

Neath Port Talbot Council's Plan for Children & Young People Services 2019 - 2022



Building Safe and Resilient Communities

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Foreword

We are pleased to share with you our plans for Children and Young People's Services for the next three years.

This document describes Neath Port Talbot Council's plans to meet the needs of our local population. Its purpose is to outline how we will support children, young people and their families in Neath Port Talbot. Over the years, strong relationships have been built with partner agencies, providers, children, young people and their families. Our aim is to ensure that we understand the needs of our population and continually place children and young people at the heart of everything we do.

Working together with partners, providers and our communities we strive to develop and design services and responses that achieve improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

It is our intention to develop a more diverse and mature range of providers offering greater choice in the market, so that those from whom we commission and procure services are able to deliver and improve quality and performance, are forward thinking, innovative and proactively respond to the needs of the children, young people and families who use those services.

We want to involve all those who use or provide services so that together we can plan the best way to change and invest in our resources so that we can shape the social care market to offer targeted good quality, value for money, effective and sustainable services.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to offer our thanks to all those who have been involved in the development of the commissioning strategy and look forward to working with you throughout its implementation.



Councillor Alan R. Lockyer
Cabinet Member for Children's Social Services



Keri Warren
Head of Children and Young People Services

What is our Vision for Children, Young People and Families in NPT?

The Council's vision is to create *a Neath Port Talbot where everyone has an equal opportunity to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous*¹.

This will be achieved by working in partnership with other agencies such as health, housing, education, the third sector, community organisations and the private sector. Through partnership working, people will receive modern, high quality and sustainable services that will meet their assessed care and support needs and demands both now and in the future.

To that end the work of the Social Services, Health & Housing Directorate will embrace the following well-being objectives as defined in our Corporate Plan 2018-2022:

- **To improve the Well-being of children and young people**

"All of our children and young people have the best start in life, so they can be the best they can be"

- **To Improve the Well-being of all adults who live in the county borough**

"Everyone participates fully in community life – socially and economically"

In doing so we are committed to working in a way which achieves our overarching objectives.

¹ NPTCBC Single Integrated Plan 2013-2023

What do we want to achieve?

Our goal is to ensure that children and young people in Neath Port Talbot are safe, and living in families where they can achieve their potential and have their health, well-being and life chances improved within thriving communities. We want to get it right for our citizens – from childhood to adulthood.

We will therefore focus on:

- ✓ Ensuring children, young people and families are central to decisions about them, and their voice and experiences are heard and responded to
- ✓ Building safe and resilient communities and enabling people, including children young people and their families, to be part of their communities
- ✓ Valuing children and getting it right from early childhood to adulthood so they get the best support
- ✓ Planning and delivering the best services based on the voice of children, young people and their families and evidence of what works
- ✓ Supporting children, young people and families and their communities to be safe, independent and responsible for their own well-being
- ✓ Creating seamless support and services to promote positive transition for young people as they enter adulthood
- ✓ Improving the quality of social care services provided and safeguarding people within the borough

At the highest level we want to:

- ✓ Ensure consistency and quality of practice across teams and services
- ✓ Promote independence, choice and control for children, young people and families
- ✓ Safeguard citizens from harm
- ✓ Create new models of care and support within the community so that people are able to stay within their own communities
- ✓ Develop a robust market which can respond to changing demands in the future
- ✓ Engage in development of prevention and well-being services so that more people are able to stay independent
- ✓ Value the important role of young carers and recognise their own well-being needs so that they are supported

We propose to shift the focus of the care system so that there is greater emphasis on building safe and resilient communities that promote people's strengths, and ensure we intervene early to prevent needs from increasing.

What shapes our thinking?

