

<b><u>BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></b>	
<b>Report to</b>	<b>The Chair and Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Report Subject</b>	<b>Inspire 2 Achieve / Inspire 2 Work Project Update</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Lynn Phillips-Head of Education Transformation and Performance</b>
<b>Report date</b>	<b>October 2017</b>
<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Education – Youth Services</b>
<b>Executive Portfolio</b>	<b>Cllr C. Meredith, Executive Member Education</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017</b>
<b>Date signed off by Monitoring Officer</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Date signed off by Section 151 Officer</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Date signed off by Chair</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b>
<b>Key words</b>	<b>ESF funded Inspire 2 Achieve/Work project update</b>

## Report Information Summary

<b>1.</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of the report is to update Scrutiny members on the local Inspire 2 Achieve (I2A) and Inspire 2 Work (I2W) projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). These projects follow on from the previous work of the Youth Service's Prevent project, as part of the Local Authority's approach to reducing the numbers of young people becoming NEET.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Scope of the Report</b>
2.1	<p>These projects directly link to the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), which sets out 6 key areas which local authorities must implement to ensure that the numbers of young people becoming and remaining NEET (not in education, employment or training) are reduced.</p> <p>This report will provide a brief background to the Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work projects and explain the current situation with regards to new funding becoming available through European Structural Funds (ESF).</p> <p>The report will explain the current situation, progress to date and expected timescales for approval for Inspire 2 Work.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Contribution to the National Well-Being Goals – Detail attached as Appendix 1</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CLT/Committees/Other groups</b>
4.1	<p>This report will be discussed by Education's Directorate Management Team, Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and the Executive Committee for information.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendation/s for Consideration</b>
5.1	<p>It is suggested that members of the Scrutiny Committee;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutinise the impact and contribution of the Youth Service's team to reducing the numbers of young people becoming NEET; and,</li> <li>• Agree to continue to scrutinise the performance of both Inspire to Achieve/Work projects via annual monitoring reports.</li> </ul>

Why this topic is a priority for the Council?					
Single Integrated Plan (SIP)	Council's Well-being Objectives	Performance Management Improvement Framework (PMIF)	Transforming Blaenau Gwent (TBG Programme)	Relevant legislation	Other (please state)
√	√			√	YEPP

Reporting Pathway							
Directorate Management Team (DMT)	Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)	Audit	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny	Executive	Council	Other (please state)
√				23/10/17	22/11/17		

## **Main Report**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Background and Context</b>
1.1	<p>In 2013, Blaenau Gwent Youth Service lead on the development of two ESF operations across South East Wales (10 Local Authorities and 4 FE Colleges) called Inspire to Achieve (11-24 at risk of NEET young people) and Inspire to Work (16-24 NEET young people). The lead for the West Wales and the Valleys programme (6 Local Authorities and 4 FE Colleges) was transitioned from July 2015 to a newly established regional lead team in Environment and Regeneration, whilst the local delivery projects still sit within the Youth Service within the Education Directorate. The new operations sit under WEFO's Priority 3 Youth Employment and Attainment and are funded under Specific Objective 1 (16-24 young people NEET) and Specific Objective 2 (11-24 young people at risk of becoming NEET). This funding has secured sustainability for the Youth Service's work linked to the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) for an initial 3 years and can also be extended for an additional 2 years.</p>
1.2	<p>The regional lead team in Environment and Regeneration co-ordinate the operations for all joint beneficiaries across West Wales and the Valleys. Blaenau Gwent Youth Service line manages the two local delivery projects, Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work, which ensures continued support for young people both at risk of becoming and currently NEET.</p>
1.3	<p>The ESF Inspire 2 Achieve project was approved by WEFO in February 2016, with Inspire 2 Work approved in November 2016. The Youth Service has established both teams, with some staff re-designated from their previous Prevent youth worker role and some new appointments made.</p>
1.4	<p>The Inspire projects are underpinned by the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), which outlines 6 key areas which Local Authorities are expected to have in place to support young people who are risk or who are currently NEET. Two of these six key areas are implementing an early identification process for young people at risk and providing a lead worker to support those young people identified. The Inspire youth workers provide this lead worker support for 11-16 year olds and through a partnership approach</p>

