

Directorate of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning

Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee

Covid-19 update

Schools

- On 20th March, the Education Minister announced the repurposing of schools as emergency childcare provision for critical workers and facilities for vulnerable learners.
- NPT established eight hubs across the authority and provided care for circa 200-250 children on a daily basis.
- These arrangements ceased on June 26th allowing schools to reopen for Catch Up and Check In arrangements on June 29th.
- Current attendance shows that between 55-60% of pupils will benefit from these arrangements. One notable trend has been the low attendance of pupils entitled to *fsm*.
- Throughout the lockdown period, NPT has provided a weekly payment of £19.50 to each *fsm* child whose family has registered. Current figures show over 90% take up. To date circa £1.1 million has been paid to eligible families. Payments will continue throughout the summer closure period.

Schools

- Schools have been supporting home learning throughout the lockdown period. The local authority has provided 502 chromebooks, as well as 690 Windows laptops (converted to act as Chromebooks) and 12 iPads for pupils with no appropriate IT equipment and / or internet access. Further funding of £1.16m has been received for 2020/21 to support pupils' digital competencies.
- All schools have prepared recovery plans and risk assessments based on the guidance provided by NPT and Welsh Government. These will be revised as schools prepare for wider opening in September.
- The Directorate's SMT meets with TUs on a weekly basis to discuss staffing and associated issues.
- We expect almost all members of staff to be able to return to work in September.
- Headteachers have received weekly support to update them on key developments and to discuss concerns. A dedicated FAQ portal has been established.

Inclusion / wellbeing

- The Inclusion Service and Wellbeing Teams continue to support schools, parents / carers and pupils during lockdown through a combination of remote consultations and direct work with the most vulnerable children and young people. This will continue over the summer period.
- A bank of resources has been developed on a range of Covid-19 issues, including home learning, bereavement, anxiety, well-being and transition. An online resource library has been established.
- The Inclusion Service has worked closely with Social Services to develop the Vulnerable Learners' Register and staff have worked collaboratively as part of a multi-agency group, to discuss provision, address issues and ensure the register is updated on a weekly basis.
- An Inclusion Service Parent / Carer telephone advice line has been established which has supported 22 families since it went live at the beginning of May 2020. The School Based Counselling Service has also created a Parent / Carer support phone line as well as a school staff wellbeing phone line. 25 parents / carers and 9 members staff have accessed this service since May 2020.
- Since lockdown, the School Based Counselling Service has recruited an additional two counsellors. This has enabled us to meet demand and significantly reduce the waiting list. The current waiting list is 25, a reduction from 111 in 2018/19. This is comprised of pupils who are not able to access counselling remotely and therefore will be prioritised in September.

Inclusion / wellbeing

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) have continued to receive regular supervision and training from the EPS in order for them to continue to support vulnerable pupils in hubs / schools and remotely.
- All Inclusion teams have continued to support transition from early years through to post 16. Further work has been undertaken with NPTC to develop enhanced provision for Post 16 complex needs.
- Education Welfare Officers have continued to support schools throughout the lockdown period by making 'garden' visits to families who have not engaged or have been invisible to school staff.
- The Directorate worked in partnership with Swansea Bay Health Board and Public Health Wales to plan and administer circa 1,500 COVID-19 antibody blood tests at the new Bay Field Hospital for school-based staff who worked in the school hubs throughout lockdown.
- The Additional Learning Needs Support Service (0-16) has continued to perform its statutory functions. ALNSS officers have been available throughout the period, in order to provide advice and guidance to families and schools, and liaise with partner agencies.
- There has been contact with and monitoring of NPT pupils in residential and independent sector placements in addition to continuing to provide for pupils moving into the LA, including LAC pupils.

Libraries

- Monday 22nd June - Neath, Pontardawe and Port Talbot libraries re-opened together with the home delivery service, operating a collection / return service.
- Monday 27th July - Cwmafan and Glynneath Library will reopen for call and collect service.
- Monday 3rd August - The mobile library service will resume a call and collect service only.
- Wednesday 12th August - Neath, Pontardawe and Port Talbot Libraries will offer limited access and public internet access.
- Monday 17th August - Baglan, Sandfields and Skewen Libraries reopen for call and collect service.
- Owing to maintenance and capacity issues, Cefn Coed Museum's reopening will be delayed.

