

# **NEATH Port Talbot COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board**

**17<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

### **Report of the Head of Participation Chris Millis**

#### **Matter for Information**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All wards.

#### **Youth Service Update**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

**To provide members with an update on the Local Authority Youth Service.**

#### **Executive Summary**

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service consists of 29 Full time staff and 62 part time staff funded via a mixture of Core funding and external Grant Funding. The youth service seeks out to offer young people opportunities to learn and develop through good quality youth work interventions.

The service has both open access and targeted services which together have worked with over 6,000 young people aged 11-25.

The Youth Services Keeping in Touch Team and Legacy Team have made good progress in helping reduce the number of young people leaving school to become Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to our lowest ever figure of 2.3%.

The Community based Youth Clubs have maintained the number of young people attending over the years with 1,230 individual young people attending them in 2017/18.

The Youth Service has been active in supporting schools by using the mobile provision to provide lunch club activities for young people.

Targeted work has increased with grants now making up for over 50% of the youth service funding. This work supports vulnerable young people as individuals and also in groups and the youth service is now responsible for running the Families First Funded Young Carers provision.

The Youth Council has grown from strength to strength and this was recognised this year with the Youth Council being awarded a National Youth Excellence Award.

Our Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme has maintained its high standards and is still within the top 3 highest achieving schemes in Wales.

The healthy relationships and sexual education sessions delivered to young people is now dependant on Core funding due to the withdrawal of funding from the local health board.

Outcomes for young people have increased during 2017/18 with over 600 individual young people gaining a nationally recognised accreditation.

The Youth Service has recently been awarded the Bronze Level Quality Mark for Youth Work.

## **Background**

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service currently employs 29 full time staff and 62 part time staff to deliver a range of supportive and educational activities to young people aged 11-25. Please see the Youth Service Structure attached (Appendix 1)

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service sets out in its Vision to encourage and enable young people to have fun, participate in all opportunities available to them and to gain the skills needed to become happy, confident and fulfilled adults and members of their communities. This is backed up by the service Mission Statement to deliver good quality learning, social and recreational opportunities and activities through highly motivated, well trained and enthusiastic youth workers in safe and friendly places accessible to all young people.

### **Young People in Neath Port Talbot**

According to the Office for National Statistics mid 2017 data there are 23,450 young people aged 10-24 resident in Neath Port Talbot. Young people within this age group account for just over 16.5% of the total population. There are slightly more males than females 52.2%/47.8% split.

The 2011 census reports that 6,197 or 25% of young people aged 10-24 are able to speak Welsh. The number of Welsh speaking young people increases at the lower end of the age range with 46% of Welsh speakers in the age range 10-14, 34% aged 15-19 and 20% aged 20-24.

Neath Port Talbot has 12 LSOAs that are within the top 10% of the most deprived communities in Wales (WIMD 2014). There are two Communities First Delivery Areas across the County Borough. Neath Port Talbot has 42 electoral wards.

## **Needs Analysis**

### ***Youth population***

Wards with the most young people are predominantly those within and around the urban areas of Neath and Port Talbot and those that

make up the Afan Communities First Cluster area. The highest actual numbers of young people aged 11-25 are in Bryn and Cwmavon (1109), Bryncoch South (1000), Neath East (1050), Port Talbot (1023), Sandfields East (1177) and Sandfields West (1247). Young people in these areas account for, on average, 17% of the total population. Some wards have a smaller number of young people but the concentration of young people, as a percentage of the total population, is larger than the average of 17% e.g. Briton Ferry West (19.2%) and Gwynfi (19.3%).

The top 10 wards that have the highest number of young people as a percentage of the total youth population are Sandfields West, Sandfields East, Bryn and Cwmavon (5%), Aberavon, Baglan, Bryncoch South, Neath East, Neath South, Pontardawe and Port Talbot (4%).

Half (50%) of the total youth population are concentrated in roughly one third of the wards (12 wards) in Neath Port Talbot.

### ***Unemployment rate:***

Year 11 destination statistics collated by Careers Wales West indicate that the number young people transitioning from school into NEET has reduced steadily from 7.1% in 2009 to 2.3% in 2017. In 2013 the NEET figure increased to 4.4%. The increase was attributed to the reduction in ENGAGE provision, improved response rates to the Careers Wales survey, lack of social mobility within the population and lack of employment and employed status training opportunities. The latest information from Careers Wales shows Neath Port Talbot's lowest ever figure of 2.3%.

Using the Careers Wales Tier Model the number of NEET young people aged 16 – 18 has decreased to its lowest level since our records began. This is not to say that isn't an issue for young people and over recent years the number of NEET young people has been problematically high. At its highest points in August 2015 and August 2016 there were over 350 young people in Tier 1-3. The Youth Service and partners have made a sustained effort and reduced this figure to under 200 Tier 1-3 young people in August 2018. Further work to reduce the NEET figure is ongoing. Please see the latest graph (attached as Appendix 2)

## **Youth Service Provision**

The Youth Service currently has contact with 27% of 11-25 year olds within Neath Port Talbot through a mix of universal, targeted and specialist provision. This is above the Welsh average of 16% and places us with the 4<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of members in Wales.

### ***Universal provision:***

This is open access provision that is available to all young people aged 11-25 (although youth clubs are 11-18) and delivered through the following methods:

- 12 youth clubs – centre based (*Blaengwynfi, Bryn, Croeserw, Cymmer, Sandfields, Taibach, Bryncoch, Cimla, Crynant, Cwmllynfell, Glynneath, Seven Sisters.*)
- Rolling Zone – mobile provision
- Lunch Clubs – base within 4 Secondary Schools (Ysgol Bae Baglan, Ystalyfera, Cwmtawe, Llangatwg)

Although described as universal provision, it is not universally available across the whole of Neath Port Talbot. Youth club provision is mainly located in areas of high deprivation but not always in those areas that have the highest numbers of young people or those with the greatest concentration of young people.

There are currently 12 community based youth clubs geographically spread throughout the local authority in a number of community settings for example; schools, community centres and or buildings [see appendix 3]. They each vary in relation to the number of nightly sessions and opening times offered to young people. Attendance can fluctuate, with the highest attendance at Taibach youth club and the lowest at Bryn youth club. During 2017/18 the number of young people [contacts] attending our youth clubs equate to 1230 [542 Female and 688 Male] and the ages ranges of young people are between 11-19 [see appendix 4].

There are at least 4 youth practitioners in attendance in each youth club, one of which will be a worker in charge [responsible for the operational/supervision and management of the youth club. The others through a culture of participation, provide and developing opportunities and initiatives that foster learning that respond to young people's needs. This is undertaken by utilising our youth work curriculum framework, which provides a foundation for practitioners to plan deliver and evaluate their work systematically, measure outcomes achieved with young people and address our Youth Service aims and the principles that inform youth work in Wales. Such outcomes include accreditation programmes, Millennium Volunteer Junior Leaderships Awards and certification of achievements that provide recognition of young people's learning in relation to our curriculum framework. Young people are also offered an opportunity to engage in a number of trips and events throughout the year that not only celebrate their achievements but encourage new cultural learning.

Issues impacting on our community based youth clubs range from a reduction in numbers/footfall, staffing pressures due to recruitment issues and reduced finances within the context of current budget limitations. Additionally there are added pressure on practitioners who are now having to work with young people who present complex health issues although not exhaustive they include; self -harm, sexuality and relationships issues. Consequently, this work is escalated to one or more of our four full time youth practitioners to managing cases of young people who are in crisis. This impacts on the role and current workload of the full time team who currently manage many other elements of our core youth service provisions

The Rolling Zone consists of a large and small mobile unit and is used to provide services in areas where club provision does not exist, to support outreach in areas where diversionary activities are needed to reduce youth annoyance, to support project work with targeted groups such as NEETs and to increase the reach of the service to more young people at local community and partner events and through lunch time clubs on school premises.