1.5	<p>for 16-24 year olds.</p> <p>The two Inspire projects will ensure that the expectations of the YEPF are continued and that the numbers of young people becoming NEET continue to reduce.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Performance Evidence and Information</b>
2.1	<p><b>ESF Grant for Sustainability of the Service:</b></p> <p>The delivery plans for the two ESF operations ‘Inspire to Achieve’ (11-24 at risk of NEET young people) and ‘Inspire to Work’ (16-24 NEET young people) have now both been approved since February 2016 and November 2016 respectively. This funding ensures that the Local Authority continues to meet the requirements set out within the Welsh Government’s Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) and secures sustainability for the Youth Service’s work linked to the ‘brokerage’ element. We have recently been asked by WEFO to submit an extended profile for both projects until 2022.</p>
2.2	<p>Over the last academic year, the following progress has been made with the Inspire 2 Achieve (I2A) project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To date 272 young people have been supported (164 male, 108 female). Each young person has an individual action plan which is identifying and addressing barriers to achieving their potential in school. The Raising Aspirations Group (RAG) is monitoring progress of the I2A project and to hold them to account through a partnership approach.</li> <li>• Direct work within the schools is on-going, with every secondary school, including Canolfan yr Afon, having an allocated I2A Youth Worker. All I2A youth workers and Careers Wales staff meet individually in their associated schools and as whole teams to discuss partnership working and how best to support identified young people. Direct work with young people includes gardening, gym, work placements, confidence/self-esteem sessions, behaviour management and transition.</li> </ul>
2.3	<p>The breakdown of I2A support in the last year is as follows:</p> <p><b>Abertillery Comprehensive School - I2A Youth worker linked</b></p>

to the school. Support offered is a mix of 1:1 sessions, group work and support with accessing work placement opportunities (transport to interviews etc.). I2A Youth Worker delivering Personal and Social Education (PSE) qualifications/accreditation to the internal Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for the school. Projects include Street Games 'Us Girls', Egg Seeds Gardening project, support a cohort of year 11 young people – this includes checking the status of college applications, referring on to the I2A Transition Workers as and when necessary for follow on support and liaising with the Inspire Careers Wales Advisor for updates on young people and post 16 Education, Training and Employment (ETE) options.

**Brynmawr Foundation School** – I2A Youth Worker (maternity cover) in place until Autumn 2018, providing a period of consistency for the young people and the school. Support during the school day is timetabled to run in tandem with lesson times and mainly consists of 1:1 support. Accredited programmes include anger management and healthy lifestyles which positively impact on young people's attainment, attendance and behaviour. Other projects include 'Break Club', which runs during morning break time with sessions split between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 young people, Street Games activator sessions, the Gardening Project, support with post 16 options through Inspire Careers Advisor.

**Canolfan Yr Afon (PRU)** - I2A Youth Worker linked to the school. A number of meetings were held with key school links, due to on-going issues at Canolfan Yr Afon relating to an I2A base and access to young people. Following on from this, the worker splits his time between the main building and the 'house' (a separate building on site for young people with anxiety / school phobia's etc). A mix of 1:1 and group work provision is provided. 1:1 support continues to be intensive and involves working with the young people in a school and community setting, as attendance is often an issue. External meetings (Social Services, Health) are also attended in relation to many of the young people, in order to share information and feed in to any plans around the young people's welfare.

Group sessions tend to be small (maximum of 4) and consist of accreditation based programmes, including Traditions and Customs of Wales, Healthy Living, cookery and Bronze Youth

Achievement Award. For young people with complex issues and a history of long term absenteeism this can be the first qualification they have achieved and have a huge positive impact on their attendance. Other areas of support include visits to the local college and training provisions for Key Stage 4 participants, in order to assist them in understanding their post 16 Education, Training and Employment (ETE) options.