Margam Country Park

- 4th June - Margam Park re opened to allow residents within a 5 mile radius the opportunity to visit the park for the purposes of walks/exercise etc, no facilities were open.
- 13th July - Margam Park entered the next phase of reopening. Toilets including baby change and takeaway catering resumed with a limited takeaway service from Charlotte's Pantry.
- 1st August - Car parking charges will be re introduced. Card payments only will be accepted and car park season ticket holders will have their membership extended free of charge from the park's closure to the 1st August.
- The Friends of Margam have in recent years provided excellent support to the park management. Discussions are commencing to allow the friends return in the future, when it is considered safe to do so.
- Margam Orangery will remain closed for functions as per Government guidance. Staff are being proactive, wedding 'show arounds' are being programmed, an online video is also being produced by the team to sell weddings for 2021/22
- Ivy Cottage has re-opened for tourists and is fully booked until October 2020.

Celtic Leisure / Physical Activity and Sport Service Theatres

- Members decided on the 17th March 2020 that delegated authority was to be granted to the Head of Transformation in consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Head of Property and Regeneration, Head of Legal Services, Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture to finalise an invitation to tender for the provision of leisure services in Neath Port Talbot in line with the current specification of service (subject to any minor updates necessary) and to embark on a tender process as detailed in the report.
- A draft contract and service specification together with the required contract surrender documentation are being prepared. It is proposed to go to the market in September 2020 with the intention of going back to members in January 2021 for a final decision.
- Staff working in the **Physical Activity and Sport Service**, together with **Theatre** staff were originally redeployed to the NPT safe and well team, but have now transferred to the Track, Trace and Protect Service until September.

Summer Childcare and Enhancement Programme

- Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) will provide funded childcare for vulnerable pre-school children.
- Children aged 3 and 4 receiving funded childcare through the Childcare Offer can restart their place over the summer holidays, up to 30 hours a week.
- £75k additional funding received from WG for summer childcare and play provision for vulnerable children and young people, which will provide:
 - 50 childcare places per day for five weeks, for children aged 5-11 years
 - One week summer play at Maes y Coed and Awel Y Môr schools for identified pupils
 - 10 sessions of play and recreation activities for young people aged 12-16 years with additional needs
 - 25 sessions of play and recreation activities for young people aged 12-16 years

Summer Childcare and Enhancement Programme

- £46k additional funding from WG for summer enrichment targeted at areas of deprivation, which will provide 80 sessions of activities over eight days for pupils in years 5 and 6.
- Sessions to include:
 - Physical activity and sport provided by Sgiliau
 - Music based activities provided NPT Music Service
 - Play and recreation activities provided by NPT Youth Service

Communities For Work (CFW) Communities For Work Plus CFW + and RDP

- The CFW and CFW Plus mentors continue to support to their existing participants whilst working from home. In the last 3 months, (April – June) we have had 169 referrals for people needing Employability Support and eligible for CFW/CFW+, and referral numbers are increasing each week. Between April and June we have helped 49 people into employment. Every participant is supported, even if they are not looking for work during this time.
- Promotional Activity - we held the first virtual jobs fair, via MsTeam, and have a youth focused jobs fair planned for the 22nd July. We used social media on National Employability Day to promote our service, including banners in communities.
- The **Rural Development Team** has introduced a £10k application that needs far less evidence and are working on a £1k application that it going to be around 2 pages and can be approved quickly and efficiently to get the funding to the communities that need it.

Skills and Training

- To encourage and motivate hair dressing learners throughout lockdown we have delivered weekly virtual cutting and setting /dressing hair sessions via Zoom. Sessions have included an explanation and a step by step demonstration of how to achieve a variety of haircuts and setting skills while maintaining effective and safe methods of working.
- Since the lockdown the Engagement team has been sending work out to existing trainees via email to complete and contacting them by telephone for monthly reviews.
- We have also been liaising with Youth Service, Careers Wales for the recruitment of school leavers in July for the Summer Sorted programme and Traineeship Engagement. All new starts are being contacted via telephone and email and being issued weekly tasks to complete. For those without IT access at home we are offering a pick up option at our centre.

Adult Community Learning

Adult Community Learning continues to deliver online courses via different platforms e.g. teams, zoom, google classroom, emailing information etc. Looking at the different platform, ACL will be encouraging all tutors to use teams in future to share, save resources and deliver online lessons.

Some tutors have delivered course work to learners who do not have internet and have kept in contact via telephone.

New online courses being advertised; numbers are starting to increase.