There is important law and national guidance influencing the commissioning of health and social care services for children and adults, including:

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

The Act consolidates existing laws and places individuals' wellbeing at the centre of care; promoting choice and control

Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action 2011

The Welsh Government's agenda for regional commissioning and collaboration in service provision

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales

Housing (Wales) Act 2014

Sets out Welsh Government's aims to improve the supply, quality and standards of housing in Wales

Neath Port Talbot CBC Corporate Plan 2018-2022

Sets out our well-being objectives and priorities

Western Bay Population Needs Assessment

Looks at current and estimated future demand for services

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016

Places service quality and improvement at the heart of the regulatory regime and strengthens protection for those who need it

Together for Mental Health (2012)

Welsh Government's 10 year strategy to improve mental health and well-being

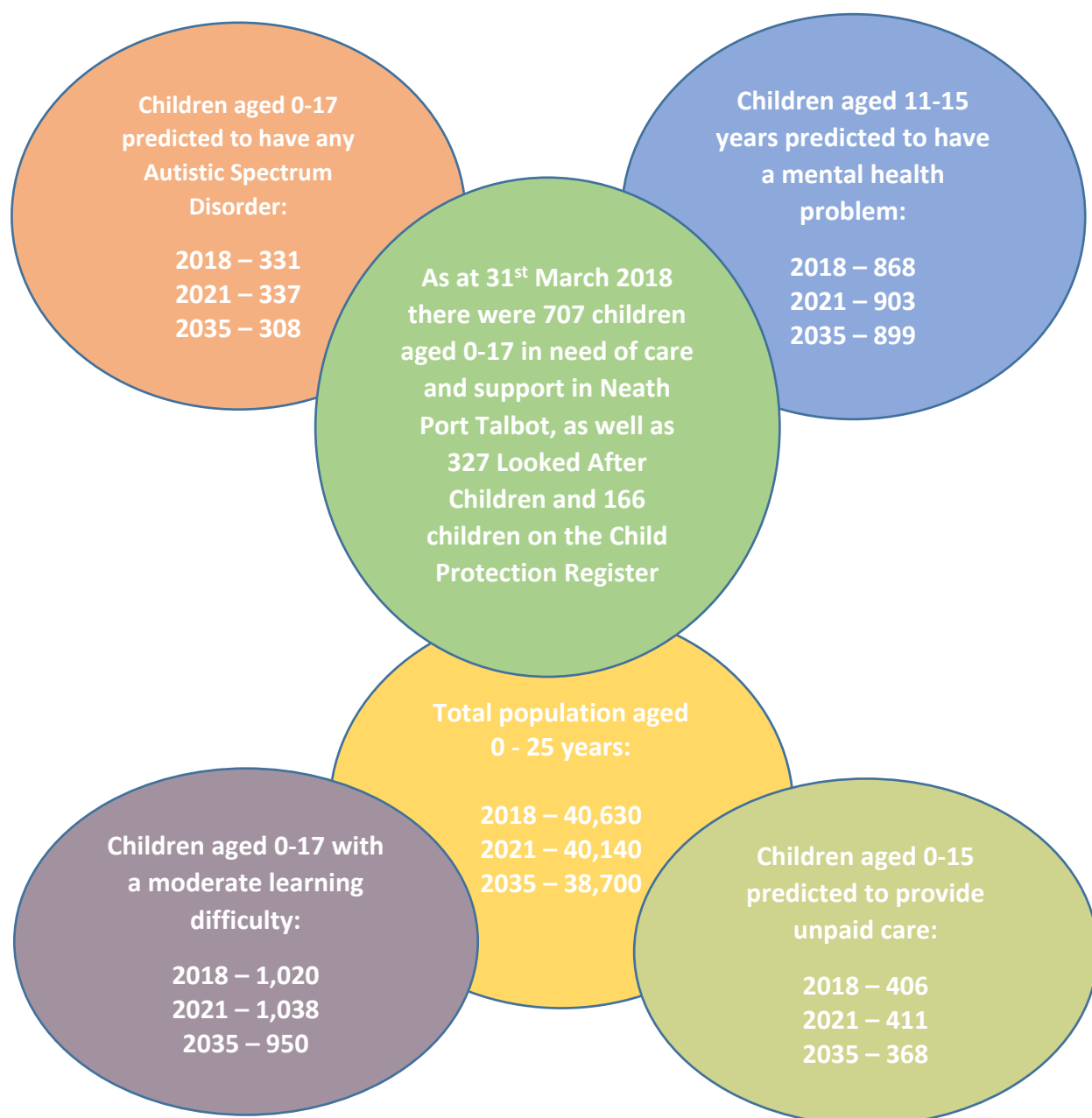
These are some of the things we have to consider when we plan how we will respond to the needs of our local population. In addition, this plan will complement and work alongside regional strategies such as the CYP