**Ebbw Fawr Learning Community** - I2A Youth Worker linked to school. Continues to deliver a specialist programme of support to a group of 6 Key Stage 4 young people at risk of exclusion on a Monday afternoon. A range of credit based units and physical activity sessions offer these young people the opportunity to gain accreditation and impacts on their attendance, as they are engaged in an alternative way of learning.

The 'Youth Offer Panel' takes place fortnightly and provides a coherent route for I2A referrals. I2A staff, key school staff and Communities First staff currently attend. Decisions are made regarding support that can best match the needs of the young people. This is an example of best practice and Abertillery Learning Community have adopted a similar referral process. Discussions are on-going as to alternative appropriate services that could attend, following the loss of Communities First funding.

Due to the high numbers of referrals in to the I2A project, the I2A Youth Worker offers initial 1:1 support to young people, in order to develop a youth work relationship with them and put in place appropriate needs led action plans. Once this is established, young people are then fed in to small groups. Group sessions include topics such as friendships, bullying, confidence and self-esteem, sexual health and positive relationships. The aims of these sessions are to increase soft skills (confidence and self-esteem, group work) help young people manage their emotions, which in turn impacts on their behaviour in school. All of these areas are then accredited. Other projects include a Gardening Project an employability KS4 group with employer visits planned this month (September) including to a local hospital and nursery (young people had an interest in health and social care careers).

**Ysgol Gyfun Tredegar Comprehensive School: I2A youth**

worker allocated to the school who either attends or provides a report for fortnightly 'Inclusion and Wellbeing' meetings, with key school staff, where referrals can be discussed and updates can be provided. Due to high caseload and the loss of the Communities First provision within the school, school links have agreed for I2A youth worker to work with small groups as well as 1:1 timetable. Group work includes confidence, self-esteem workshops and accreditation, which in turn supports them to develop friendship groups and has a direct impact on their attendance, attainment and behaviour as they are more likely to attend and be settled in the school environment if they have a positive relationship with their peers. Other projects include Arts and Gardening project, 'break clubs' which run 2 days per week and provide a nurturing and safe environment to develop confidence and self-esteem, before moving into the mainstream breakfast club. The intended outcome for this support is to improve Attendance, Attainment and Behaviour. A cohort of Key Stage 4 young people have been identified for Inspire Careers intervention and consideration is being given to work placements as an alternative opportunity for individual young people who struggle with mainstream provision.

**Transition Support:**

2 x I2A Transition Workers work across all schools. Target areas are Year 11 transition, Elected Home Educated (EHE), vulnerable pupils (attendance below 80%) and year 6-7 transition. This support enables the I2A Youth Workers based within the schools to focus on young people in school.

Transition support has been provided to Year 6 vulnerable pupils into Year 7, Year 11 young people with multiple barriers through careers support and visits to starting training in Work Based Learning or Further Learning, opening bank accounts (needed for training allowance) and ensuring young people have accepted identification (copies of birth certificates) to access training and any appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or kit. A number of EHE young people (who would have been in year 11) have been supported into further learning.

**The breakdown of I2W is as follows:**

There has been a steady increase in the flow of referrals (100 to date), which have been distributed amongst the I2W via a weekly allocations meeting. The majority of the work undertaken has

been 1:1 support sessions which include current status assessments, goal and target setting alongside action plans and soft skills development via engagement sessions.

**Project developments include:**

Inspire Changes - run out of Abertillery Youth Centre, offering I2W young people the opportunity to informally meet as a group. Seen as the hub for group work activity within I2W and satellite projects will be created via young people consultation. Young people undertake various forms of accreditation (Agored qualifications, Youth Achievement Awards etc), positive activities including arts and crafts, sports and cooking. Agencies book slots to drop into the group project and interact with young people in their environment including Tai Calon and Gwalia (both linked to housing), Tenovus (volunteer recruitment), Phoenix Project (Domestic Abuse Project) and the Primary Mental Health Team. Other organisations deliver set programmes with the group e.g. the Filter Project from Ash Wales is delivering a 6 week programme with an overall aim of reducing smoking amongst the young people, next will be Gwent Wildlife Trust and Aneurin Leisure Trust. Satellite projects will include development and maintenance of a garden area, life skills and health and fitness. Opportunities for young people's development have been mapped which include Communities First, Tai Calon, wider Youth Service, Careers and the 14+ Team. Working alongside these agencies has provided opportunities including volunteering, training and career advice and guidance.

