respond to parents / carers concerns about childminders by promoting the benefits of this type of provision and highlighting their unique selling point.	Spring / Summer 2015	FIS Team Budget allocation. PACEY	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Childminders PACEY Family information Service Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	Programme / promotion in place. 15% increase in the number of families using childminders by 2017 CSA.	FIS website visits. FIS enquiries – childminders. Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess the number of parents using childminders.	Childminding is promoted equally along with daycare childcare settings. Parents have a choice in which childcare setting they choose and we encourage parents to consider all childcare types. The number of childminders in NPT is increasing steadily which in turn shows the demand for the type of childcare that childminders offer. GREEN

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Benefits	Provide help and support to encourage parents to involve their children in childcare decisions. Use the Children's Zone as means of engaging with families.	Spring / Summer 2015	FIS Team Budget allocation.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit FIS Team Play Works Children's Rights Units	Programme in place. Promotion to parents and carers.	Consultation with children and young people.	Generally children are not consulted about the childcare they use because it is the parent who would make the decision. Information is available to children on the Childrens Zone about what to expect in a childcare setting. GREEN
Benefits	Provide training for providers to enable them to engage with / work with children when planning events, activities and change. Work with Play Works to develop training which will respond to children / young people's desire to be more involved with decision related to childcare which affect them.	Spring / Summer 2015	Additional to training programme.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Play Works	Ask providers to record participation and feedback back to NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit. Review impact during consultation with children and young people to support 2017 CSA.	Consultation with children and young people.	Participation training is ongoing which looks at consulting with children. GREEN
Meeting specific needs Page 208	Respond to 30% of parents who believe there is not enough Bilingual Language provision by working partnership with schools and relevant organisations to promote existing provision. Undertake further research to ascertain sustainability of further Bilingual Language provision.	Promotion of existing provision Summer 2014. Feasibility study Autumn / Winter 2015	Early Years and Childcare Team Mudiad Meithrin Menter Iaith Funding for feasibility study.	Mudiad Meithrin Early Years and Childcare Team Menter Iaith	Increased use of existing provision.	Bilingual language provision occupancy rates.	Welsh Language training is ongoing in the training programme and some settings have benefitted from the Wales PPA Welsh Language course that is currently available. It is our aim to increase the use of the Welsh language in all English medium settings as well as increase the number of settings who offer a bilingual or Welsh service. Training is planned for frontline staff in how to promote bilingual services to families. GREEN
Meeting specific needs	Support providers who have identified a need for training to enable them to support specific groups of children and in so doing provide additional choice for families with specific needs. Work with partner organisations to deliver targeted training.	2015 training programme and on-going.	Funding and training programme.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit PACEY Family information Service Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	25% of providers attending training during the period 2015 – 2017	25% of providers attending training during the period 2015 – 2017.	The training programme includes specific sessions on inclusion and individual support is given if required. An accessibility audit is currently being undertaken in partnership with the Play Development Team to ascertain if any childcare settings requires support to ensure accessibility to all. GREEN

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Meeting specific needs	Review O Gam I Gam and consider expanding criteria to enable more families with additional needs, such as those with low incomes, in training and / or returning to work, to receive support.	April 2015	Early Years and Childcare Team / Think Families Partnership Funding budget.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit	20% increase in the number of families applying for O Gam I Gam funding. Increase in use of childcare among identified groups at 2017 CSA.	Review and monitor funding applications.	Currently under review with issued being discussed. AMBER
Meeting specific needs	Support providers to provide more spaces for children with disabilities and provide increased choice for families.	2015 training programme and on-going. Support services developed with partnership organisations.	Early Years and Childcare Team / Think Families Partnership Funding to support additional staff costs.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Providers	25% of providers attending training during the period 2015 – 2017	25% of providers attending training during the period 2015 – 2017.	All registered childcare places can provide places for children with disabilities under the O Gam i Gam scheme therefore offering a good choice of local childcare for parents and carers. GREEN
Meeting specific needs Page 209	20% of providers believed they would benefit from training to support Welsh Language provision. Work with Menter Iaith and Mudiad Meithrin to create a targeted training offer. This could make use of the Wales PPA Welsh Language for childcare course which is currently in South East Wales.	2015 training programme and on-going.	Early Years and Childcare Team / Think Families Partnership / Mudiad Meithrin Funding	Mudiad Meithrin NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Menter Iaith Think Families Partnership	15Nº providers attending training during the period 2015 – 2017	15Nº providers attending training during the period 2015 – 2017	Welsh Language training is ongoing in the training programme and some settings have benefitted from the Wales PPA Welsh Language course that is currently available. It is our aim to increase the use of the Welsh language in all English medium settings as well as increase the number of settings who offer a bilingual or Welsh service. Training is planned for frontline staff in how to promote bilingual services to families. GREEN
Ensuring quality provision	Create guidance / a checklist to support parents in choosing quality childcare provision. Promote in accordance with previous actions, in partnership with key organisations.	Summer 2015	Early Years & Childcare Team / FIS Team. Funding.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Family information Service PACEY Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	15% increase in proportion of parents who use childcare for social / learning benefits at 2017 CSA.	Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's awareness of childcare benefits.	A leaflet has been produced supporting parents who are making choices in childcare and parents are also directed to the Choosing Childcare that is available from FIS. GREEN

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2015
Ensuring quality provision	Parents / carers and children and young people believe that a quality assurance standard would help improve quality and enable families to make informed childcare decisions. Work in partnership organisations to promote existing assurance standard and encourage participation.	2015 – on going	Early Years & Childcare Team / FIS Team / Umbrella organisations / Play Works Budget to be agreed.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Family Information Service Team Play Works PACEY Wales PPA Mudiad Meithrin Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	Increase the proportion of quality assured providers from 40% to at least 55% by 2017.	Training needs analysis and FIS database monitoring.	Funding has been made available to childcare settings to undertake a recognised quality assurance award and this is promoted on our social media sites. Recognition is also given to those settings who have achieved an award by promotion on social media. 7 settings have completed all aspects of the Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme with another 34 settings engaged with the scheme. A Healthy Snack Award is also available to settings in NPT. GREEN
Ensuring quality provision Page 210	Review training programme to target meaningful improvements to quality of provision. Encourage increased participation among providers by highlighting benefits to them. Work in partnership with other organisation's to develop a unique training offer.	Review training and budget programme 2013. On-going delivery of provider training.	Early Years & Childcare Team / FIS Team / Play Works / NPT CVS. Budget to be agreed.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Family Information Service Team Play Works NPT CVS	Minimum of 10% increase in training participation from previous year in 2013.	Participation among providers. Bi-annual review of training programme.	Participation on training courses is good and the programme is varied. A training needs audit is completed annually to ensure that training is appropriate and that value for money is achieved from any training funding. Currently the training programme is free to childcare providers but if budgets change then this may also need to change. GREEN