## **Schools and Lunch Club provisions:**

Utilizing our Rolling Zone bus we provide prevention and interventions, programmes for young people as part of a whole school approach with partners in education, health and the third sector. Delivery of such programmes include an OCN Agored Cymru health and wellbeing accredited programme in secondary schools. In addition our lunch club provision supports the increase of young people's physical activities [for example, through volleyball, skipping and teambuilding activities], thus contributing to an improvement in young people's health and wellbeing. In addition we are addressing mental health and emotional resilience through many of our sessions offered to young people in our schools with other partners for example WACDA, Barnardo's, KICKS Swansea City AFC.

Some issues persist around the unreliability of the vehicle [Rolling Zone] for the lunch clubs due to its age and condition, resulting in costly repairs which is also time-consuming. Limitations regarding staffing and pressure regarding keeping up with the demands from schools and partners in the wider community [local events etc.] to provide the provisions can also be an issue.

### ***Targeted provision:***

Targeted provision is much more focused and can be aimed at specific groups of young people with particular needs such as NEETs or targeted due to certain characteristics such as young carers, LGBT or Speech and Language. This provision is funded through a variety of external sources including, WG Youth Support Grant, Families First, ESF Grant and Communities First Legacy Grant. Each funding stream has its own requirements and is subject to change dependent on the direction of the funding provider:

- **Families First** now focuses on 4 main areas :
  - **Caseloads.**
  - **Transition**
  - **Vulnerable Groups**
  - **Young Carers**

Family First funded youth workers now focus on early intervention and prevention activities for young people.

- **WG Youth Support Grant** funds 3 Keeping in Touch Youth and Community Workers who focus on NEET young people aged 16-25 as well as the Youth Engagement and Coordinator. This grant has been provided to enable the authority to implement the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. The Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator post who oversees the development of systems and procedures to ensure young people are able to make an effective transition to post 16 employment, education and training. Working with schools, Careers Wales and post 16 education and training providers the co-ordinator focuses on early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET and reengaging those that are NEET into employment, education and training.

**Cam Nesa ESF** Grant provides Youth Work support that seeks to make a significant reduction in the number of 16-24 year old young people who are NEET through improved engagement specific to individual needs. The **vision** for the Operation is a participant-led, young-person centred network of opportunities, responding to those young people identified as NEET and then providing them with the right level of challenge and support, and additional activities to help them make genuine progress.

The **aims** of the Operation are:

- Reducing the number of 16-24 year-olds who are NEET.
- Ensuring that all young people are supported to enable them to re-engage in employment, education and training whatever their intended destination may be.
- Providing improved engagement and progression opportunities for all young people and contributing to higher achievement rates.
- To promote longer term employability of those young people.
- Linking with a wider range of initiatives seeking to support this group of young people.
- Working in an integrated way across existing local authority partnerships (e.g. 14-19 Networks, EPC-led multiagency meetings) and also cross-sector (Local Authority, Schools, FE Colleges, Third Sector, Training Providers, Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus).



- **Communities First Legacy Grant** provides Employment, Training and Education support for young people aged 14-16 in years 9-11 of all secondary schools within Neath Port Talbot. The Legacy Youth Workers support young people identified by their schools, the VAP and discussions both within and outside of the school environment. The Legacy team also transition with the young people at the end of year 11 to best support them into a positive Education, Employment or Training destination;

### ***Specialist provision:***

These services are a mix of both universal and targeted provision but all meet a specific need for young people.

### ***Youth Council:***

The Youth Council consists of 12 young people aged 11+ who were elected through a democratic process. The Youth Council is the representative voice of young people aged 11-25 in Neath Port Talbot and has been recognised as the first point of contact for youth engagement in decision making by the Local Service Board and County Councillors. The members come from a range of targeted groups such as looked at children, young people who are leaving care, young carers and speech and language groups as well as representatives from secondary schools. The Youth Council have representatives on the Children's Commissioner Advisory Panel and the UK Youth Parliament. The Youth Council are involved in assisting social and political change by meeting regularly with decision makers to advocate for and amplify the voices of young people who are residents of NPT. A more detailed report on the Youth Council is attached (see appendix 6).

### **Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and Open Gold Centre:**

The D of E is available to young people from the age of 13+. It is run in all secondary schools and also operates through some community youth groups. A range of other youth organisations, such as youth clubs and uniformed organisations, also play a key role in supporting young people through the various D of E sections. With 3 levels i.e.

bronze, silver and gold, it offers a good opportunity for young people to develop or improve their skills, provide support to their communities, and test their physical and emotional resilience through an outward bound expedition. Neath Port Talbot is recognised as providing one of the best schemes in Wales, we are always within the top 3 local authorities for the number of young people that gain a D of E annually. We also have the highest average completion rate in the country over the last 5 years. The D of E is a nationally accredited outcome and is well recognised by employers, further and higher education providers. The Youth Service has an extensive store of equipment available to schools and youth organisations which are loaned out to keep the cost down for young people.

### **Open Gold Centre:**

The Open Gold Centre is open to any young person in NPT aged between 16-24. The centre provides a 10 month programme which delivers the training for the Gold expedition. The training takes place in the Brecon Beacons and the final expedition takes place in Dartmoor. The centre also operates a young leader's scheme for the young people who have completed the Gold Award and want to remain involved with the centre. They therefore join this scheme which trains them up as expedition leaders and they work as volunteers with the Open Gold Centre and also with secondary schools at Bronze and Silver level.

### **Relationship and Sex Education [SRE]**

The Youth Service make a significant contribution to the delivery of SRE within the local authority and support the lessons in the locally devised SRE Key Stage 3 SRE pack. The pack enables partners and professionals [Teachers, Youth and Nurse Practitioners] to deliver SRE in secondary educational schools across NPT to provide a cohesive approach to SRE. The approach provides a consistent educational experience for all young people within the county borough, adhering to relevant Welsh Government SRE recommendations. In addition a Senior Officer within the core Youth Service team manages the NPT SRE group which brings together all relevant partners involved in SRE reporting to the Director and

Assistant Director of Education and the VAWDASV Leadership Group.

### **Relationships Advise Drop in Service [RADS]**

Is a free, confidential, non-judgemental service accessible in a number of our community venues [youth clubs/schools/colleges and mobile provisions] at convenient times for young people and delivered by highly trained youth practitioners in the field of sexual health and young people. RADS practitioners deal with a range of issues including; safe relationships, contraception, pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted infections [STI's], LGBT and many other health issues. Additionally, they provide barrier contraception, pregnancy testing, advice and support to access secondary sexual health and other health service to address; substance misuse, eating disorders, smoking cessation, sexual exploiting, abusive relationships, self-esteem and mental health issues. The Youth Services RADS manager provides a daily on-call emergency service for RADS. Issues regarding this service relate to the withdrawal of funding form the LHB [RADS was funded by the LHB from 2001 - until 2017].

### **Outcomes for Young People**

During 2017/18 the number of young people achieving a nationally accredited outcome from the Youth Service raised to 10% with 648 individuals being awarded either a Duke of Edinburgh Award or a Qualification ranging from entry level to level 3.

Local outcomes for the Youth Service during 2017/18 was 2,033 which is 32% of the young people who engaged with the Service.

### **Outcomes for the Youth Service**

During 2018 the Youth Service Received a Youth Excellence Award for its work with the Youth Council and also received the Bronze Quality Mark.

