



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

22nd January 2025

Report of the Head of Education Development - Chris Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Impact of the support by the Case Assessment and Progression team

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with information in relation to Neath Port Talbot Case Assessment and Progression (CAP) Team.

Background:

The Case Assessment and Progression (CAP) team is a new service that became operational for academic year 2023/24. The team was created as Headteachers were expressing concerns that various services and agencies (internal and external to the Council) were either providing support for pupils at risk of exclusion at a too slow rate or were waiting upon one another before their own interventions could begin. In some cases progress wasn't being made as services were duplicating interventions and there was a lack of a joined-up approach.

The team work with pupils who are at potential risk of a future exclusion from school, disengagement, poor attendance, becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) or all of the above. The pupils need to be already open to more than one service area and who would benefit from a co-ordinated and collective approach to supporting that pupil with solutions that will allow continued positive engagement. The team is intended to provide intervention as early as possible to reduce the risks and support pupils in achieving positive outcomes.

CAP officers meet with the school, family and young person to better understand what the current situation is and where any barriers to success lie. Efforts to date have already revealed some misunderstandings between home and school through a lack of positive dialogue. The CAP officers will then work with the school, family, young person and other service providers and agencies, both internal and external to the council, to remove the barriers to provide a coordinated and collective approach.

Whilst CAP officers work closely with families and pupils to understand their positions, they do not provide direct support or interventions themselves; instead the core purpose of the service is to coordinate and ensure other services and agencies undertake their commitments and interventions when and where they have said they would.

There is a dedicated secretarial support administrator for the team who ensures comprehensive minutes of multi-disciplinary meetings are kept and circulated to partners, and more critically allotted actions for those services/agencies are logged for them to be held to account over the commitments they have given to supporting the pupil.

Within the CAP team there are also three Education Transition Workers engaging directly with pupils who need support as they transfer into a new school or placement reducing the risk of exclusion. The main areas of focus are: children/young people who

have been permanently excluded from a school within the LA; children/young people moving into the LA and in-year transfers with complex needs; and also children/young people who are looked after. The transition workers create a tailored and bespoke transition plan for each pupil they work with. This might include initial visits to a new school after hours or facilitating information exchange meetings to share relevant information between the previous and new school. There have been some excellent positive outcomes of the transition support provided to date.

The team also has a tuition coordinator who arranges packages of education for pupils not currently able to attend school for an extended period of time for reasons such as: following a permanent exclusion; long-term medical issues, and also complex hard-to-place pupils to help them to become 'school ready' when a suitable place is identified.

Tutors provide the tuition coordinator with regular reports on pupils' engagement and attainment which has fed into plans to get them ready to learn and back into school. Having the freedom to work from the pupils' area of interest they are able to informally assess and provide valuable feedback. Additionally, tuition has also been provided for some children with ALN whilst specialist placements are arranged/finalised. This has proved successful and in one case the tuition was part of the integration plan into the specialist placement.

Although the CAP manager and one CAP officer were in post from August, 2023 the team wasn't fully staffed until November, 2023. However, the team has quickly become embedded and is working well with all secondary schools and with some primary schools, depending on identified need.

Since its conception the team has worked with, and closed, 49 CAP cases, 45 Transition cases and 29 tuition cases. The current open caseload, across the whole team is a further 71 pupils.

The team receives referrals for CAP and transition support from every secondary school in the County Borough. The input with primary schools is currently low and this is primarily due to primary schools 'managing behaviour' without multiple agencies/services being involved. We have seen many successful transitions and CAP cases with considerable improvements in behaviour, attendance and engagement. The multi-disciplinary approach has focussed work and meant action has taken place in a more timely way.

Early in 2024 it became evident that we had a growing number of pupils either receiving, or facing, their second permanent exclusion. It was identified that these pupils, and others, are not necessarily academic and would respond better to vocational learning pathways. Therefore, the team established links and worked with the Skills and Training Department in Tir Morfa to offer a bespoke package for a small number of pupils in year 10 and 11. This was a successful venture and a number of pupils were identified to access Skills and Training for post 16 training opportunities preventing them becoming NEET.

Building on this work with Skills and Training, the CAP team have worked with other alternative providers to put in place bespoke packages of intervention/education for over twenty pupils in the current academic year 24/25 to date. These pupils include some twice permanently excluded and some at imminent risk of either their first or second permanent exclusion. The packages are provided by Skills and Training, Positive Programmes and Bulldogs Boxing. Transport and packed lunches have been provided where the pupils meet the criteria, for example, FSM. The team have been supported in this by Access Managed Services and Passenger Transport.

The engagement with the alternative provision is part of a wider timetabled approach so that the pupils are still able to access core teaching and learning subjects. In a number of cases the change of place (and face) has helped develop social skills, improved wellbeing and resulted in the pupils being calmer and ready to learn on their

timetabled school days. They are accessing learning opportunities that support their basic skills but are delivered as part of health and wellbeing activities, youth engagement activities, fitness activities and a variety of bespoke learning packages. Pupils have the ability to attain qualifications in a range of areas, some of which are equivalent to GCSEs (e.g. SWEET).

As a new service the team have made an impactful start supporting some of the most complex and challenging pupils in terms of changing their behaviours. There have been a good number of successes, however, there have also been many challenges and some setbacks in terms of engagement. Links with internal and external services and agencies has become stronger and where there are lessons learnt from individual cases these are fed back to respective schools.

There remains a lot of work to do by the team and Members will continue to be provided with regular reports of this work by the Case Assessment and Progression Team.

Financial Impacts:

No Implications.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The information contained within this report covers all of Neath Port Talbot.

Workforce Impacts:

No impact.

Legal Impacts:

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Risk Management Impacts:

There is no identified risk in relation to this report.

Crime and Disorder Impacts:

Many of the pupils working with CAP have had previous involvement with law enforcement due to their behaviours in the community. Some have previously been subject to regular PPNs in relation to anti-social behaviour. Pupils out of school are a safeguarding concern and there have been instances where some of our permanently excluded pupils have been reported causing disturbances in Neath and Port Talbot town centres.

CAP have close working relationships with the Youth Justice Service and have been able to directly refer pupils to education and prevention work with YJS.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

That Members note the update provided within this report.

Appendices:

None.

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