Priority	Delivery actions	Key milestones	Resource allocation	Lead Responsibility (Bold) Supporting Partners	Performance measure	Monitoring / evaluation	Annual update - March 2017
Affordability Awareness	Work with partners to develop an information / gift packs for parents preparing to have a child.	Pack and registration system developed my Spring 2017. Pilot programme 2017/18.	Early Years and Childcare Team. Sponsorship from local businesses.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit	75 families to registered and receive a pack during the pilot.	Registration and distribution.	
Times when provision is available.	Undertake a feasibility study to considering increasing the number of childcare spaces available before 8am and after 6pm. Following the recommendations of the research for PACEY by Eleanor Stafford this should be focus on childminders. If the feasibility studies suggest provision will be sustainable support the establishment of additional childcare provision available before 8am and after 6pm.	Additional places available to parents from January 2016.	Early Years and Childcare Team. Provider support.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit	Use the feasibility study to defined a targeted number of spaces available before 8am and after 6pm and occupancy rate. Reduction in % of parents who are dissatisfied with provision opening times at next CSA.	Monitor partner providers against the feasibility study targets for spaces and occupancy. Use 2014 CSA as a benchmark against which to assess parent's satisfaction.	
Out of School Care Page 211	Respond to the needs of older children, who require childcare but don't want to be with younger children, by encourage providers to create over 8 places within their setting if they have capacity / available space. Work with Play Works to develop a targeted activities toolkit that providers can use to engage this age group. Develop a cost model including cost benefit analysis to illustrate to providers the value of developing this provision.	Work with providers Spring 2016.	Early Years and Childcare Team. Play Works. Budget for cost based model and toolkit. Case studies to illustrate benefits to providers.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Play Works Wales PPA Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	Increased satisfaction among older children in childcare	Consultation with childcare monitored against 2014 CSA benchmark.	
Supporting families where parents who are studying and / or looking for work	Back to work support scheme – consider a short term grant scheme to provide funding to support parents entering work to enable them to begin using childcare before they get paid. Funding would be paid directly to providers, and parents would be asked to make a small contribution in the form of match funding.	Work with families through Year 3 from September onwards.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Team / Think Family Partnership / Job Centre Plus. Funding allocation.	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Think Family Partnership Job Centre Plus. Workways NSA	Development of funding programme. Take up of funding scheme.	Take up of funding scheme. Consultation with parents who use the funding in the form of feedback.	
Working with employers	Work with an existing provider to develop a satellite provision located at Neath Port Talbot Employer. Use as a case study / tool to aid future developments.	Work with employers during Year 3.	Funding and resources	NPTCBC Early Years and Childcare Unit Providers Umbrella Organisations Think Family Partnership	On site provision place by Summer 2016. Targeted occupancy rate defined by feasibility work to support provision	Consultation with employers and parents throughout the development of provision.	

				Chamber of Commerce NPTCBC Economic Development Team	development.		
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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board

28th April 2016

Report of the Head of Participation Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning

Matter for Decision:

Wards Affected: All Wards

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS PANEL.

Purpose of the Report

To seek authority from Members to establish and convene a home to school transport appeal panel in order to hear any appeal lodged by a parent / guardian in relation to the authority's application of the Home to School Transport Policy.

Executive Summary

Where an application for transport assistance has been made and has been rejected, the parent will be written to with an explanation of the decision. This letter will provide an opportunity for the parent to appeal on the following grounds:

- that the appellant believes that local authority has not applied the policy correctly;
- that the appellant is able to cite any special/exceptional circumstances which they believe should be considered.

Background

On the 27th March 2013, the Cabinet took the decision to implement the new Home to School Transport Policy. A link to this policy can be found under Appendices of this report.

The policy makes provision for parents or guardians to appeal decisions made to refuse free transport in accordance with the criteria outlined above.

In order that appeals may be handled in a clear and transparent way it is proposed that an appeal panel is established to consist of three local authority officers.

The panel will invite appellants to make representation in person or to supply a written statement in relation to their appeal. The panel will also invite an officer to

present the Education Leisure Lifelong Learning Directorate's position (see Appendix 1).

The panel will be supported by an officer from the Authority's Legal Section.

Officers will be bound to the decision of the Home to School Transport Appeals Panel.

Financial Impacts

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report, as this is a decision for setting up an Appeals Panel and not the outcome of the subsequent decisions from the appeals.

Risk Management

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Recommendations

For Members to approve the establishment of a Home to School Transport Appeals Panel.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To enable the Local Authority to convene and consider Appeals in regard to decisions taken on free Home to School Transport.

Consultation

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

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 Procedures for Considering Appeals.

Link to Home to School Transport Policy (27th March 2013) below

[Home to School Policy](#)

List of Background Papers

None

Officer Contact

Chris Millis

Head of Participation,

Telephone 01639 763226

email c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk

Paul Walker,

Operations Coordinator

☎ 01639 861107

✉ p.walker@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS PROCEDURE

Where an application for transport assistance has been made and has been rejected, the parent will be written to with an explanation of the decision. This letter will provide an opportunity for the parent to appeal on the following grounds:

- that the appellant believes that local authority has not applied the policy correctly;
- that the appellant is able to cite any special/exceptional circumstances which they believe should be considered.

Where a parent believes that a case can be made in relation to either or both of these criteria the following procedure will apply:

1. The appellant is invited to submit an appeal form (see below) to outline their grounds for appeal. On receipt of the appeal form a formal hearing will be heard by the Home to School Transport Appeals Panel.

Officers will be bound to the decision of the Home to School Transport Appeals Panel. However, as with all transport assistance, this may be subject to review in the light of any material change in circumstances. Further appeals are not allowed within the same academic year, and may only be made in subsequent years if there is a substantial change in circumstances to consider.

The Home to School Transport Appeal Panel shall be convened within 28 working days of the receipt of a written Appeal.

The written appeal can only be in relation to how the appellant believes the local authority has not applied the policy correctly or to cite any special/exceptional circumstances which they believe should be considered.

2. The appellants shall be invited to make representation in person before the Home to School Transport Appeal Panel or to supply a written statement to be considered by the Panel.
3. Documentation comprising the applicant's original written or formal statement and an officer's report shall be sent to the Panel members, appellant and relevant Council Officers at least 5 working days before the Panel hearing.

4. The Home to School Transport Appeal Panel shall comprise three from four local authority officers, one of whom shall act as the Chairman.
 - HEAD OF ICT
 - HEAD OF PLANNING & PUBLIC PROTECTION
 - HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES
 - HEAD OF PROPERTY AND REGENERATION

5. The procedure shall follow the general from :-
 - (i) The Chairman shall state the nature of the appeal
 - (ii) The Appellant shall be invited to make representation or a written statement considered.
 - (iii) An Officer will present the Directorate's position.
 - (iv) Panel members will be given opportunities to question the appellant and/or officer.
 - (v) The appellant and/or officer shall withdraw whilst the Panel consider its decision.
 - (vi) The appellant and officer may be invited to return should further information be requested.
 - (vii) All parties shall be informed of the decision by the Chairperson, unless, in exceptional circumstances the hearing is postponed for further information to be presented.
 - (viii) All parties shall have the decision confirmed in writing within 5 working days.