## **2019/20 Financial year**

The Youth Service is also currently working with the Welsh Government on proposals to secure additional grant funding to address issues around Youth Homelessness and Mental Health.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Youth Service Structure**

**Appendix 2 – NEETs Graph**

**Appendix 3 – Youth Clubs info**

**Appendix 4 – Youth Clubs Attendance Summary**

**Appendix 5 – Youth Council Report**

## **Officer Contact**

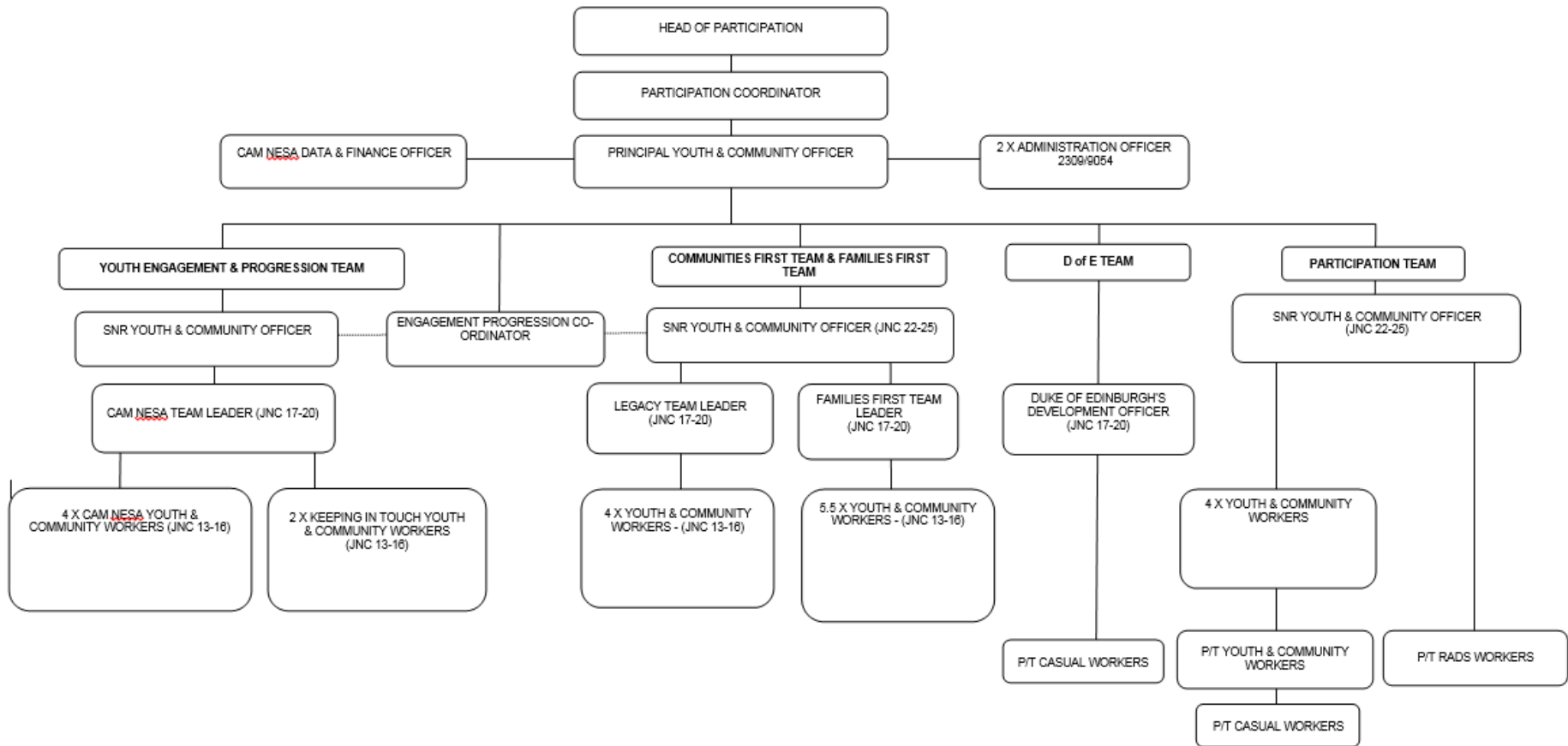
1. **Chris Millis, Head of Participation, Telephone 01639 763226 e-mail [c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk)**

**Angeline Spooner-Cleverly, Participation Co-Ordinator, Telephone 01639 686044 e-mail [a.spooner@npt.gov.uk](mailto:a.spooner@npt.gov.uk)**

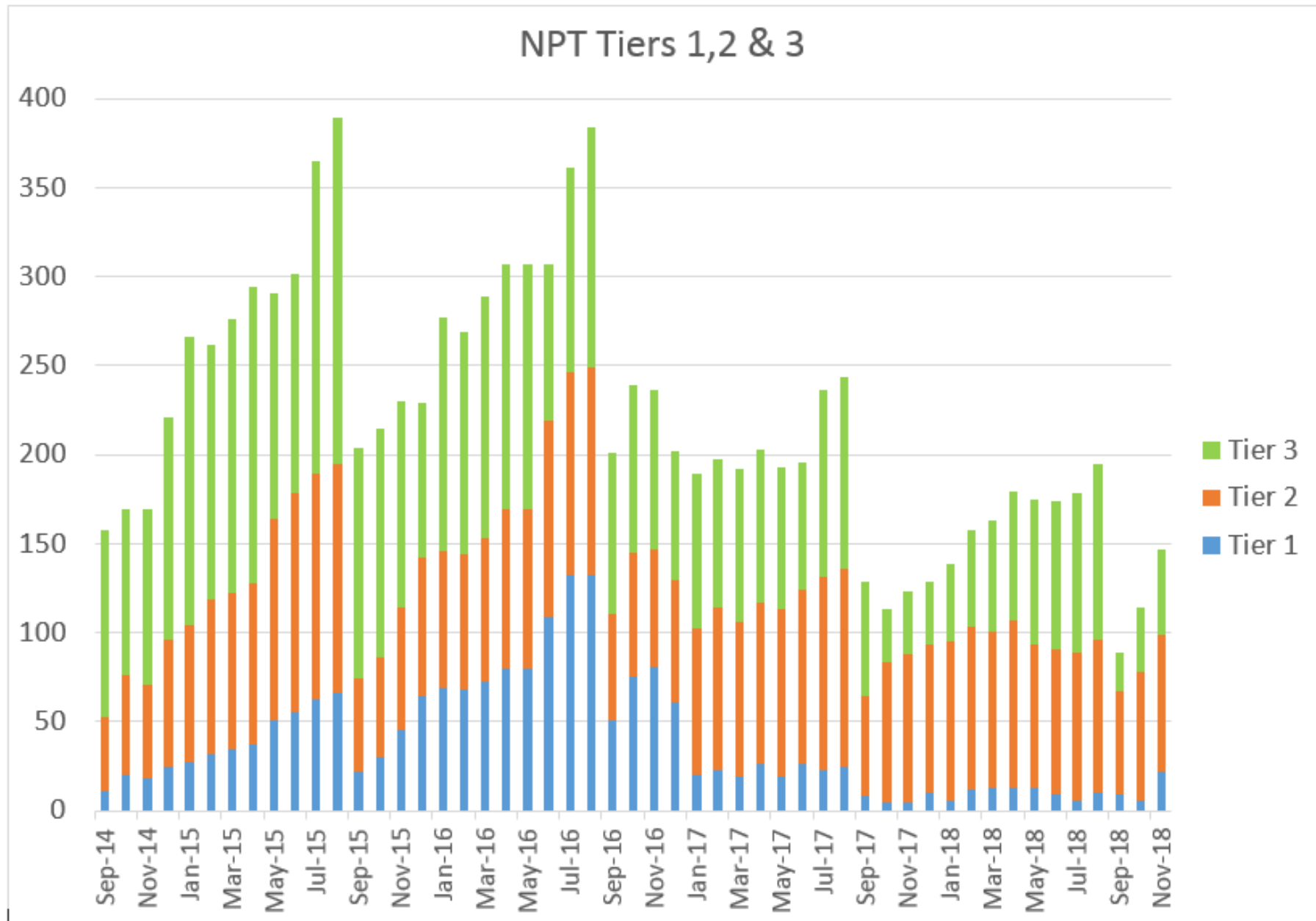
**Jason Haeney, Principal Youth & Community Officer, Telephone 01639 763007, e-mail [j.haeney@npt.gov.uk](mailto:j.haeney@npt.gov.uk)**