Partnership Plan, PSB Well-being Plan, and local and regional health and education plans.

What do we know about NPT’s population?

The following section summarises some of the key information we have on children and young people in Neath Port Talbot in 2018, as well as some projections over the three-year time period of this plan and beyond to 2035. Data obtained from Welsh Government’s Daffodil database: www.daffodilcymru.org.uk and in-house systems.

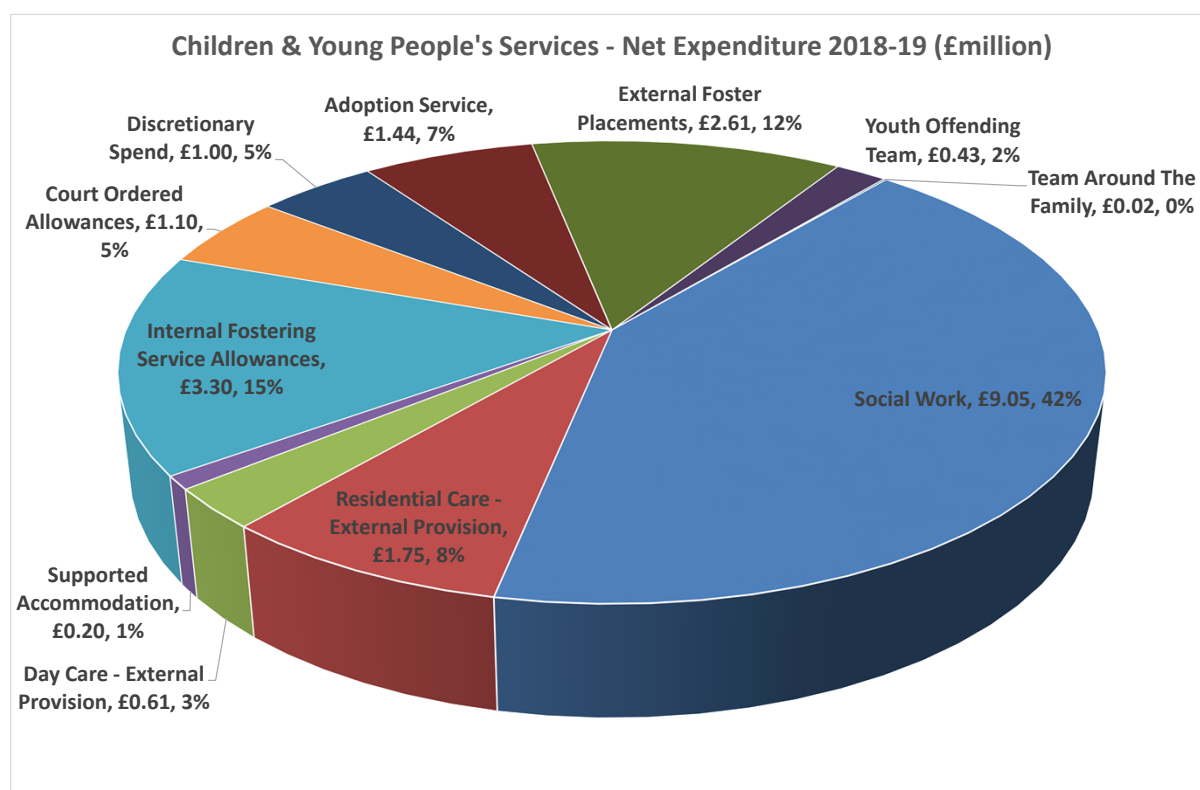
Children and Young People in Neath Port Talbot



What do we spend and how do we spend it?