6. An appropriate qualified Council employee shall act as Clerk to the Home to School Transport Appeal Panel and an officer from the Legal Section will act as advisor to those conducting the hearing throughout the procedure.

If appellants are not happy with the way an appeal was conducted, they can make a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman investigates written complaints about the way an appeal was conducted, not the decision.

Neath Port Talbot

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEAL FORM

Please ensure that you:

1. Read the accompanying school transport appeal hearing process guidelines,
2. Sign the form and return it promptly to:

*Home to School Transport Appeals Panel
Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
Port Talbot Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ*

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEAL

Pupil's Surname

First Names(s)

Name of School

Date of Birth

Full Postal Address incl postcode

Parent's / Guardian's Name

Relationship to Pupil

Current Address incl postcode

Phone Number

Home

Work

GROUNDS / REASONS FOR SUBMITTING THE APPEAL (please tick boxes)

1) That the local authority has not applied the Home to School Transport Policy correctly.

2) That the appellant is able to cite any special/exceptional circumstances which they believe should be considered.

Details of appeal:

You may attach any additional sheets to this form.

It is important that you explain as clearly as you can the reasons why you are appealing in accordance with the box or boxes ticked above.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Your appeal will be considered in the light of the Council's stated policy on Home to School Transport.

Signed:	Date:
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When signed and completed please return to the address at the top of this form

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET BOARD

Report of the Head of Participation - Chris Millis

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Review of School Music Service

Purpose of the Report

The report seeks Members' approval to withdraw from the current joint West Glamorgan music service and to establish a new music service to support Neath Port Talbot schools from 1st September 2016.

Executive Summary

Following joint consultation between the City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council it is proposed that the 'West Glamorgan Music Service' (WGMS) is disaggregated with effect from 31 August 2016 and that a single music service is established to deliver music provision under a service level agreement (SLA) in Neath Port Talbot.

It is proposed that the new service will continue to deliver tuition, enabling children and young people to experience and learn a range of musical instruments and to develop singing abilities.

The music centres, orchestras, ensembles and bands will continue to operate jointly as these are self-funding (from income raised, support from a friends group and parental contributions).

Background

The West Glamorgan Music Service is a joint-working service between Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) and the City and County of Swansea. Staff are employed by each of the local authorities but sometimes work across schools in both councils.

The WGMS is mainly funded by schools via a service level agreement (SLA). The value of the SLA is determined in part by the subsidy provided by the respective local authority. In NPT, the subsidy for the music service for 2015/16 was £267,174.

In Neath Port Talbot, the Council has decided to continue to subsidise the service for the financial year 2016-2017 by £272,935. However, the City and County of Swansea has only committed its subsidy until August 31st 2016. Under such funding arrangements the joint delivery of music provision becomes untenable as it would become increasingly difficult to secure value for money and clear accountancy of the subsidy being provided by NPT.

The disaggregation of the service will provide greater clarity and accountability over the cost of the music service. It will ensure that staff are clear over who is their employer and which schools they work with.

Consultation took place with staff, trade unions, schools, pupils and other interested parties during the period 9 February 2016 until 10 March 2016.

The attached joint local authority consultation paper (Appendix B) was circulated widely and made available. Joint meetings were also held with staff employed by both local authorities and with trade union representatives. Individual meetings and consultation with pupils also took place.

Between both authorities, 966 response letters were received during the consultation period, as well as two petitions (one with 6090 electronic signatures).

The main points raised by those responding to the consultation related to the financial subsidy for the service or a misconception that the proposal was to end the service completely; however, this was not a part of the consultation. The proposal is to create a music service in each of the local authorities, funded by each respective local authority, with staff employed by that local authority to serve the schools (College) maintained by that council.

A summary of the consultation responses is attached at Appendix B.

Financial Impact

There should be minimal direct financial implications from this proposal.

The total budgeted cost for the music service for 2016 /17 is £926,855 which is offset by income of £653,920 and a net subsidy of £272,935 (see also Appendix A).

Costs

The majority of the costs for the service is on salaries and transport. The salary costs are in the region of £805,077 which is largely the costs of peripatetic music teachers and a small administration support service. Transport costs are in the

region of £29,000. Other costs that are attributable to the provision of services include :-

- County Youth Orchestra
- Music Centres
- Youth Music Brass Bands

Income

Budgeted Income for 2016 / 17 is £653,920 which is largely made up of a Service Level Agreement with Neath and Port Talbot schools - £318,750. There is currently strong “buy back” profile from Neath and Port Talbot schools and few schools have indicated that they want to withdraw from this service.

Schools also pay for additional tuition and it is envisaged that this income will be in the region of £247,777.

However, financial pressures could result if schools were not to support the Service Level Agreements. Existing service provided to Powys will also have to be reviewed to ensure that NPT is achieving value for money.

A complete inventory of assets / instruments will be undertaken and split on an equitable basis. Any school pulling out of the full SLA will have assets removed from the school.

There is a potential for redundancy related costs arising from the disaggregation of the Music Service, funded from central budget provision.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impacts

It should be noted that if schools do not buy back the SLA (regardless of the outcome of the proposal to disaggregate the service) then there could be redundancies in either of the authorities, as currently schools in NPTCBC are serviced by staff employed by Swansea and vice-versa. This potential has always been present given that the bulk of the funding has always been generated by schools purchasing the service via SLA, and so a disaggregation of the service does not affect this.

- The disaggregation of the service will lead to a contractual review, with NPT staff being issued with new contracts and job descriptions.
- NPT staff will be placed in NPT schools, based on their skill set and musical specialisms.
- There is currently a hold on recruitment
- The skills audit will identify expertise
- Surplus areas such as “Strings” will be negotiated with CCS where they have deficit and vice versa
- Support for the manager will be implemented immediately in relation to staff audit, skills audit, resource audit and financial management.

Legal Impacts

Legal support will be provided in relation to any employment issues arising from any transfer of employment contract or if any subsequent restructure involves the potential for redundancies.

Risk Management

Schools may pull out of the SLA resulting in possible redundancies. However, early indication through correspondence and surveys have shown a 90% buy back for the financial year of 2016-17

The Service may have a surplus of certain skills and instrumental teaching and a deficit in other areas, e.g. Strings and Brass. However, a skills audit will take place across both authorities

A planned review of the NPT SLA will take place in order to tailor the needs to the demand. This will be in full consultation with both Primary (LLAN) and Secondary (NAASH) senior leaders.

The Service is currently based in Clydach, building is owned by Swansea and therefore no rent is currently charged to NPT. We envisaged that service will re-located to Baglan Training Centre, as the service manager will be located within the same premises as the direct line manager, the Education Coordinator.

There is a review currently operational to identify areas whereby NPT will have a “strong” skill set in one discipline e.g. strings and “weak” in another area e.g. woodwind.