# Appendix One

## PROPOSED STRUCTURE 2018



## Appendix Two



## Appendix Three

# Youth Clubs In Your Area

**Cwmilynfell Youth Club**

The Welfare Hall

Tues 6:30pm-8:30pm

Weds 6:30pm-8:30pm

**Bryn Youth Club**

The Community Centre

Fri 6:00pm – 8:00pm

**Blaengwynfi Youth Club**

The Library and  
Public Hall

Wed 5:45pm-7:45pm

**Glynneath Youth Club**

The Training Centre

Thurs 6:00pm-8:30pm

**Seven Sisters Youth Club**

The Community Centre

Thurs 6:30pm-8:30pm

**Bryncoch Youth Club**

The Community Centre

Thurs 7:00pm-9:00pm

**Crynant Youth Club**

The Community Centre

Tues 6:00pm-8:00pm

Fri 6:00pm-8:00pm

**Cymmer Youth Club**

Cymer Afan  
Comprehensive

Tues 5:30pm-7:30pm

Fri 5:00pm-7:00pm

**Taibach Youth Club**

The Community  
Education Centre

Tues 7:00pm-9:00pm

Thurs 7:00pm-9:00pm

**Sandfields Youth Club**

Ysgol Bae Baglan

Tue 7:00pm-9:00pm

Thurs 7:00pm-9:00pm

Fri 6:00pm-8:00pm

**Cimla Youth Club**

The Community Centre

Mon 6:00pm-8:00pm

**Croeserw Youth Club**

The Community  
Enterprise Centre

Mon 6:00pm-8:00pm

## Appendix Four

### Youth Club Summary 2017-18



Youth Club	No of Sessions Open	Contacts	No of Individual YP	Female	Male	Average Attendance
Blaengwynfi	29	947	114	65	49	33
Bryn	25	105	24	11	13	4
Brynoch	23	236	51	22	29	10
Cimla	29	234	41	21	20	8
Croeserw	21	444	75	33	42	21
Crynant	57	819	70	30	40	14
Cwmllynfell	59	1266	94	43	51	21
Cymmer	49	757	101	44	57	15
Glynneath	28	303	42	15	27	11
Sandfields	82	3205	315	112	203	39
Seven Sisters	26	310	53	21	32	12
Taibach	59	3262	240	120	120	55
Ystalyfera	4	20	10	5	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>11908</b>	<b>1230</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>24</b>





## **Appendix Five**

# **Youth Council Report 2017 – 2019**

## **YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT**

### **Background - NPT Youth Council**

NPT Youth Council is a vehicle for social and political change which maintains a vibrant inclusive and representative body underpinned by the UNCRC.

The overall aim of the project is to increase/embed young people's participation in communities, local regional and national decision making structures while the specific aim is to ensure children and young people have a voice and their rights are respected.

The youth council encourage and exemplify active citizenship by devoting themselves to selfless voluntary service for the benefit of those engaged - this challenges any bias that broadly speaking young people need protecting and are not capable of making decisions affecting their lives.

The Youth Council meet with the decision makers at a local level to amplify these voices, enrich decision-making processes, share perspectives and participate as active citizens, volunteers' campaigners, decision makers, leaders and facilitators of change.

The Youth Council Members get involved in their communities and democracy locally, regionally and nationally with representatives on The Children Commissioners Advisory Panel, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Youth Health Board (ABMU), British Youth Council, UK Youth Parliament, Public Health Wales and a local Mental Health Youth Group. Youth Council Members also build alliances across the community, working with the EYST project and Intergenerational Work with the Older Peoples Council.

NPT Youth Council members have made a measurable impact as passionate advocates for those who are vulnerable/marginalised or less able to speak for themselves e.g. creating opportunities for special interest groups to participate as elected members e.g. LGBTQ, Young Carers, BME, Speech & Language Group and Looked after Children.

The main driver for the work is Article 12 of the UNCRC

### **ESTYN Inspection 2017**

The youth council met with the Estyn Inspectors on 6 December 2017 at Baglan Training Centre. Estyn recorded the following in their report:

*...‘The youth council draws appropriately on a wide range of young people representing schools and colleges as well as particular interest groups such as the LGBT forum and LAC forum. As part of its work, the youth council meet with elected members of the cabinet every three months and petitions councillors effectively on behalf of young people living in Neath Port Talbot’.*

**(Estyn 2017 – ‘A Report on Neath Port Talbot Borough Council’ December 2017)  
([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)).**

## **Make Up of NPT Youth Council 2017 - 2019**

Groups represented on the Youth Council are Cefn Saeson, Cwmtawe, Llangatwg, Dwr y Felin, St Josephs and Ysgol Bae Baglan. Neath and Gorseinon college are also represented. Special interest groups include young people from Speech and language, LGBTQ, Young Carers, Looked after children, Families First Caseload, and BME. Other special interest groups who feed into the youth council include Gypsy Traveller education, 9 Youth Clubs along with Dwr y Felin Mental health youth group. A group of skaters at Aberavon Beach have also contacted the youth council with issues during 2018.

Special Interest groups who referred young people; who then choose not take up the offer included Calan DVS and Route 16.

## **LEGISLATION**

The legislation and local authority duties are:

### **The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010**

Requires local authorities to promote and facilitate participation by children and young people in decisions that might affect them (Welsh Government, 2010). It requires local authorities to:

"Make such arrangements as they consider suitable to promote and facilitate participation by children in decisions of the authority which might affect them, and to publish and keep up to date information about its arrangements."

Local authorities fulfil these responsibilities through a named youth participation officer and one or more youth forums that represent the voice of young people at a local level.

### **The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 guidance ‘Shared Purpose: Shared Future’**

This makes specific references to the National Participation Standards for Children and Young People, whilst Annex B of the guidance for Public Service Boards sets out the expectation of adopting the National Participation Standards in working with partners, to enable children and young people to have a voice.

## **Rights to Action Wales (2004)**

'Rights to Action' is a policy document issued by the Welsh Government in 2004. It states that:

*"Children and young people should be seen as citizens, with rights and opinions to be taken into account now. They are not a species apart, to be alternately demonised and sentimentalised, nor trainee adults who do not yet have a full place in society."*

'Rights to Action' adopts seven broad policy aims for children, which are presented as a direct translation of the UNCRC's articles.

### **Local Participation Action Plan Guidance Briefing Local Service Board (LSB)**

The LSB has a statutory duty to enable the participation of children and young people in decision-making as defined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and to ensure that children and young people's involvement is embedded into every aspect of the planning, delivery and evaluation of local services.

The legislative basis for this requirement is contained in Section 12 of the Children and Families Measure (2010). Guidance to LSBs on developing the Single Integrated Plan reinforces this duty.

In order to meet the requirements of the legislation, and subsequent guidance, LSBs and local partners must:

Promote and facilitate participation within the broader context of children and young people's rights

Integrate children and young people's participation into all aspects of planning, delivering and reviewing services in a way that informs the Single Integrated Plan.

Develop and implement a Local Participation Action Plan that sets out: its intentions in enabling children and young people to have a voice and be involved in decision-making at a local level;

Ensure that children and young people feel listened to, are empowered, and consequently services better meet their needs;

Lists what local partners will do to promote and facilitate the participation of children and young people in planning, delivering and reviewing services, and how this will contribute to local authority priorities and the priorities of the Single Integrated Plan

The LSB and local partners must ensure that each local authority area has a meaningful, effective and representative Youth Forum.

It is stressed that – as a minimum – resourcing children and young people's participation at the local level should include resources and staffing to support the local Youth Forum and awareness-raising of the UNCRC. That the LSB establish clear lines of accountability

between the LSB and Youth Council and recognise the Youth Council as the body to represent young people across Neath Port Talbot in decision making.

## **UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD 1989 (UNCRC)**

Participation is one of the guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 of the UNCRC sets out the right of children and young people to express an opinion and to have their opinion taken into account when decisions are being made on any matter that affects them. Article 12 is the main driver for the youth council's work as it's an enabling right which empowers young people to access broader rights under the convention within the family, the school and the larger community context.

This guiding principle affirms that children are active citizens with an important contribution to make to their families, schools, communities and nation. They have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity. It recognises the potential of children to enrich decision-making processes, to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and facilitators of change.