Reducing budgets mean that the Council has to continue to work as efficiently as possible when commissioning services.

The Council spends approximately £21.5 million per year on providing, commissioning, and managing services for children and young people with social care needs, including Fostering Services, Adoption Service and Early Intervention & Prevention work.



By focussing on Early Intervention and Prevention Services, we are investing to support children to remain at home with their families where possible and safe to do so. It is anticipated that these initiatives will help Children & Young People's Services to achieve a savings target of £700,000 to meet its commitments to the Council's Forward Financial Plan in 2019/20.

What is our focus?

The following represent the key areas we are going to promote. Emphasis is on reducing or removing the need for long term care whilst ensuring that sustainable quality services are available for those who need them:

- 1 • A focus on early intervention and prevention - resolving problems early; right support at the right time
- 2 • Quality support that meets needs and agreed outcomes, and that children, young people and families are satisfied with
- 3 • Promote outcome focussed interventions - making sure that what we do has a positive impact and is evidence based
- 4 • Starting from a position of what someone can do, and will be able to do for themselves, with appropriate levels of support
- 5 • Adaptable, flexible and inclusive services that can meet changing needs - ensure people are able to achieve the goals that matter to them
- 6 • Understanding what is important to people and offer activities that meet outcomes, including supporting people into education, employment and training
- 7 • Make sure we have a range of good quality service providers
- 8 • Make sure everyone working with children, young people and families help them to be full and active members of their communities
- 9 • That we receive good value for money

How will we do it?

We are an ambitious Council and there is much we want to achieve to make sure people get the best possible support and have positive life experiences.

This section explains what we want to work on over the next three years to deliver this plan.

Children's needs are best met by their own families if this can be safely supported. Helping families stay together is a key focus of Children's Services. Early intervention and prevention services can reduce the number of children and young people reaching the threshold for care and needing to become Looked After Children (LAC), or support them to return safely to their families in a timely manner.

We must manage risk effectively with families that are approaching the threshold for care, and work to ensure we only provide care to those children who need to be looked after outside of their family, and are supported to remain in the family home when it is safe to do so. We will provide a range of effective interventions which support families to make changes whilst always ensuring that children and young people are kept safe.

There are a number of ways we will achieve this:

Early Intervention & Prevention

Strengthen approaches to early intervention, prevention and wellbeing

Effective Early Intervention will resolve problems before they become overwhelming and require high cost, reactive services.

The terms 'intervention' and 'prevention' are often used interchangeably across disciplines and in practice will often overlap, so the following explains what it means to us in Neath Port Talbot:

Prevention

Prevention is essentially a broad set of universal and additional support services that aims to prevent problems by building resilience, increasing protective factors and reducing risk factors facing children, young people and their families.

Early Intervention

Early intervention involves identifying children and families that may be at risk of running into difficulties and providing timely and effective support. Its

purpose is to improve the life chances of children and families and benefit society at large, whilst being cost effective².

By enabling people to access support services, and through better targeted early interventions we will prevent or reduce the need for more complex social care services in the future.

This vision is underpinned by a number of principles:

- Listening to children, young people and families, and ensuring that their voices are evident throughout our involvement
- Working together as a strong partnership to deliver effective local support
- Identifying the children, young people and families who need extra help and support at the earliest opportunity
- Commitment to a 'Family First' approach to the assessment of needs which will have a positive impact on all individuals within the whole family
- Delivering a whole-family approach, ensuring that we use interventions and approaches that we know make a difference and achieve good outcomes.
- Keeping families at the centre of what we do through effective assessment processes and by empowering professionals to address the needs of children, young people and their families at the first opportunity
- Share information in a timely way , avoiding the need for continuous or repetitive assessment and 'starting again', understanding the whole family's needs
- Continuously improve – learning as we go by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the way that we work, gaining a better understanding of what helps families most, and focusing our resources on making a positive difference

By offering more coordinated, cost-effective, timely and tailored support for children, young people and families, we will ensure a more joined up, evidence-based approach to early intervention which should reduce demand for specialist and acute services, resulting in improved outcomes and life chances for families through their needs being met earlier and more efficiently across the whole system.