There are currently three individuals who work within the music service that are not on NPT payroll, they invoice NPT for the services that they provide. The staff skills audit will apply to all staff.

Consultation

There has been joint external consultation on a proposal with City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to disaggregate the shared music service and to establish a new music service in Neath Port Talbot to support Neath Port Talbot schools from 1 September 2016

Recommendations

That Members approve the proposals;

1. to withdraw from the current joint West Glamorgan Music Service;
2. and to establish a new music service to support Neath Port Talbot Schools from 1st September 2016.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To confirm the disaggregation of the shared music service and to establish a new music service in NPT to support NPT schools from 1 September 2016.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period

Appendices

Appendix A – Financial report

Appendix B - Consultation paper

Appendix C – Summary of consultation responses (copies of the actual comments received to the On-line Petition in relation to the consultation are available in the Members Room in Port Talbot and Neath Civic Centres.)

Appendix D - EIA screening Form

List of Background Papers

NA

Officer Contact

Mr Chris Millis

Head of Participation

Tel 01639 763226

Email c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk

Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning

Music Tuition		Original	Revised	Original
Actual		Budget	Budget	Budget
2014/15		2015/16	2015/16	2016/17
£		£	£	£
	Expenditure			
	Employees			
789,448	Teachers salaries	778,674	778,674	777,674
25,901	Salaries	26,403	26,403	27,403
2,767	Other Employee Costs	2,763	2,763	2,816
	Transport			
30,442	Transport Costs	24,500	24,500	29,000
	Supplies and Services			
24,023	Materials	37,000	37,000	37,000
2,044	Other Supplies and Services	1,572	1,572	2,103
	Third Party Payments			
21,978	Third Party Payments	0	0	0
	Transfer Payments			
42,390	Transfer Payments	50,170	50,170	50,859
938,993	Gross Expenditure	921,082	921,082	926,855
	Income			
629,795	Gross Income	653,908	653,908	653,920
309,198	Net Expenditure/(Income)	267,174	267,174	272,935
87	Contributions to/(from) Reserves	0	0	0
309,285	Net Expenditure/(Income) after Reserves	267,174	267,174	272,935

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Appendix B

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and City and County of Swansea

Consultation document

Proposal

This consultation is a proposal to end the 'West Glamorgan Music Service' (WGMS) with effect from 31 August 2016, and to create a single music service in each local authority under a service level agreement (SLA) with schools (and with the college in Neath Port Talbot).

Introduction

Background

Following local government reorganisation in 1996, a number of educational services continued to function via 'joint working' between Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) and the City and County of Swansea (CCS).

The role of the WGMS is to support schools to deliver high-quality music education. The musical instrument and vocal tuition can and does contribute significantly to school culture, cohesion and identity. Access to this provision can enhance skills and life chances, ensuring that learners, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have opportunities to realise their potential.

The music service supports and enhances the teaching of music in our schools (and college in NPTCBC) by providing children and young people with opportunities to learn a wide range of instruments, to develop singing and to perform in ensembles, choirs, and other groups, on school premises, in the wider community, and at regional and national level.

The WGMS is currently funded from a number of sources:

- Service level agreement (SLA) buy back from schools/college
- Additional extra-curricular tuition
- Post-16 funding
- Additional out-of-county income
- Education base budget subsidy

Reason for proposal

Austerity measures implemented by central government are having a devastating impact on local government services with settlements for both NPTCBC and CCS being heavily reduced year on year.

There needs to be clarity over the cost of the service to each local authority, particularly in these times of austerity and potentially reducing SLA buy-back from schools, as well as reducing council financial contributions.

Staff need to be clear over who is their employer and which schools they work with.

The needs of schools need to be met in the most cost-effective way to ensure the future sustainability of the services.

Case for change

The key principles for change are:

- To ensure that children and young people within both local authorities continue to have access to learn a wide range of instruments, to develop singing and to perform in ensembles, choirs, and other groups, on school premises, in the wider community, and at regional and national level.
- The WGMS works with all stakeholders to focus on the most appropriate way to deliver a music service to children and young people.
- To continue supporting the West Glamorgan youth ensembles with clear accounting and cost sharing for this element of the service.
- Clarification for staff with regards to their employer, place/s of work and contract of employment.

Issues to consider

As part of the process, all employees affected will be supported by each local authority's relevant policies and procedures. This will involve consultation and access to the 'at risk register' where they will be placed, should they be at risk of losing their job following consultation. Some employees may wish to take voluntary redundancy. Throughout the process, both local authorities will be working with the teacher/support staff trade unions to secure the employment of any staff at risk, where possible.

All staff employed within the WGMS will potentially be affected.

The proposal will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for a period as potentially all staff could be at risk. Staff are used to working with particular schools under the WGMS but could be required to attend different schools and in a different authority if the proposal goes ahead. This could have an impact on travelling expenses. All assets of the service will need to be shared between the two councils and new locations for the separate offices could be sought.

Both local authorities intend to continue supporting the West Glamorgan youth ensembles with clear accounting and cost sharing for this element of the service.

Staffing

Neath Port Talbot – current staffing

The total hours of music teaching are 538 hrs (19.56 FTE approx.) per week by staff employed by NPT.

The total hours of instructors at the Music Centres are 12hrs per week (0.4 FTE approx.)

The total hours of admin are 36.75 (1FTE approx.) hrs per week by staff employed by NPTCBC.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council - proposed staffing

One manager, admin support, a team of peripatetic teachers and a team of instructors (non-peripatetic at Dwr y Felin, Cwmtawe and Pontardawe Brass Centre).

The total amount of teaching hours needed for September 2016 are currently calculated to be 384 hours per week (14 FTE approx). This means that effectively there will be a reduction of 164 hours per week (5.96FTE approx.).

There will be a reduction in hours and/or grade of admin support in line with the duties of the new service.

The total amount of instructor hours needed will be 12hrs per week (0.4FTE approx.).

City and County of Swansea – current staffing

The City and County of Swansea currently employ staff to provide 568.01hrs across the local authorities (21.8 FTE approx.)

City and County of Swansea – proposed staffing

Based on current buy-back levels from schools in Swansea the following hours of peripatetic support are estimated to be needed per week for September 2016:

Curriculum – 58.85
Strings – 204.64
Brass – 93.98
Woodwind – 101.83
Drama – 2.66
Guitar – 47.75
Percussion – 42.08
Keyboard – 7.25
Harp – 23.58
Vocal – 22.08

The total hours required (approx. 604 or 23 FTE) is greater than the current number of staff hours paid by Swansea, although subject specialisms may not match requirements from schools.

Travel time, management and administration will be added to this estimated structure.

Peripatetic staff in both local authorities will continue to be paid under the school teachers' pay and conditions document. With effect from 1 September 2016, their confirmed employing council will issue all staff with a new contract.