Provided online courses for Tai Tarian and Teams around the Family.

Prospectus 20/21 – providing information is a challenge due to situation but ACL is hoping to start delivering 1 -2 courses in Tir Morfa at the end of August if this is safe for everyone. If this goes well, more classes will start in September prioritising classes where learners need to complete assessments.

CPD training for staff/tutors – many tutors have taken up the opportunity of doing online training during this time.

Youth Service

- The Youth Service has continued to support and engage with young people using a variety of methods such as social media, telephone calls, video chats and text messages.
- The Youth Council have continued to meet regularly during this period and have been raising issues that have been affecting young people during the last few months which have included Covid 19 and also Black Lives Matter.
- The Families First Youth Workers have continued to support their caseloads of vulnerable young people who have been referred to the service.
- Families First Young Carers have been supporting those who have a young carers assessment and have been supporting young people and families with food packages and regular contacts.

Youth Service Continued

- Families First continue to support the LGBTQ+, Young Carers and Speech & Language groups. This has included running activities with them and regular meetings and chats.
- The Legacy Youth Workers are supporting their year 11 school leavers who have been identified by the schools, careers wales and discussions as being those most at risk of becoming NEET.
- The Engagement Progression Coordinator and has been meeting regular with Careers Wales, NPTCG and Work Based Learning providers to help young people with the transition into EET.
- The KIT & Cam Nesa Teams continued to support young people aged 16-25 and have arranged placements into college, work based learning provision and employment.
- Youth Support Grant Youth Workers have been supporting young people who are at risk of homelessness and those suffering from loneliness and isolation.

Access Managed Services (AMS) Cleaning and Catering

- AMS worked closely with H&S to ensure that all risk assessments are in place for a two stage clean:
 - Stage 1. Standard clean during Covid 19
 - Stage 2. Enhanced clean for a suspected or confirmed case.
- Shirley Freeguard sits on the all-Wales group to advise on the procedures and protocols to deal with cleaning schools during Covid 19.
- AMS provided training to 480 school based staff in infection control. This included social distancing and sanitising stations. AMS also trained staff from Margam Park, Gnoll Park, and corporate cleaning.
- AMS supplied PPE to all schools including gloves, aprons, disposable cloths and chemicals. This support is on-going.
- AMS are now working on a plan for September and are actively recruiting casuals through the safer recruitment procedure.
- For the first two weeks of lockdown AMS Catering was repurposed and staff provided healthy grab bags for fsm pupils at every kitchen location.
- Primary school cooks also catered for comprehensive school pupils to access grab bags at their nearest primary school.

Other services

- Staff from DELLL have been redeployed to other crisis support areas such as the Safe and Well scheme and the TTP service.
- Education Support has supported schools on Continuity of Learning Plans and guidance on Blended Learning.
- Weekly online vocal and instrumental lessons delivered by the Music Service. The Welsh language support team has also provided regular online updates.
- The LAC officer has continued with online support as usual particularly for the Complex Needs Panels and liaison with Children's Services.
- **Legacy Update**
- Digital Inclusion Ambassador has been keeping in touch with community organisations offering support where needed and advising training opportunities, how to keep safe shopping online and information on the latest scams.
- Legacy Community Counselling has been working remotely, offering telephone counselling to those children that are suitable for this service. Unfortunately not all are suitable due to their complexity.

Other services

- The VLS (Vulnerable Learners' Service) has maintained contact with all supported families via e-mail, social media and telephone conversations. VLS has delivered resources to children (EAL & GT) and provided translation of key letters and documents in relation to guidance around the pandemic.
- The NPT digital SEREN summer school has been a highly successful innovation that resulted in Welsh government asking NPT to allow access to students from other hubs across Wales. Overall we have 250+ students who have signed up for workshops (with more emailing every day to join). Of that over 100 are NPT students and the rest from across Wales.

Other services

- SSIP officers have continued to successfully manage current 21st Century schools and WG grant funded projects and all have progressed through lockdown, most with minimal or no impact expected on final completion dates.
- Planning and development for future projects has also continued through lockdown and communication with all partners has been maintained.
- Support has been provided for schools to ensure that they have been able to reopen buildings safely, and advice on managing spaces and movement around buildings has been given when requested.
- Capital maintenance programmes have been carefully assessed and prioritised, many works will be undertaken this summer including pupil toilet refurbishments, window replacements and building fabric repairs.