² Early Intervention Foundation

This will be implemented through the commissioning and delivery of Integrated Family Support Services.

Safeguarding

Children should live or grow up in homes where they feel safe and secure. Safeguarding children and young people is a key priority and underpins all activity in Children's Services

Children who are at risk should be supported at the earliest opportunity, with a view to trying to make things get better and stay better. Interventions will aim to keep children in their own homes, within their family or within their local community.

To help keep children and young people safe we will:

- Ensure all our staff are aware and trained in the importance of appropriate information sharing to safeguard children
- Reduce exploitation, specifically focusing on Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing Children, Modern Slavery and County Lines as part of the Western Bay Safeguarding Children Board
- Continue to use robust safeguarding decision making for vulnerable children and families through the measurement of set criteria
- Make sure children and young people living in the context of domestic abuse, parental substance misuse, mental ill health and disability (Adverse Childhood Experiences) are identified early and receive appropriate help and support
- Routinely conduct contract monitoring of service providers to ensure consistency and quality of care and support delivered

To ensure that Looked After Children have high quality, stable care

We will ensure that children and young people receive the right level and type of care and support to have positive childhood experiences

We will plan effectively for Looked After Children (LAC) to ensure they have stability and permanence, do not remain in care longer than is necessary and leave care positively. In particular, supporting a successful transition to adulthood, and increasing placement choices in fostering and adoption.

We ensure all children and young people in care have a care plan, to make sure that they come into and exit care at the right times. We need to ensure that children do not 'drift' through care, but have clearly planned processes which allows them to be reunited with family and friends where possible, have stable, supported and well matched placements with alternative carers and exit the care system in a timely and positive way at whatever age that happened

To achieve this we will:

- Ensure there are effective decision-making arrangements in place prior to children becoming looked after
- Maintain robust scrutiny and review of short-term admissions into care
- Ensure the sufficiency and stability of placements when children need to be looked after by:
 - increasing the number of NPT foster carers to match the needs of the children who need to be looked after; and
 - providing support and training to foster carers to assist them in supporting children to achieve their outcomes and to increase the likelihood of placement stability
- Ensure lack of drift for children who are looked after by:
 - promoting timely assessment and rehabilitation to families where safe to do so; and
 - ensuring that where possible children and young people are able to be cared for safely without the need to be looked after
- Work closely with our partners to ensure the right support services from Education, Health and other universal and early intervention services are available to LAC in order to prevent unnecessary placement breakdown, and meet identified needs

- Employ effective joint working arrangements across organisations including Adult Services and Housing, ensuring key transition points across the life course and a focus on adults as parents
- Ensure responsive and effective identification of safeguarding issues via development of the Multi-Agency Placement Support Services (MAPSS) – a multi-disciplinary team that aims to help children with complex needs as a result of their experiences to remain in stable placements, by providing specialist placement support
- Develop a pilot Transition Team to work jointly between Children & Young People Services and Adult Social Care to ensure children with complex needs have a smooth transition to adulthood;
 - To ensure consistency in planning for young people as they progress to adulthood
 - To develop commissioned services to meet the needs of young people with complex needs as they move from being a child to an adult
 - To support young people to achieve independence with the least intrusive package of support to meet their needs and to encourage a step down in service provision where appropriate
- Strengthen and develop accommodation for care leavers by:
 - reviewing the commissioned arrangements to provide supported accommodation for care leavers;
 - develop services to meet complex needs including mother and baby placements
 - develop opportunities for young care leavers to access education, employment and training opportunities

Implement outcome focused interventions across Children's Services

The services provided should contribute positively to children's lives, maximising the child's potential and improve stability

By focusing on improving social work practice in relation to assessment and outcome based care planning we will further develop services that promote long term child and family stability.