The UNCRC is also the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world – accepted by non-state entities, such as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), a rebel movement in South Sudan. All UN member states except for the United States have ratified the Convention. The UK signed it in 1990, and it came into UK law in 1992.

The UNCRC is also the only international human rights treaty to give non-governmental organisations (NGOs), like Save the Children, a direct role in overseeing its implementation, under Article 45a.

### **Partnership Work:**

The youth council have mechanisms in place to enable ongoing, structured, systematic and meaningful engagement with partners. For example they are regularly consulted on most aspects of service provisions e.g. the design of play spaces, health issues, promotional materials e.g. ACES card, Young Carers Posters and recently Calan DVS Early Intervention Project Year 7.

Another example - Community Safety requested the Youth Council consult on their Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) card they hand out to young people. The card highlighted the services young people can access for additional support.

The youth council recommended several changes and this was done. More young people may now pick it up.

The importance of working with partners who share the same aims and objectives is paramount to the success of any partnership work. However we currently do not have a partner organisation to work with due to cuts in different organisation's funding streams.

For example during the 2015 - 16 term we worked with the CRU who then lost their funding.

The Youth Council's partners include the Youth Service who fund a dedicated worker, venue and travel costs to projects and events which include reward activities. The local authority cabinet members are also considered partners along with the young people resident in NPT.

### **How the Youth Council engages with their communities of Practice:**

The youth council go that extra mile to champion children's rights by giving young people a voice, empowering them with their rights and achieving fantastic outcomes on their behalf. As mentioned, this is achieved with support from the local authority's councillors/youth service.

Young people contact the youth council through social media, by letter, email, petitions and most recently by video. The youth council undertake consultations, face to face meetings and attend youth groups/events. An intergenerational project is on-going while the local authority involve the youth council is most aspects of services designed for young people.

### **NPT Youth Council Elections 2017 - 19**

In 2017 young people aged between 11 - 25 years old and resident/in school within Neath Port Talbot had the opportunity to stand as a candidate in the youth council elections. Opportunities were also created for young people from Young Carer's, Speech & Language Youth Club, Route 16, and Looked after Children along with young people from the LGBTQ & BME community.

We also approached the Gypsy Traveller community, Action for Children and Calan DVS. Calan DVS submitted two Candidate forms however two young people choose not to take up the offer. The Gypsy Traveller community said they would feed any issues in.

Having a committed group of young people was essential to the success of the Youth Council. A very detailed and comprehensive bi lingual Candidate Pack was produced for the election year, ensuring that young people fully understood what they were signing up for.

Presentations were delivered in schools and youth groups - youth workers answered any questions. Once elections had taken place, 2 days of training were delivered to the new members over the summer period, to again ensure that they understood their role and the commitment needed to be on the Youth Council.

Children's Rights training along with building an effective youth council were covered. This enabled the young people to be involved in the decision making and shaping their youth council so it was fit for their purpose.

Invited guests included the EYST Project who delivered a Hate Crime/Islamophobia workshop, Paul Hinder led on a consultation on play parks and spaces while Liam from corporate delivered a consultation on the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015.

The 2017-19 elections resulted in the new youth council being the most representative to date. It successfully represented the views of thousands of young people across NPT and ensured that minority groups had a voice, something which built on the 2015 -17 elections.

Prior to the election the lead youth worker had contacted all the schools within NPT offering them the opportunity to participate in the elections. Following discussion with the principal officer of the youth service it was agreed that 3 places per school would be offered and two spaces per special interest/marginalised group. Any Independents in colleges who applied would also be considered. These numbers were generated to ensure the lead worker had the capacity to manage the group.

<b>Number of young people elected to the Youth Council 2017 – 2019</b>
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<b>Schools</b>	<b>Number of Seats Allocated</b>	<b>Seats Taken Up</b>	<b>Reason not taken</b>
Cefn Saeson	3	3	
Cwmtawe	3	3	
Dwr-y-Felin	3	3	
Dyffryn	3	0	Did not participate
Llangatwg	3	2	
St Josephs	3	1	Did not participate
Ystalyfera	3	0	Did not participate
Ysgol Bae Baglan	3	2	Did not participate

Afan College	2	0	Did not participate
Neath College	2	2	
Gorseinon College	2	2	
<b>Special Interest Groups</b>			
LGBTQ	2	1	
Young Carers	2	0	Referral from Ian Whitehead Ross did not engage or reply
Looked After Children	2	2	
Speech & Language Group	2	2	
Route 16	2	0	One young person changed his mind
Calan DVS	2	0	Young people referred changed their mind
Action for Children	2	0	Will feed in through forum
BME	2	2	
Gypsy Travellers	2	0	Feed in through forum

During the Cabinet Liaison Meeting in October 2017 the youth council asked the Director of Education to speak to the Heads of schools who did not offer their young people the opportunity. This approach would then encourage these schools to participate.

Following this meeting the youth worker received emails from Ysgol Bae Baglan, Ystalyfera and Dyffryn schools asking to participate. Despite the enquiries only Ysgol Bae Baglan referred their young people. These two young people are now taking an active role on the youth council.

One young person from St Josephs contacted the youth council herself to stand as a Candidate. This young person has since been voted deputy chair by her peers and is an active member of the youth council.

### **Attendance issues/Drop Outs/Resignations up to and including**

**December 2018**

Reasons given included:

Saturday jobs, attendance issues leading to resignation by text, no contact, no contact since being referred to the youth council despite information being posted out. A Candidate forms was received from Ian Whitehead Ross for a young carer however this young person did not turn up for training and t/c did not receive any response. 2 Candidate forms were received from Calan DVS however parents texted to say their young people had changed their minds.

From January 2018 there were approx. 18 active elected members of NPT Youth Council.

### **Examples of On- Going Work 2018**

#### **Cuts to Minority Ethnic Achievement Service & Traveller Education**

The Youth Council are campaigning to reverse the decision to cut individual funding streams to the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) and the Traveller Education Service (TES) in NPT. These funding streams will be merged into the new Education Improvement Grant.

The background to the campaign was information from the Traveller education community highlighting how cuts would affect them. The youth council were already aware of the high quality service delivered by the MEAS team after, previously asking for evidence on whether minority ethnic groups' rights were being upheld in NPT. A fantastic presentation was delivered by Jan Hoggan (MEAS) during a youth council cabinet liaison meeting.

Actions to date included letters from the youth council to Cabinet Secretary of Education Kirsty Williams stating the rights of these young people were not being respected and requesting sight of the Children's Rights Impact Assessment.

Under the Wales Measure (2010) ministers have a duty to complete a CRIA to assess how any change to policies or procedures will affect young people. The Youth Council asked the Cabinet Secretary for a meeting to discuss the Education Improvement Grant. The meeting was declined.

The youth council then wrote to the Children's Commissioner Professor Sally Holland with the issue and asked her to champion these vulnerable groups of young people. A meeting with the Children's commissioner followed which was productive and the commissioner took the issue forward when she spoke to the welsh government on



November 15. This was streamed live from the Senedd. NPT Youth Council were mentioned during her broadcast. (See Commissioner's Report attached P11 & P12.

On 6 November 2018 the Youth Council were informed by the Commissioner's office that funding for MEAS has been maintained in the 2019/20 budget, at the same amount as this year (£8.7M). The Commissioners office said they also sent some evidence to the Assembly re-raising these concerns, quoting the correspondence from the youth council in that. It will be published online in due course - the commissioner's office will send a link once this is live.

The youth council voted at their meeting on 24 November to contact Ruth Coombs, Head of Wales Equality and Human Rights Commission to keep this issue current and gather more support to help our young people.

### **Mental Health**

Mental Health has been one of the top issues for young people over the last three years both nationally and in Neath Port Talbot.

In 2018 - 491 Young people in NPT voted that mental health services should be improved with young people's help and should be available in schools. (Make Your Mark 2018).

The Wellbeing team also consulted 531 young people in local authority schools and the results could be better. See Appendix 1.