The Communities For Work (C4W) Triage partnership work is pivotal. All 5 x I2W Youth Workers have continued with their Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) roles to improve the projects efficiency and partnership working. There is a SPOC for each C4W cluster area in Blaenau Gwent (Ebbw Fawr, Ebbw Fach North, Ebbw Fach South and Tredegar) and their roles include forwarding post code eligible referrals with consent to Triage, providing and gathering information on support and opportunities for young people to and from C4W clusters. There is also a Referral SPOC within the I2W team. This role includes coordination of referrals to and from project, maintenance and development of a referral database, and planning ways to expand referral opportunities through partners.

**Youth Engagement and Progression Framework:**

	<p>The Youth Service co-ordinates the Welsh Government’s ‘Youth Engagement and Progression Framework’ through a strategic multi-agency partnership the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG). The partnership is mature and effective and continues to address all 6 key areas of the Framework. This includes using the Early Identification Tool (5th year), updating the provision map for the Youth Guarantee (5th year), updating the online directory of support (4<sup>th</sup> year), further developing the ‘lead worker’ role and further refining the tracking and support of young people. All areas of the Blaenau Gwent action plan are developing well and either met or are on track.</p> <p>The Youth Service also facilitates the NEETs Practitioner Forum, an operational multi-agency partnership, and sub group of the RAG, which co-ordinates the EIT process and allocation of lead worker role, as part of the Welsh Government’s Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF – NEETs). The Inspire projects play a key role in this process.</p> <p>As a result of this co-ordinated approach with partners, there has been a steady reduction of numbers of young people becoming NEET, from 8.7% (74 young people) in 2009/10 to 2.49% in 2015/16 (almost sustaining last year’s lowest figure yet of 2.4%)</p> <p>Focus areas this year include gathering disengaged young people’s feedback about pre and post 16 advice, support and curriculum choice, ETE LAC focus group.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Risk Implications</b>
3.1	<p>There are no direct risks associated with the projects, as the funding has been secured for almost 3 years, with the intention of being extended until 2022, and redundancy costs have been built into the project. However, this is a vital service for young people who have an identified need for support. The risk associated with the potential removal of the external ESF revenue funding in the future, therefore, will need to be considered.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Financial Implications</b>
4.1	<p>The funding for the Inspire 2 Achieve project was approved in February 2016. The total project approved cost is £1,212,959; ESF Grant £1,041,457.00, match funding £171,502.83. The</p>

4.2	<p>match funding is provided through existing externally funded staff. The recently revised extended profile awaiting approval is until 2022 and is for a total project cost of £ 4,435,322.</p> <p>Redundancy costs have been built into the project.</p> <p>The approval for Inspire 2 Work is expected in June 2016. The proposed total project cost is £501,994; ESF Grant £419,990.00, match funding £82,004.00. The match funding is provided through existing externally funded staff. The recently revised extended profile awaiting approval is until 2022 and is for a total project cost of £ 2,508,885.</p> <p>Redundancy costs have been built into the project.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Staffing/Workforce Development Implications</b>
5.1	<p>There are no staff/workforce developments to consider, as any existing staff retained as part of the Prevent programme have been transitioned into the Inspire 2 Achieve Team.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Options for Consideration</b>
6.1	<p>Within Blaenau Gwent and over the next three years, Inspire 2 Achieve aims to support 669 young people aged 11-18 most at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) to remain in education or training, to gain additional qualifications and to reduce their future risk of becoming NEET. Inspire 2 Work aims to support 267 young people aged 16-24 who are NEET to enter education, employment or training and to gain additional qualifications.</p> <p>The ESF Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work operations will ensure that the Local Authority continues to meet the requirements set out within the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and progression Framework (YEPF). This also addresses comments made in the last Estyn inspection about the sustainability of the Youth Service's provision to these young people.</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent's local delivery plan is based on identified need. The Raising Aspirations Group oversees an annual mapping process, which helps identify gaps in provision and informs NEETs online directory of support, which is a requirement within</p>