Proposed services provided

- To provide regular weekly instrumental/vocal tuition to pupils
- To provide classroom music teaching support – by arrangement
- To provide INSET for schools/college and in-house staff – by arrangement
- To provide pre-inspection advice and guidance
- To serve as a PPA resource for schools
- To continue to provide dance and drama to certain schools – by arrangement.

What do schools say?

“At our school, we feel a deep commitment to the importance of music for children of all abilities and from all backgrounds. Music gives all pupils the ability to express their creativity and has a tremendous impact on self-worth and esteem. Children who experience difficulties at home and/or in school can achieve and get involved in things which they would otherwise have no chance of doing. The educational effect that music has in terms of literacy and numeracy are also immense. I would be extremely reluctant to cut, what is, a truly wonderful and enriching provision.”

“It would deny our pupils, many of whom do not get the opportunity to access private music tuition outside of school due to the geographical location and economic circumstance of many of our families, the opportunity to learn an instrument, to perform in school and community events, to learn how to read music and to widen their appreciation for and knowledge of music, musicians and musical instruments.”

Success

- A strong tradition of an excellent music making
- Comprehensive high-class instrumental/vocal/classroom curriculum provision to schools
- Consistently high standards achieved across all key stages
- Customer satisfaction and buy back

- Friends of West Glamorgan Music Service (FWGYM)
- Internal and external practical examination results
- Youth Arts Wales involvement
- Youth music performance opportunities and annual concert at the Brangwyn Hall and Margam Festival. Tours to Lake Garda with string/wind orchestras and brass band with invitations to return on future dates.
- First class inspection reports with Estyn.
- Workshop days provided to schools and partnership with projects from outside agencies.
- Musical instruments, equipment and library for schools. Under the ERW consortium, joint working systems are being further developed across the consortia including specialist instrument loan, music libraries, and performance opportunities.
- West Glamorgan Music is highly regarded by schools and the new services in each local authority will prioritise maintaining this high standard of delivery.

Equality impact

Each local authority has undertaken the required Equality Impact Assessments.

Consultation

The formal 30-day statutory consultation on this proposal will be undertaken during the period Tuesday 9 February 2016 until Thursday 10 March 2016, with staff, trade unions, relevant headteacher groups and other stakeholders.

Consultation will be facilitated via team and one-to-one meetings where relevant.

The outcome of consultation will be reported through each local authority's relevant HR process.

How to respond

Responses may be made to:

Director of Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning, c/o Chris Millis, Head of Participation, ELLL Directorate, Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ.

c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk

Chief Education Officer, c/o Nick Williams, Head of Learner Support Service, Civic Centre, Swansea, SA1 3SN.

education@swansea.gov.uk

Music Service Consultation Exercise 9 February 2016 - 10 March 2016

Number of consultation responses received: 966

Support Proposal/Happy	0
Against Proposal/Unhappy	965
Undecided	1
<i>Responses from:</i>	
Learner	90
Parent/Carer	57
Member of Staff	12
School	2
Elected Member/AM/MP/MEP/Trade Union	5
Other	802

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	Point Raised	Local Authority (LA) Response	Number of Written Responses Raising Point	% of Responses Raising Point
1	The respondent makes the point that they do not want the Council to withdraw the subsidy. Some respondents make it clear that they do not want the service to split and some say it may end up costing more.	This proposal is to create new sustainable services for each local authority and is not about a financial change to the service.	407	42.1%

2	The respondent thinks that the funding subsidy should be phased out over a number of years, giving more time for cost saving strategies.	This proposal is to create new sustainable services for each local authority and is not about a financial change to the service.	30	3.1%
3	The respondent says that opportunities for learners will be lost (e.g. making friends, acquiring skills, creativity, travel, concerts and extra-curricular activities). Some respondents have concerns because learners enjoy different subjects.	This was not part of the consultation. The proposal to create new services for each local authority should not affect opportunities for learners. The orchestras and ensembles will continue to operate jointly.	136	14.1%
4	The respondent says that music can support the learner with development including communication, confidence, literacy, numeracy, mental health etc.	This is recognised. This was not part of the consultation. The proposal to create new services for each local authority should not affect opportunities for learners.	724	74.9%
5	The respondent says that the West Glamorgan Music Service (WGMS) is able to provide a bigger orchestra and range of instruments and is afraid that this will be lost if both Council's stop working together.	This was not part of the consultation. The proposal to create new services for each local authority should not affect opportunities for learners. The orchestras and ensembles will continue to operate jointly.	79	8.2%
6	The respondent has concerns regarding staff jobs, future employment and potential redundancies.	If all schools buy back in to the service level agreement there should be minimal impact on staffing. This is a decision for individual governing bodies.	27	2.8%
7	The respondent says that the service is ending and that this means future generations will not be able to access music provision. Sometimes the respondent says that this is because of stretched school budgets and schools being unable to buy back into the Service Level Agreement (SLA).	There is no proposal to end the service, only to have a clearly defined service in each authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	130	13.5%

8	The respondent has concerns that learners from low-income families will be disadvantaged as they will be unable to afford to pay for music tuition. Some respondents say that music plays a part in fighting poverty.	The local authority is not proposing a charge for learners. Schools that buy into the music service level agreement (or from external providers) decide individually if they wish to charge parents a fee. Schools will, through the flexibility delegated budgets allow, and, in particular, the pupil deprivation grant, be able to ensure that no learners are disadvantaged in their ability to access the service.	699	72.4%
9	The respondent says that the staff within the West Glamorgan Music Service are committed, go the extra mile and sometimes work without pay at music centres.	Staff commitment is recognised. This proposal should not affect staffing greatly if schools continue to buy back into the service level agreement. Music centres should always have been self-funding from parental contributions.	32	3.3%
10	The respondent has a concern that disaggregating the West Glamorgan Music Service is taking place before local government reorganisation and is going against Welsh government guidance.	At present there is no clarity about the timing or detail of local government reorganisation. We need a clearly defined service in each authority with strong, unambiguous, transparent staffing and financial accounting. The current arrangement is unsustainable as it is not feasible to correctly cost the service or risks for either local authority and therefore schools.	643	66.6%
11	The respondent is concerned that Swansea is falling behind or will fall behind Neath Port Talbot as they are continuing to support the service short-term.	Local authorities, due to financial pressures, have to make very difficult financial decisions. Swansea has agreed to continue with financial support into the financial year 2016-2017 to allow the service to become more sustainable.	119	12.3%
12	The respondent fears that Welsh culture, heritage and community partnerships through music will be lost	There is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	650	67.3%

13	The respondent fears that the future careers of learners involved with the West Glamorgan Music Service will be harmed as GCSE or music grades may be affected. Some respondents say that they benefitted from music themselves when in education, others are parents/carers who are concerned about their children.	There is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each local authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	43	4.5%
14	The respondent is concerned that there will be a period of disruption whilst both services separate and two new services are formed. Some respondents are concerned about the logistics of splitting e.g. sharing instruments, skilled staff in specific fields of music, cover for maternity and sickness.	There is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	529	54.8%
15	The respondent makes the point that the West Glamorgan Music Service has already faced severe cuts and cannot sustain any more.	There is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	595	61.6%
16	The respondent says that the current proposals conflict with the Council commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).	There is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	629	65.1%
17	The respondent says that a private provider could not deliver the same high standard of tuition as the WGMS. Some respondents make the point that the pay and terms and conditions of staff would also be reduced if forced to work for a private provider.	There is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	127	13.1%