At the last cabinet liaison meeting on 10 October 2018 the youth council raised the issue and asked what the local authority is doing to promote young people's mental health/wellbeing in schools.

One solution the youth council has is to promote the new Legacy Funding Counselling service based at Tir Morfa Centre. This is free and the service is available for young people who do not attend school and recently extended to young people at risk of disengaging from schools.

This will help young people who are worried, stressed, anxious, angry, sad, and as mentioned young people who do not attend school. This will also place no strain on the budget. The youth council asked their support worker to invite Cheryl Powell Community Legacy Counselling to the next cabinet liaison meeting.

Currently, The only complaints from some young people about counselling services in schools was; they feel stigmatised during lessons when they were called to the councillor by the teacher - other young people ask what they were going for. Allegedly they don't know when these appointments are going to happen.

The waiting lists for outside services is also an issue when young people feel they desperately need help now.

## Young Carers

During the Youth Council elections 2017 - 2019 two seats were allocated to young carers as a special interest group. The youth council support worker contacted Ian Whitehead Ross. Only one referral was received however despite contact the young person did not turn up to any training or meetings.

Families first are now running the new Young Carers project (2018). The youth council support worker then visited the new Families First Young Carers group. The purpose of the visit was to promote the youth council and offer two seats on the council at the next elections (March 2019).

Most of the young carers were interested. One member of the youth council who is a young carer now attends this group.

### **Issues raised on behalf of young carers 2017 to date include:**

School Attendance codes - The youth council believe school attendance codes do not effectively take young carers personal situations into account which, are out of their control.

They also felt that some young carers may not attend school if they know they will be marked late anyway.

The Head of Participation said that school attendance codes were under review. This is ongoing.

### **LGBT+ Provision:**

'Protect LGBT+ Young People' was a top issue for NPT young people (Make Your Mark Campaign (2017)). The Youth Council brought this issue to cabinet and highlighted the lack of any provision within NPT. Maps and details of services available to young people in surrounding authorities were shown. This resulted in a positive change with the Youth Service's Families First team setting up a new LGBT+ provision/service within NPT.

Feedback to date includes attendance in double figures. The provision is an environment which maximises social inclusion and safety. Young people can get support if needed, have fun, attend workshops and contribute to group discussions about issues which matter to them or anything else they wish to discuss.

Two seats on the youth council have been allocated to this special interest group at the next youth council elections in March 2019. There is one representative from the LGBT+ community already on the youth council.

The group designed a leaflet to raise awareness of LGBT+ for schools – this was handed out during a cabinet liaison meeting and the youth council are awaiting feedback from the Head of Participation.

# **Snapshot of Work/Achievements for Youth Council Members 2017 - to date**

## **Youth Excellence Award 2018:**

NPT Youth Council won a national award in recognition of their outstanding work on championing the rights of children and young people.

The Youth council were successful in the category of 'Promoting Young People's Rights at the Welsh Government's Youth Excellence Awards Ceremony on Friday 29 June 2018. The Awards are held annually to celebrate the best youth workers and youth projects in Wales.

Cllr Peter Rees Member for Education Skills and Culture along with Jason Haeney Principal Officer NPT Youth Service attended the award ceremony held at the Cardiff Principality Stadium.

The youth council were recognised for influencing many projects across the county borough which impact on young people for example, the development of a local LGBT+ provision for young people, the relocation of Sandfields youth club, initiating first aid training for pupils in all secondary schools as well as advocating for action in various youth clubs and then, most recently for skaters who use Aberavon skate Park.

## **First Aid Training in Schools 2016 - 2018**

In 2016 First Aid Training in Schools was the third top issue by voted for by young people 11 – 18 years living in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

For the past two years, The Youth Council lobbied the local authority to amplify these voices.

In January 2018 funding was agreed for 3 months. This led to a multi-agency project between the Youth Service, Communities First, Skills & Training Agencies and the Schools.

From January 2018 to the end of March 2018 over 550+ young people have received First Aid training.

The age range was extended to include young people 11 – 24 years which will enhance job application forms for young people.

## **Youth Health Summit 2017**

**Fourteen members of NPT Youth Council attended the Public Health Wales Youth Health Summit to have a voice and influence change. At the summit there was a Question & Answer Session with the Professor Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and Tracey Cooper, Chief Executive Public Health Wales.**

### **Young People's Annual Quality Statement 2018 (Public Health).**

**In 2018 the youth council and other young people from across Wales were invited by Public Health to attend a residential to design and write articles for the above document. This led to the young people being part of the steering group who organised the 2018 inaugural Youth Health Summit held on 1 December 2018. Ten young people attended the event.**

**The youth council were also invited to Public Health's AGM for the launch of the young person's quality statement. Public Health gave the young people involved £10 Amazon vouchers as a reward.**

**Our young people were the only group invited to feedback on the work and the experience at the residential. The young people did a brilliant job and stood with confidence at the front of the board and other workers/young people attending. The speeches were streamed live on the day and the event tweeted out by Public Health.**

### **Intergenerational Project 2017 - 2018**

**NPT Youth Council & NPT Older Persons' Council were keen to investigate develop and explore common issues and themes experienced by both the younger and older (50+) generations.**

**At a meeting both generations voted to raise awareness of scams which are affecting both. NPT Youth Council then ran an awareness raising activity for Young People called 'Beat the Scammers'. All youth clubs took part in a poster competition and designed posters to warn others of the scams targeting both the older and younger generation.**

**The competition was judged by Community Safety and the three winning posters will be published in their magazine along with the youth service magazine.**

### **Leisure & Play:**

**The youth council are passionate about improving play/leisure facilities for young people or resolving any issues young people in NPT may have with existing play leisure facilities/providers. One example of work to improve current provision since October 2017 is:**

## **The Skater community:**

The skater community contacted the youth council stating their drain had been cemented over by the council and the skate park was now flooding regularly when it rained. The youth council met with the skaters twice at the park and took pictures of the flooding,

The youth council took their issue to cabinet and the matter is resolved with a new eco drain system installed at the park. Cllr Edward Latham was the main driver with the authority to ensure these works were being carried out and completed. Thanks to Cllr Latham.

## **Cwmllynfell Youth Club**

The Youth Council was contacted by young people from Cwmllynfell Youth Club. The young people complained by video that the committee had sublet their sport hall during youth club hours. With the support of the cabinet and Principal Officer from the youth service a positive outcome was achieved. The principal officer of NPT Youth Council Jason Haeney visited an alternative site at the local primary school which is one option should this situation ever arise in the future.

## **Make Your Mark Campaign 2018**

Make Your Mark is the biggest youth consultation in Europe. In 2018 over 1.1 million young people took part in the UK. The youth council asked the Leader and cabinet to support this campaign annually in NPTCBC. The youth council argued that NPTCBC can raise its profile when it comes to young people being listened to and having a say.

The youth council went on to say that when young people are listened to they feel valued respected and empowered to become active citizens.

Anna Stockton member of UK Youth Parliament & Chair of NPT Youth Council represented NPT on 9 November when the UK Youth Parliament came together in the House of Commons to debate and decide the most important issues to campaign on the year ahead.

UK Youth Parliament has chosen to focus on lowering the voting age to 16 and putting an end to knife crime in 2019. Members of Youth Parliament are set to formally launch the campaigns during their day of action in January 2019. UK Youth Parliament will now begin to plan actions for the campaigns ahead.

Make Your Mark generates valuable information for the youth council as it gives a picture of the top issues in Wales and more importantly what young people in Neath Port Talbot think.

Across NPTCBC **2,745** young people voted and the top three results for NPT were:

Mental Health	491
End Knife Crime	454

For a list of Schools and Youth Groups who took part see Appendix 2

**Wales' top 3 issues were: Mental Health, End Knife Crime & Help the Homeless**  
See Appendix 3

The youth council also gave information about other surrounding authorities' results.

LA	2016	2017	2018
NPT	2,300	2,935	2,745
Swansea	1,468	5,284	2
Bridgend	135	2	182

### **Marine Pollution Project**

The youth council signed up as youth activists with the National Museum for Wales' Marine Pollution project. The aim of the project was to raise awareness about the problem of plastic pollution in our seas. To date the youth council have completed a workshop at the museum and used their creative talents to make marine life out of the plastics, fishing nets and detritus found on welsh beaches.