	<p>the YEPF Framework. The gaps identified locally included continued dedicated support of lead workers for young people identified as at risk or NEET, with the ability to provide holistic support in and out of school, transitional support moving between schools, year groups and moving into post 16. Both operations will address this identified need.</p> <p>Within the Youth Service, the current staffing structure under Inspire to Achieve (I2A) and Inspire to Work (I2W) is a combined team of 1 x Project Manager, 1 x Team Leader, 7 x I2A Youth Workers and 5 x I2W Youth Workers. This team replaced the existing Prevent team but also added capacity to deliver against the proposed targets. The projects support young people with multiple barriers aged 11-24, both at risk or currently NEET, over 3 years, achieving the targets and outcomes outlined above.</p> <p>This funding enables the Youth Service to continue to provide the support needed to identified and vulnerable young people and ensures the Local Authority continues to meet the requirements set out in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Impact Assessment Against Proposals / Options*</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Involvement</b></li> </ul> <p>The ESF Inspire projects will bring substantial funding to the Local Authority, at both a Lead Beneficiary level and also for the local delivery teams. The funding will ensure that skilled, qualified staff are retained and enable the Youth Service to continue to meet the needs of young people, the local area and the requirements of Welsh Government.</p>
7.2	<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)</b> N/A</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Conclusion*</b>
8.1	<p>The work of the Youth Service has made an invaluable contribution to the work to reduce the numbers of young people becoming NEET. The approval of the ESF grants will ensure that through the Inspire projects, young people will continue to be supported and that the Local Authority will continue to meet its requirement outlined in the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.</p>

Assess how well your project / activity will result in multiple benefits for our communities and contribute to the national well-being goals.		
Description of the Well-being goals	How will your project / activity deliver benefits to our communities under the national well-being goals?	Is there anyway to maximise the benefits or minimise any negative impacts to our communities (and the contribution to the national well-being goals)?
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b>            An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<p>The Youth Service directly supports young people aged between 11-25 to access learning opportunities which provides them with qualifications and employability skills. INpsire 2 Work and Achieve is a key project in the service</p>	<p>Projects such as ESF Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work are still in their first year of a three year programme. Young people are being identified for support and this will continue throughout the lifetime of the programme.</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b>            A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>The Youth Service delivers environmental and economic projects directly to young people.</p>	<p>Young people accessing Youth Services build resilience to cope with the barriers they face in their lives. Young people should be encouraged to access this support.</p>
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b>            A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p>	<p>The Youth Service directly supports young people with mental health and wellbeing issues through counselling and workshops.</p>	<p>Through collaboration with Families First and the Youth Service, we are intending to widen the support to young people in this area.</p>

Description of the Well-being goals	How will your project / activity deliver benefits to our communities under the national well-being goals?	Is there anyway to maximise the benefits or minimise any negative impacts to our communities (and the contribution to the national well-being goals)?
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b>            A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).</p>	<p>The Youth Service directly supports young people to improve their self esteem and confidence and to overcome barriers.</p>	
<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.</p>	<p>The Youth Service works with partners to bring young people and their communities together in a more cohesive way.</p>	
<p><b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b>            A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.</p>	<p>Through partnership with the Urdd, the Youth Service promotes oportunities for learning, socialising in and understanding Welsh Language and Culture.</p>	
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b>            A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p>	<p>All work with young people through the youth service addresses issues about consequences, and how what you do as an individual impacts on others around you.</p>	<p>Young people should be encouraged to access the youth services available to them in order to mix with others from their community and to learn how to compromise and work collaboratively with different people.</p>