18	The respondent suggests that the Council could use income to provide a subsidy to the West Glamorgan Music Service (e.g. the sale of the Civic Centre, charging for events/concerts, exploring sponsorship, discussing early retirement/voluntary redundancy with staff and reducing working hours to keep costs low).	These suggestions are helpful though it is should be noted that there is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each local authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	13	1.3%
20	The respondent makes the point that they would like the West Glamorgan Music Service to be enhanced.	Schools are the users of the service and identify the level of support that they require.	17	1.8%
21	The respondent says that consultation and communication on the proposals has been poor. Some respondents say that they wish to see the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), but have been unable to do so. Some respondents say that the consultation has been different in the both authorities.	Both local authorities have their own guidance on consultation and communication and these have been adhered to.	10	1.0%
22	The respondent makes the point that they are supportive of the opportunity to review, monitor and reform the service so it can become more efficient.	These suggestions are helpful though it is should be noted that there is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each local authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	2	0.2%
23	The respondent makes the point that the Council is not being supportive of the Donaldson Report (Successful Futures) and is not trying to improve results (e.g. PISA).	These points are recognised though it is should be noted that there is no proposal to end the service, only to have clearly defined services in each local authority with clear financial accounting and staffing.	5	0.5%

Conclusion -

Responses include letters from:
National Union of Teachers (NUT)
NASUWT

Penclawdd Junior Band
West Wales Brass Band Association
Ospreys Supporters Choir
Neath and District Trades Union Council.
Suzy Davies AM (Assembly Member, South Wales West)

Petitions

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Y Login Fach (167 signatures).
Friends of West Glamorgan Music Service (WGMS) (6090 signatures).

Late responses

A petition was received from the parish of Llansamlet (received 11 March 2016 - after closing date). (68 signatures).
Five email responses as at 17/03/2016.
Two hard copy responses as at 17/03/2016.

For information

Nine letters were received with no name. These have not been included.
A letter asking questions was received from Byron Davies MP. Leader of City and County of Swansea responded.
A letter was received from Swansea headteachers. Chief Education Officer responded.

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

Please ensure that you refer to the Draft Screening Form Guidance while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact Corporate Strategy or your directorate Heads of Service Equality Group Champion.

Section 1

What service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Music

Directorate: ELLL

Q1(a) What are you screening for relevance?

Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan	Proposal
x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) Please name and describe below

To create a single NPT music service (this service is already in existence, the operational arrangements will continue throughout the borough)

Q2(a) What does Q1a relate to?

Direct front line
service delivery

Indirect front line
service delivery

Indirect back room
service delivery

x (H)

(M)

(L)

(b) Do your customers/clients access this service...?

Because they
need to

Because they
want to

Because it is
automatically provided to
everyone in NPT

On an internal
basis
i.e. Staff

(H)

x (M)

(M)

(L)

Q3 What is the potential impact on the following protected characteristics?

	High Impact (H)	Medium Impact (M)	Low Impact (L)	Don't know (H)
Age	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		x
Marriage & civil partnership	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Welsh language	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4(a) How visible is this service/function/policy/procedure/ project/strategy to the general public?

High visibility
to general public

Medium visibility
to general public

Low visibility
to general public

(H)

x (M)

(L)

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

(b) What is the potential risk to the council’s reputation? (Consider the following impacts – legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk
to reputation

(H)

Medium risk
to reputation

x (M)

Low risk
to reputation

(L)

Q5 How did you score?
Please tick the relevant box

**MOSTLY H and/or M → HIGH PRIORITY → EIA to be completed
Please go to Section 2**

**MOSTLY L → LOW PRIORITY / NOT RELEVANT → Do not complete EIA
Please go to Q6 followed by Section 2**

Q6 If after completing the EIA screening process you determine that this service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EIA you must provide adequate explanation below (Please use additional pages if necessary).

The service is already in existence, is accessible to children and adults. It provides locations that are accessible to those with disabilities. It is fully accessible in terms of Gender, Race, religion / belief. The service also offers the service through the medium of Welsh.

Section 2

Screener- This to be completed by the person responsible for completing this screening
Name: Chris Millis
Location: ELLL
Telephone Number: 01639 763226
Date: 3/2/16
Approval by Head of Service
Name: Chris Millis
Position: Head of Participation
Date: 3/2/16

Please ensure this completed form is filed appropriately within your directorate because it may be required as evidence should a legal challenge be made regarding compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET BOARD

28th April 2016

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING – N. JARMAN

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

WESTERN BAY YOUTH JUSTICE AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide committee with an update on the performance of the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service, with specific attention to the local data available for Neath Port Talbot.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The report provides a brief outline of:-

The last nine months performance as reported to the Youth Justice Board but highlighting Neath Port Talbot specific performance where available .

The findings of the Short Quality Screening Inspection conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation in October 2015

3. Background

3.1 Youth Offending Services/Teams (YOS/Ts) are statutory multi-agency partnerships who have a legal duty to co-operate in order to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area funded from a variety of sources including UK Government, Welsh Government and

the statutory partners. (i.e. the Local Authority, Police, the National Probation Service and Health).

3.2 In December 2012 the three Local Authority Cabinets agreed that regional collaboration should be taken forward for mutual benefit an interim combined Western Bay Regional YOS Management Board was established to take this work forward. In May 2014 the interim board arrangement ended and the first Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service (WBYJ&EIS) Management Board was held and all local management boards ceased. The management board is chaired by the Neath Port Talbot Director of Social Services, Health and Housing and has a membership in line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act including Cabinet Members from all three local authorities.

3.3 The production of a Youth Justice Plan is a statutory duty of the Local Authority under Part 3, Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The plan sets out:

How youth justice services are to be provided and funded, and

How the Youth Offending Service established by the Local Authority is to be composed and funded, how it will operate and what function it is to carry out.

3.4 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 39(1) placed a duty on each Local Authority, acting with its statutory partners (Police, Probation and Health) to establish Youth Offending Teams in their local area to deliver youth justice services. Section 38(3) of the Act placed a duty on the Local Authority and its statutory partners to make payment towards the expenditure incurred in providing youth justice services.