The work was placed into several exhibits dioramas taxidermy and display cases at the Museum during National Marine Week end of July to the 1st week of August, to depict how plastic pollution harms or kills marine life.

The work also links to the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015. The youth council asked the council if schools in NPT could do a poster competition to raise awareness of the issue adding the winning poster could be turned into a sign to put along the promenade. Cllr Latham said signs had worked well in Vivian Park play area this is ongoing.

The youth council pointed out that this would cost money however it would be a long term investment for future generations. Cllr Latham is also supporting the youth council with answers to questions such as 'what does NPT do with its recycling? Etc. A meeting with the environment officers at the Quays is to be arranged in the New Year.

# Accreditation/Opportunities/Education for Youth Council Members

The youth council are recognised for volunteering their time through the Millennium Volunteer Awards. The Millennium Volunteer Awards recognise young people's dedication selflessness and active citizenship at 50, 100 and 200 hours.

Education is offered to the young people during their elected term such as on-going training e.g. Children's Rights, Committee Skills, Hate Crime education e.g. Islamophobia (EYST project). Legislation e.g. Well-being of Future generations Act 2015.

During their elected term the young people also learn the following:

- Communication and public speaking skills
- Greater knowledge of politics and current affairs
- The ability to look at an issue from someone else's perspective
- Debating skills
- Teamwork skills
- Leadership skills
- Organisational skills
- Negotiation skills
- Listening skills

In addition to acquiring and developing the above skills, a youth council member will also benefit from the following:

- **Having a range of experts to call on from the local authority to provide advice, suggestions and Guidance.**
- **To work in partnership with the local authority decision makers for the benefit of young people and to raise the profile of NPTCBC.**
- **Having a dedicated worker supporting the role and work of the Elected Members**
- **Meeting new young people and making lots of new friends.**
- **Attending events.**
- **Meeting / coming into contact with Councillors, Assembly members and some politicians**
- **Positive representation - young people can represent their peers to the media/communities, countering negative stereotypes and promoting positive images.**
- **Chance to gain an insight into how and why decisions are taken.**

## **Example opportunities for the young people include:**

Membership of the British Youth Council 2017 - 2019- Invites to members meetings to feed in to national participation events and campaigns/promote youth council work locally to raise the profile of NPT Youth Service and local authority.

One young person is elected through the youth council as the Member of UK Youth Parliament representing NPT at the House of Commons debate every November (Ongoing).

One young person sits on the Children Commissioners Advisory Panel, opportunities are offered every two years by the commissioner's office.

Two young people sit on the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Youth Health Board (ABMU) while another young person represents young people on a local Mental Health group. (Ongoing)

Seven young people were part of the group designing and contributing to Public Health Wales' 2017 Annual Quality Statement 2018.

Four Young people are part of the steering group planning the 2018 Youth Health Summit.

The youth council are the advisory group for a new health project being set up by C. Fry Senior Youth Officer NPTYS.

### **High Sherriff's Award**

In 2017 one young person was successfully nominated while in 2018 two young people were successful. Youth council members have successfully been nominated since 2015.

### **Rotary Awards**

Three members of the youth council received Rotary Awards - the latest was Erin Sandison, who represents the Young Carers. The award was for children's rights and her work with Dwr y Felin Mental Health group.

### **The Debbie Connolly Special Recognition Award**

One member of the youth council was awarded with the above award at the CVS Award Presentation Evening. The special award recognised the outstanding contribution by this young person to volunteering in the local and wider community.

### **Meetings:**

Cabinet Meetings dates 2017 - 19

15.2.17, 11.10.17, 31.1.18, 11.7.18, 10.10.18



## **Meetings with AM's & Politicians:**

**Jeremy Miles, Assembly Member (AM) for Neath** requested a meeting with the youth council. At the meeting Jeremy Miles AM gave an update on Votes at 16, the proposed Welsh Youth Parliament and his priorities for Neath. There was a great question and answer time at the end which was enjoyed.

Jeremy Miles AM then wrote to the Youth Council congratulating them on their success with the Youth Work Excellence Award. Jeremy Miles asked the youth council for another meeting so they could discuss how to promote young people's rights.

### **David Rees AM for Aberavon**

The youth council met with David Rees AM for Aberavon during the February 2018 half term at the TY Hywel building in Cardiff Bay for a question and answer session.

This was a positive experience with discussions focussing on facilities for autistic young people at football matches, how to petition welsh government and raise local issues.

The youth council also had a workshop on 'Our Assembly Our way' delivered by Kelly Harries WAG. This was followed by a guided tour of the Senedd.

### **Lord Tariq Ahmad Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations**

Lord Ahmad was interested to canvas the views of young people ahead of the upcoming Commonwealth Youth Forum 2018.

During his visit to Cardiff he engaged with young people from across Wales to hear what issues were on their minds and to discuss what they thought should be being done in response to these.

Anna Stockton and Seren Wonklyn represented NPT Youth Council at the event.

### **Children's Commissioner for Wales Professor Sally Holland**

The Commissioner met with the youth council to discuss their concerns regarding the cuts to Traveller education and MEAS funding.

## **Requests to Meet the Youth Council:**

Bethan Sayed AM South Wales West recently asked for an invitation to a youth council meeting. Ms Sayed said she heard other AM's had met with the youth council. This will be voted on shortly.

## **Issues Raised:**

**IMMIGRANTS REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS OCT. 2017**

The youth council asked if the rights of these young people were being respected in schools and quoted article 22 of the UNCRC.

The Youth Council identified the need to involve young Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in different projects and topics, for example on the Youth Council. Youth Council representatives asked if there was any data available on the number of families within Neath Port Talbot and whether there was a mechanism in place to contact young people to gain an understanding of how best to assist them settling into new schools.

The Youth Council received an update from J.Hoggan Team Leader, Minority Ethnic Achievements Service (M.E.A.S) during the meeting in October 2017. J. Hoggan explained to the Forum that there currently there are 52 refugees in Neath Port Talbot, funds are received from the Home Office so we are able to employ Arabic Bilingual Teaching Assistants to support the Arabic Speaking Learners.

J. Hoggan read out a list of schools to the Forum where Syrian children had settled in Neath Port Talbot Schools. It was highlighted that if schools are not on the list, in order for pupils to receive support a request form has to be completed by the school.

Information and photographs regarding M.E.A.S. work was distributed to the Forum. Members thanked J. Hoggan for all the good work her team carries out, and also thanked the children that have helped the refugee children settle into school life.

## **Mental Health Survey**

The Youth Council are still awaiting information on the survey proposed by Mental Health Group (ABMU) also one of the priorities under the Well-being of future generations (Wales) Act 2015. The youth council will keep the forum updated.

On 11 July Corrine Fry Senior Officer updated cabinet that the group had changed and the survey would be looked at a later date.

## **Communities First**

Youth Council raised concerns with Cabinet members in relation to the financial cut backs affecting the Communities First programme along with the low number of consultations undertaken. The Youth Council received an update from Kerry Jones, Participation Officer Communities First, regarding the phasing out of Communities 1st, the new Employability Grant across all Local Authorities and Legacy Fund across the current Communities First areas, which will start from 1st April 2018.

Kerry Jones updated the forum during the meeting of 31.1.18 that over 100 young people had been consulted on the changes. While the youth council were disappointed at the

number of consultations undertaken they understood that the Welsh assembly government were leading on the different phases of the funding cuts.

The youth council also wrote a letter to Minister for Communities Carl Sargeant stating their outrage at the cuts which would affect areas in NPT already suffering from socio economic disadvantage. The youth council asked if a Children's Rights impact assessment had been undertaken prior to the funding cuts. The response did not answer the question and gave only a brief overview of the situation.

