



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee

19 November 2020

Report of the Head of Transformation

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Inclusion Service Report on Overview of Support for Children and Young People with Additional learning Needs

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with an update on the continued safe and effective service that the inclusion service has provided during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Background:

The Inclusion Service has continued to provide a safe and effective service during the Covid 19 pandemic. Teams across all services have worked both physically in schools as well as remotely, to

support children and young people (CYP), school staff and families. The service has also evolved and expanded in order to meet the needs of children, young people and their families who may have experienced mental health issues as a result of the pandemic.

The service has co-ordinated work across teams and with wider agencies to support schools, Children, Young People and their families. This has included providing specific support, advice, strategies and resources relevant to the needs of the children and young people. Online training, advice clinics and new telephone helplines have been created and continue to operate, to ensure support continues to be accessible during any future periods of lockdown.

Grant funding made available by Welsh Government for pupils with complex needs and for school based counselling has been utilised to extend the offer of appropriate counselling and support to primary age pupils and to develop outdoor provision and opportunities for further education. This additional grant money has enabled the service to significantly reduce the waiting times for children and young people to access counselling support.

Overview of service delivery

All statutory services for pupils in receipt of a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), continue to be delivered within schools following appropriate risk assessments and protocols. These include provision such as speech and language therapy (SaLT) and support for pupils with hearing and visual impairment (HI & VI). There has been close collaboration with colleagues within Health to ensure that therapies are delivered effectively.

All teams have prioritised support for the transition of pupils who have changed placement and/or those who are experiencing difficulty in returning to the school environment. Resources have been developed including transition packs and social stories, to assist in alleviating anxieties and preparing Children and Young People for a successful

return to school. Cynnydd in particular continued to support post 16 transition over the initial lockdown. The team ran virtual sessions with Careers Wales, facilitated interviews, liaised with college and work based learning providers, helped set up bank accounts, enabled young people to apply for EMA and provided equipment (see appendix A; case study 1).

School visits have been undertaken to advise school staff on how best to adapt the school and classroom environment to reduce anxieties and behaviours, including advice on structure of the day and individual visual timetables. Team Teach training, delivered by the Wellbeing Service, has continued taking a blended learning approach. The Wellbeing Service has continued to provide forest/coastal school sessions to children and young people. The service are now supporting schools to develop their outdoor areas and providing support on activities so that outdoor learning can be embedded even more into the curriculum going forward.

The Educational Psychology Service developed lesson plans, to help staff and pupils manage the return to schools following the initial lockdown. The lesson plans were developed as a reflective resource to enable and support any concerns that children and young people wanted to discuss following the crisis. The feedback regarding these resources from schools was very positive.

The School Based Counselling Service (SBCS) has delivered face-to-face counselling for children and young people and three new services have been created, including support for staff, parents and telephone counselling to children and young people.

- The staff service has worked with 11 clients and provided 16 counselling sessions
- The parent service helped 26 clients and provided 42 counselling sessions
- The telephone serviced worked with 228 clients and provided 1394 counselling sessions

- The total number of clients who have been supported is 265, based on 1452 counselling sessions.

The SBCS is also piloting a peer support programme with three school clusters, with the aim of providing well-being support and advice to schools staff, including Head Teachers.

In addition to this, the SBCS has worked collaboratively with the Wellbeing Service to utilise grant funding to extend the offer of counselling to primary school pupils from year 1. The counselling offered is age appropriate in the form of play therapy and drama therapy.

The Inclusion Service has also created a telephone service for parents / carers of children with Additional Learning Needs. To date, 34 families have received support through this helpline.

The Educational Psychology Service has continued to offer regular supervision and training for Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) staff within schools. ELSAs are a valuable resource and many worked during the initial lockdown and in Hubs with vulnerable learners. Support was provided through regular phone calls, video calls and social media platforms for ELSA staff, to ensure they were enabled to support the children and young people safely.

Inclusion Service officers have undertaken garden visits, in line with Covid guidance, to build relationships with families, undertake assessments, work through effective strategies and interventions and sign post to other agencies for support. This was particularly effective for vulnerable young people supported by the Wellbeing Service and Cynnydd who struggled to engage over the phone and online. Work was also provided for young people to complete the qualifications they started prior to lockdown with Cynnydd. As a result of this, no young person missed out on the qualification they had been working towards and NPT Cynnydd are 37% over our profile target for numbers of qualifications gained.

The Wellbeing Service and Cynnydd used innovative ways to continue to support their caseload and schools, virtually over the phone and through physically staffing hubs during lockdown. The Cynnydd team worked closely with their link schools to ensure they were feeding into the school processes for supporting vulnerable learners (see appendix A; case study 2). Wellbeing links for schools kept in contact, providing information, advice, resources and support when needed. The virtual support and 'garden visits', have led to increased support being available to the wider family along with the individual pupil. Multi agency working, including attendance at key panels, during this period remained strong and this has resulted in some really positive outcomes (see appendix A; case study 3).

On return to school in September, teams have continued to make contact with schools, through individual meetings and / or consultation clinics. Discussions have focused on how best to support the current caseload, along with any new concerns or referrals. Cynnydd are back in school full time and have already started a project with Swansea City Community Trust focusing on health and wellbeing. The Community Trust have recognised Cynnydd as a key partner who have supported the projects and enabled young people to take part and stay committed to re-engage with their education and nominated Cynnydd for a Premier league Inspires Award.

Requests for statutory assessments have continued in line with the LAs statutory duties and the Additional Needs Support Service (ALNSS) has continued to provide advice and support for families going through the statutory process.

The Inclusion Service training menu, a comprehensive training menu for schools, has been adapted to ensure that almost all training can be delivered effectively online, to ensure school based staff have access to mandatory training and continual professional development.

With the growing body of research on the long term impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and how relevant this is in the current climate, training on trauma informed approaches with schools has been developed along with Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Mental Health Panels are being offered in all clusters. These multi-agency meetings are attended by Educational Psychologists, School Based Counsellors, Wellbeing team, CAMHS and school staff.

Financial Impacts:

No Implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Implications

Workforce Impacts:

No Implications

Legal Impacts:

No Implications

Risk Management Impacts:

No Implications

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item
, to include the full consultation report as an appendix.

Recommendations:

That Members note the report

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Case Studies

List of Background Papers:

None

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