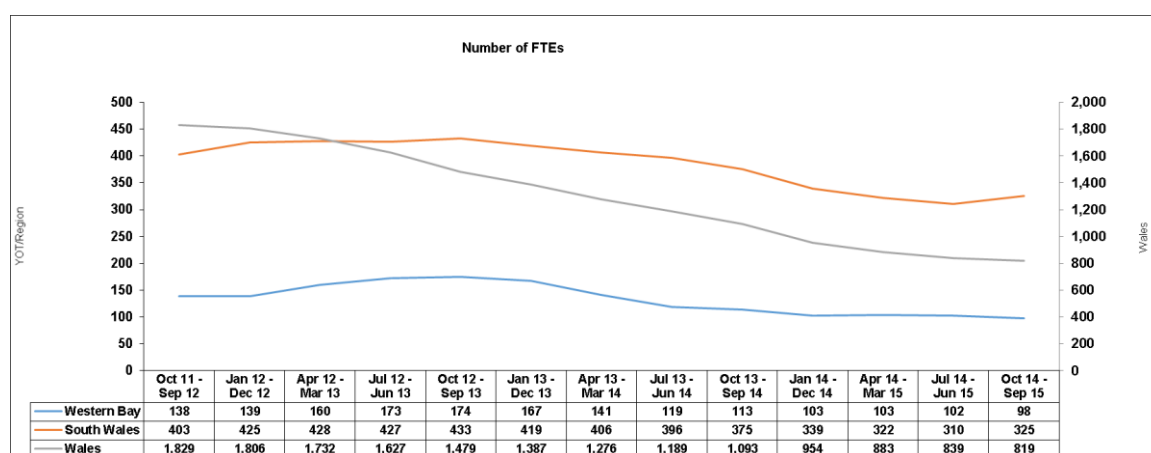
3.5 The Youth Justice Plan for 2014/2015 was one of transition and ensuring that performance did not suffer. The end of year statistics previously presented to committee evidenced that not only had performance not suffered in NPT but the service had efficiently absorbed grant funding reductions and achieved efficiency savings for all three local authorities.

4. Current Situation

4.1 There is an expectation that YOS's reduce the number of children and young people entering the youth justice system year on year. The difficulty being experienced by the Western Bay Service is that the

numbers reduced early on during 2009 and 2011 with the pilot and the roll out of the Bureau approach to diversion.

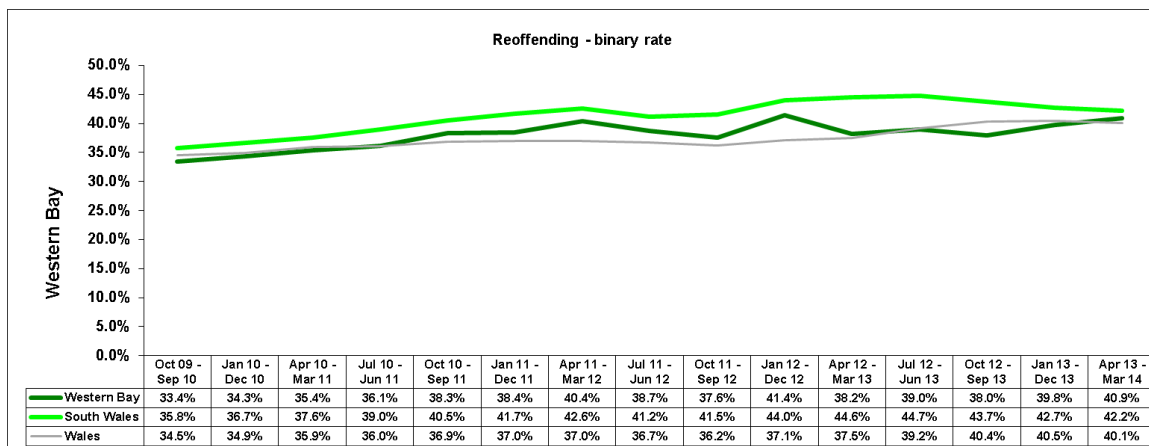
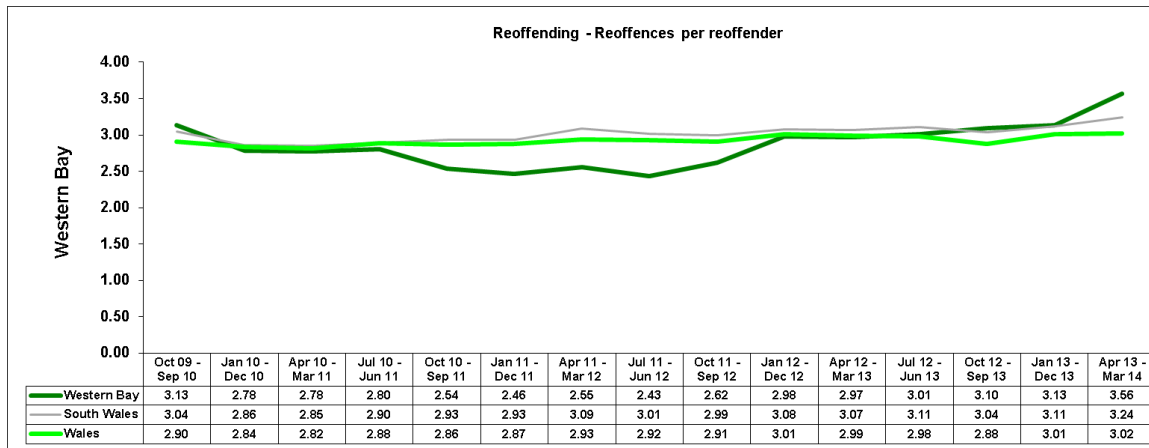
4.2 The table below from the YJB quarter three data return illustrates that whilst the Western Bay has a slower rate of reduction in the number of young people entering the Youth Justice system we continue to have some of the lowest numbers per head of population. There has been a 13.4% decrease in FTEs when comparing October to September 2014 / 2015 against October to September 2013/14. This is in comparison with a 13.3% decrease in South Wales and a 25.1% decrease across Wales.



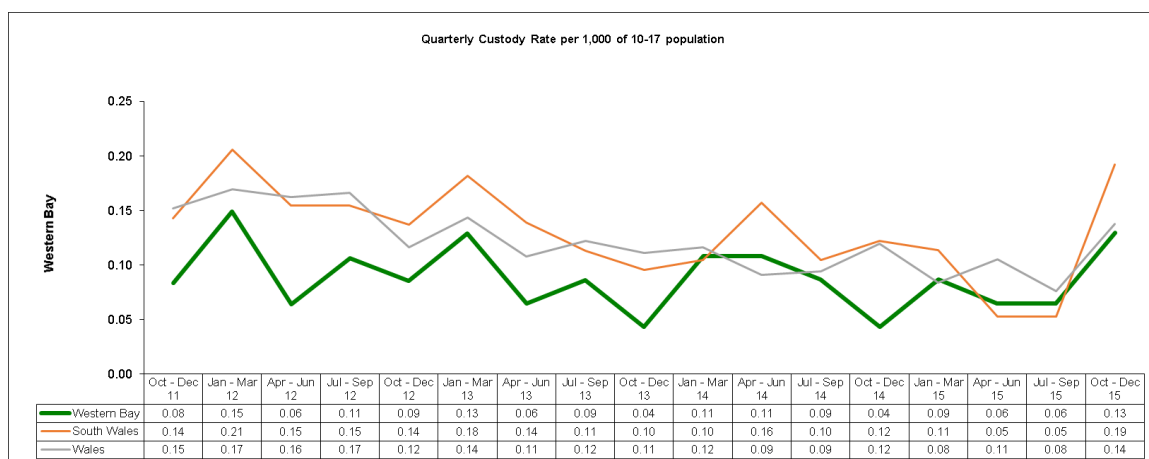
4.3 Reducing reoffending presents a challenge to most YOS's at this time. As the numbers entering the system reduce, through effective early intervention and diversion, so those within the system present as far more complex with more entrenched behaviours.