We will provide the right mix of placements and support locally where possible to meet identified needs of children who are or may become Looked After, as cost effectively as possible, and develop services which enable successful transitions to adulthood.

We will achieve this by:

- Enhanced participation and engagement arrangements for children, young people and their families
- Better facilitating children and young people to play a more active part in the creation and review of their Care and Support Plans (co-production)
- High quality assessment of local needs, informed by Western Bay Population Needs Assessment with local plans that drive evidence-based and outcome focused commissioning plans
- Recruiting more in-house foster carers with the right combination of skills to meet the needs of children and young people in our care
- Working in partnership with Independent Foster Agencies to make sure we pay a fair price for placements
- Making sure services meet the needs of children and young people requiring specialist provision including parent and child placements, complex residential placements and placements for children with disabilities

Supporting Young Carers

To strengthen our planning arrangements and support mechanisms for young carers

We recognise that for some families, children will take on caring responsibilities.

Young carers are children who help look after a member of the family who is ill, disabled or has mental health problems, or is misusing drugs or alcohol. Their day to day responsibilities often include things like cooking, cleaning and shopping.

The commitment of young carers to their cared-for person means that their own individual needs are sometimes neglected. They may find it difficult to

socialise with their peers or to find people who understand the practical difficulties of their daily life. It is important to recognise the needs of young carers and their right to be young people as well as carers.

We want to identify and reduce the numbers of children and young people who are undertaking caring roles and the numbers of families who rely on the care of a young person for their care needs because this impacts negatively on a young person's emotional and physical well-being.

We want to ensure that every young carer in NPT has the resources and support necessary to achieve their full potential and lead a life away from their caring role.

To achieve this we will:

- ✓ Review the NPT Young Carers Strategy
- ✓ Work with partners, including Education and Health, to improve early identification of young carers, including promoting uptake of carers assessments to ensure eligible need is identified
- ✓ Better identify and raise the profile of young carers among community organisations to improve the services they get
- ✓ With partners, offer support to young carers, including peer support and networking opportunities to help them achieve their potential
- ✓ Give young carers more of a say to ensure services meet their needs
- ✓ Further develop our Family Information Service so it has the resources needed to provide information and signposting facilities for young carers
- ✓ Work with various organisations and communities to identify local resources that young carers can access
- ✓ Ensure there are adequate support services in place for the cared-for person so that the young carer can have a break from their caring responsibilities

How will we know how well we are doing?

The themes from this Plan will inform the basis of the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate's Business Plan which will be monitored through the Corporate Performance Management System, the Council's Annual Report and the Director's Annual Report.

In line with the service model delivery principles, the success of this commissioning strategy will be demonstrated by:

- Fewer numbers of Looked After Children
- Fewer children at risk of, or being, exploited (in any of its various forms)
- Improved stability of foster and other placements (reduced numbers of children moving between foster placements; more young care leavers being able to access suitable accommodation)
- A greater understanding and meeting of children, young people and families' choices and expectations
- Consistent delivery of specified high standards for service provision
- Achievement of value for money and the savings within the Council's Forward Financial Plan
- Development of a culture that helps those with assessed support needs to make full use of their potential, protect them from harm and ensure dignity and respect
- Full engagement of children, young people, families and carers in the shaping and delivery of services
- Effective joint working with partners in planning and delivering services
- Regular reviews to ensure that levels of support change in line with changing needs
- Positive responses and feedback from people using services and their carers

Conclusion

The needs of children, young people and families can often be complex and multiple, but the aim and emphasis must be on working with them to find out, and provide, those services which can help achieve positive outcomes.

This document is intended to be an open statement for individuals and providers of services to understand our intentions and our ambitions. It will provide a focus for future reviews to enable us to track progress and allow us to review our assumptions. The development of the plan will allow those who receive services to see where they may wish to influence and contribute to future service developments, and it will offer providers a steer for developing new services.

This plan is a working document that will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and focused on the changing needs of the children, young people and families of Neath Port Talbot.

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