## **Hate Crime**

Contact has now been established with the Hate Crime Officer. Carolyn was invited to the launch of the BME community event on 2 August. Adam Cameron Hate Crime Officer explained he worked 3 days a week which does not include Saturdays. The youth council have asked if Carolyn will update Adam on any hate crime issues on their behalf.

## **Welsh Baccalaureate**

In the meeting on 7th December cabinet were updated that the Head of Careers would meet with the Youth Council to discuss the Youth Council's concerns that young people in Neath Port Talbot were being disadvantaged when filling out applications asking for previous work experience.

**ACTION** Head of Participation to invite the Head of Careers to speak to the youth council.

Apologies were received from the Head of careers at the meeting on 31.1.18 and again on 11 July 2018.

Emails concluded that careers had sent a letter to the schools stating work experience was now their responsibility - this information has been forwarded to the Head of Participation.

The matter is ongoing.

## **Transport**

**The Youth Council raised the issue of proposed cuts to welsh and faith school transport policies.**

It was noted that a new School Transport Policy 2017 was now in place, and that Faith School transport in Neath Port Talbot had been reinstated.

The Youth Council thanked the Head of Participation for his help.

## **Transport - Health & Safety**

Some young people do not feel safe using public transport - the youth council rose their issues and also gave examples from personal experiences of youth council members. The youth council asked for support to make public transport safer for young people.

The head of transport contacted the youth worker to arrange a meeting with the two young people who rose the issue. This was arranged however the transport manager Joy then went off sick. Ongoing.

## **Transport - Expenses and Barriers to After School Clubs**

Young people highlighted the cost and times of public transport is a barrier to some young people accessing colleges and after school clubs. The youth council gave examples of costs and times of buses causing the problem. The youth council asked cabinet for support in resolving these issues for young people?

The head of transport contacted the youth worker to arrange a meeting with the two young people who rose the issue. This was arranged however the transport manager Joy then went off sick.

To be updated.

## **Respecting Others Anti-Bullying Workshop**

On 31 October 2017 the youth council attended an anti-bullying workshop at the Dragon Hotel Swansea to have a voice and influence change. The feedback would then inform the Welsh government's anti-bullying document 'Respecting Others'.

During and following the workshop the youth council complained they felt their views were not listened to and they were disrespected by the facilitators. They also said the facilitators were using the event to promote their own agenda to influence the report to the Welsh government.

The Leader then wrote to Children in Wales who organised the event. The actual workshop was delivered by Stand against Bullying from Bridgend. The Leader then had a response from Lyn Hill Policy director Children in Wales stating that she had recorded an 'Independent person' in her notes, one of the issues raised by the youth council. Ms Hill stated the information had been forwarded to the Welsh assembly in the report.

However, although an independent person had been raised by another group this was not the context of the idea by the youth council who stated an independent person should be from outside the school and that schools should publish a table of bullying complaints. The youth council said they felt disrespected due to the facilitator feeding back comments in front of the whole room 'that will never work' this is what we need then writing her ideas down on the flip chart.

During the afternoon session one youth council member said he felt the facilitators were trying to change his viewpoint on one issue and when he tried to explain his rationale was told by the facilitator he was 'giving her a hard time' when in fact he was trying to get his point over. The youth council said they felt disrespected.

Representatives from Children in Wales came to the cabinet liaison meeting in October and apologised for the conduct of the facilitators and said they had been spoken to. Children in Wales had also let the Welsh assembly know of the complaint and the result is a new consultation will now take place. The new Respecting Others anti bullying guidance will now focus on different groups of young people e.g. LGBT+.

The Youth Council thanked the Leader and elected cabinet members for supporting them with this issue.

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

The Youth Council received an update on school attendance in days lost and percentages, as detailed in the circulated report.

It was highlighted that Schools look at pupils that continuously miss school or patterns than emerge from absences, although exceptional circumstances have to be taken into consideration.

The youth council decided to look at the codes for attendance to see whether some young people i.e. young carers are being discriminated against or need additional support.

In the cabinet meeting on 11 July the youth council raised school attendance codes asking if the copy of the one they had was the same as NPT schools use. The answer from the head of participation was no and a copy of the codes was sent to Carolyn for youth council perusal.

One of the youth council who was a young carer explained that while in primary school she was shouted at when she was late due to caring responsibilities looking after two parents.

The codes will be discussed during the next youth council meeting as there is currently no provision for young carers who may be late due to circumstances out of their control or may not attend school knowing they will not get their mark.

The solution the youth council will ask for will be a code which takes into account the needs of young carers.

## **BRITISH YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS MEETINGS**

These meetings are part of the British Youth Councils new three-year strategy to build stronger inter-organisational relationships, and creating a deeper sense of 'BYC' as a network of youth organisations and young people. For member organisations and the British Youth Council to share common issues and challenges as well as priorities, campaigns, and much more with one another.

Amy Brown along with Seren Wonklyn Secretary of NPT Youth Council represented NPT Youth Service/Council at the British Youth Council Members Meetings on 10th February and 19th May 2018.

At the meeting on 19th May our youth council member delivered a presentation to other youth groups in relation to the work completed by NPT Youth Council which was well attended. Some of the groups asked for more information about the funding for First Aid Training.

## **Bullying in Schools**

Study Leave

Consultations:

Young people at Taibach Youth Club

Blaenrhondda Community Play Park

Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

Consultation on play facilities available in NPT (NPT Play works)

Crime beat Poster Community Safety

Young Peoples Information Leaflet ACE's folding card community safety

Disrespect Nobody Campaign feedback from youth council

Radio publicity feedback from young people - Community Safety

Families First Promotional campaign posters for Young Carers project

Calan DVS Year 7 Workbook & PowerPoint

Health Project Corrine Fry Leaflet

Skate Park Consultation

Consultation Make Your Mark 2017 & 2018 (See Appendix 2 for lists of schools and youth groups who participated. (2,745 in total)

Cwmtawe,

Offsites:

Respecting Others Workshop shaping WAG's Anti Bullying Guidance 2017

UK Youth Parliament House of Commons Sitting November 2017 & 2018

Debate Skill Residential Cardiff 2017 & 2018

Panto Reward Activity December 2017 & 2018 (Free tickets from CIW)

Meeting with Estyn Inspectors December 2017

Youth Health Summit - Having a say and influencing change 2017 & 2018

Aberavon Skate Park 2017 & 2018

Folly Farm Reward Activity 2017

Our Assembly Our Way workshop & tour of the Senedd 2018

Team Building Activity Sea Safaris Cardiff 2018

Children in Wales Celebratory Event 2018

LaserZone Reward Activity 2018

Brexit Question Time Nov 2018 Cardiff

Youth Achievement Awards 2018 Cardiff

Public Health Annual General Meeting 2018

National Museum for Wales – Marine Pollution Project 2018

Meeting with Children’s Commissioner 2018

Youth Council film project Neath Civic 2018

Meeting with Minister for the Commonwealth February 2018

Panto Reward Activity December 2017 & 2018 (Free tickets from CIW)

Meeting with Estyn Inspectors December 2017

## **Conclusion:**

The Youth Council have worked diligently over the past two years and achieved some fantastic outcomes for the young people they represent. For example getting the support of cabinet members to provide LGBT+ facilities for young people in NPT, the new Young Carers project and First Aid accreditation for 550+ young people.

Achievements for individual young people to date, at a local regional and national level include one young person on the Children Commissioners Advisory Board and 2 young people elected as the Member of UK Youth Parliament for NPT. These young people also achieved the High Sherriff’s Award 2017 and 2018. 2 young people sit on the ABMU Youth Health Board and one young person sits on a local mental health group. Two young people attend the British Youth Council Members Meetings in London.

All youth council members were signed up for the Millennium Volunteer Awards.

### **Recommendations:**

There are several reasons why children and young people's involvement in decision-making would benefit the local authority. For example, when children and young people are listened to they feel valued, respected and empowered, this promotes active citizenship.

There may be a better allocation of resources if services are informed by users. These services would then be fit for purpose.

Work with a suitable partner organisation to develop the youth council and give the lead worker support with admin, delivery off sites.