4.4 A new reporting methodology has been introduced in quarter three calculating the number of re offences by the reoffender. An increase from 2.97 to 3.56 has been reported by Western Bay for the comparison period April-March 2012/13 against April-March 2013/14. South Wales are reporting an increase from 3.07 to 3.24 and Wales is reporting an increase from 2.99 to 3.02. The binary rate has increased from 38.2% to 40.9% when comparing April to March 2014/13 against April to March 2013/12. The binary rate for South Wales has decreased from 44.6% to 42.2% and for Wales the rate has increased from 37.5% to 40.1%. The diagrams below show the trend that Western Bay has to now find a way to address. This is difficult to break down on a local level at the moment as this is reported directly from PNC data. Work is ongoing to analyse the data further by using the YJB reoffending toolkit which may be of interest to the committee at later date.

4.5 The percentage increase has to be understood against a backdrop of the ever reducing number in the cohort. The number of "offenders" has decreased from 309 in 2012/13 to 269 in 2013/14 but there has been a rise in the number of offences committed.



4.6 Reducing the use of custody has also provided the Western Bay Service with a challenge. The annual number of custodial sentences can be reported as this is information that we do not need validated by the YJB. There were 15 custodial sentences in 2014/15 and in 2015/16 there were a total of 16. Whilst this is a rise in number, analysis of the sentencing shows the serious nature of the offences before the court. Offences included rape, robbery and grievous bodily harm. There were four young people who are normally resident in NPT who received custodial sentences. Three of them were sentenced to custodial sentences for robbery; two of these young people were in court for the first time. The use of custodial sentences across Western Bay, whilst not reducing, remains below the level for S. Wales and Wales where a similar pattern of increase can be seen.



4.7 Further analysis of the number of young people committing a serious offence with no previous involvement with the service was undertaken and in NPT there were six young people identified. These were aged between 14 years and 17 years of age. The offences were one of arson, two of robbery and three of a sexual nature. All committed by males. Four were known to Childrens Services (two being Looked After), two had additional learning needs, substance misuse was a factor for two of the offences and two of the young people were high achievers in education with good support networks. One young man had done well in education but became socially isolated on leaving school. As stated earlier none of these young people were previously known to the service.

4.8 The Key performance measures above are the National YJB KPI's for England and Wales. There are additional Welsh KPI's for which NPT data can be provided due to the way it is reported. These performance measures all relate to access to devolved services. The Wales only measures relate to those subject to statutory interventions and do not include statistical data relating to the prevention and diversion cases.

4.9 Education training and employment is key to a young person succeeding in life. The minimum number of hour's access recommended by the YJB for school age children is 25. From data relating to April 2015 to December 2015 25 statutory community interventions closed. Of these closed cases the average number of hours offered to children of school age is reported as 23.8 hours per week offered at the beginning of the order with only 18.3 hours being attended. At the half way stage of the order the attendance had increased to 22 hours. This however was not maintained and reduced again to the original number of hours accessed. The figures relate to small numbers so one child or young

person disengaging at the end of an order can have a huge impact on the statistic as was the case on this occasion.

4.10 For those young people post 16 the YJB recommend a minimum number of 16 hours education training or employment per week should be accessed. From the NPT local data an average offer of 11.9 hours per week is recorded with 8.4 hours being attended. This then shows a steady increase in the hours offered from 11.9 to 15.8 hours at the mid-point and 20.1 hours offered at the end of the order. However of the 20.1 hours offered, only 12.5 were being attended, an area that needs further attention from the service. There is also a need to ensure that those NPT young people leaving custody access provision at the earliest opportunity and are supported to maintain attendance.

4.11 Access to suitable accommodation is also a Wales only measure and whilst the majority of the closed cases were in suitable accommodation, three young people were recorded as spending time in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for a period of time, something the local authority is working hard to stop happening. All those NPT young people leaving custody were in suitable accommodation on release as part of their resettlement plan.

4.12 Of the 25 closed cases 20 identified substance misuse as a risk factor. All of the 20 cases received assessments within the set five days and appropriate treatment within 10 days of the assessment.

4.13. There remains a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service nurse within the NPT locality team. 11 young people were referred on for further assessment and of the 11, three refused a service and six went on to access the appropriate level of intervention within 10 days of assessment.

5. Inspection Update

5.1 The service has been subject to a Short Quality Screening Inspection conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). It was explained by the lead inspector that the fact that the service was not subject to a Full Joint Inspection is an indication that from the information available to the Inspectorate which includes the plan and performance data that the service is not causing concern. The inspection was conducted from 26-28 October 2015 as part of the wider HMIP programme of inspection of youth offending work. The report was published on the HMI Probation website on 2 December 2015. To put the inspection in context; the aim of the youth justice system is to

prevent offending by children and young people. Good quality assessment and planning at the start of a sentence is critical to increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes. 20 cases of children and young people who had recently offended and were supervised by the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service were examined. Wherever possible, this was undertaken in conjunction with the allocated case manager, thereby offering a learning opportunity for staff. The inspection confirmed that the service is not causing concern and concluded with three areas of strength and two areas of improvement listed below:

Key strengths;

- Assessing factors linked to the offending of children and young people.
- Assessing the vulnerability issues of children and young people.
- Efforts to secure the engagement with children and young people and their parents/carers.

Areas requiring improvement;

- Reviews of risk management plans reflect significant changes in the circumstances of children and young people when relevant.
- Evidence of the impact of management oversight on the quality of work needs to be clear.

5. Financial Impact

5.1 There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

7. Workforce Impacts

7.1 Where there are no impacts linked to the report then the heading must remain it must be highlighted that there are no implications e.g. "there are no workforce impacts associated with this report".

8. Legal Impacts

8.1 There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

9. Risk Management

9.1 There are no risk management issues associated with this report".

10. Consultation

10.1 There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

11. Recommendations

11.1 The report is provided for information. There are no recommendations requiring a decision.

12. Reasons for Proposed Decision

Not appropriate

13. Implementation of Decision

Not appropriate

14. Crime and Disorder Impact

14.1 The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with "due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area". The content of the report evidences the work being undertaken by the NPT locality team to positively impact in crime and disorder through early intervention and continued effort to reduce offending and reoffending.

15. Appendices

No appendices

16. List of Background Papers

No additional papers.

Officer Contact

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